



Political Mediatization of Blasphemy News

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Abstract

The independence of media after the reformation era in Indonesia was followed by the rise of the new media from various ownership backgrounds. Partisan media emerged as a means of delivering political messages to the public. Metro TV and TV One are two national television medias with different objectives, the direction of reporting and ownership. The case of blasphemy by Ahok in 2016 is inseparable from the political conditions in Jakarta which at the time held DKI Jakarta Governor Election 2017. The different framing of coverage of this case broadcasted by Metro TV and TV One indicated that there were many political messages veiled in order to achieve the goals of certain parties. The political mediatization shown by these two media by their power in directing the public and political institutions in following the logic of the media. The power of media ownership that has the of political parties background, ultimately eroded the independence and neutrality of the media itself. The political interests become important objectives thus overriding the interests of the public in getting information. The sustainability of media operations was supported by media capitalism becomes an endless economic target. Advertising from various sources are contested as a source of income for media. This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method with a case study of news on a blasphemy case by Ahok on Metro TV and TV One.

Keywords: *Blasphemy; Mediatization; News Television*

Introduction

The case of blasphemy by Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) which started from the controversy of Ahok's speech in the Seribu Islands on September 2016, led to various polemics in the public. The wild interpretation of the Quranic verse, Al Maidah 51, in the context of the elections triggered by Ahok, brings up a negative reaction from a group of people and Islamic mass organizations. The capital city of Jakarta at the same time was holding a gubernatorial election so that the blasphemy case could not be easily released from the political escalation at that time.

The case of blasphemy by Ahok became the news issue in the printed, electronic, and online media. Most of the headlines and breaking news was reporting the news of alleged religious blasphemy by Ahok. Mass media was supposed to deliver facts in reality, but in fact the information transfer of each media was different, according to the background of each institution. Media institutions are the source of many types of messages that we receive. Generally, these media can respond to various events and opinions in society, but at the same time, they also serve as a composer and consumer initiator. Therefore, it is necessary to observe their character, the way they operate, the reasons they communicate, to understand how and why messages are formed (Burton, 2008: 28).

Metro TV and TV One, which are national-scale television news media in Indonesia, have different framings in reporting on the blasphemy case by Ahok. In the view of cultural studies, the media cannot be separated from interests (ideology). Stuart Hall explained how the ideology (interests) permeated and worked in the media "text" and how the "text" of the media constructs the formation of reality in daily life based on the dominant group and is not a reflection of the actual reality (Hjarvard, 2008: 110).

The difference of news framing between Metro TV and TV One is reinforced by the background of ownership, in which both of these media are affiliated to certain political parties. The owner of Metro TV is the founder of the Nasional Demokrat Party (Nasdem), which was supported Ahok in the DKI Jakarta Governor election 2017. Meanwhile, the owner of TV One is Aburizal Bakrie (ARB) family, that affiliated with the Golkar party. ARB is a figure who is very instrumental in winning Anies-Sandi in the 2017 Jakarta Governor's election.

These television media cannot be simply separated from the interests and propaganda of their respective owners. A set of filters has controlled the contents of media information starting with media size, profit orientation, media ownership, and continues with the intervention of advertisers, media sources, pressure groups, as well as anti-communism and fundamentalist ideologies (Ibrahim and Akhmad, 2014: 86). All of these filters are screening out most of the media information to the public. The news filter finally covering media bias. These hidden and intended bias is ultimately difficult to avoid because the media also carries the hidden agenda of certain interest parties, that operate behind the media. In this case, the hidden agenda of the political elite, business elite or even the media elite itself.

General Theory

Mediatization is a process of modernization of the community in obtaining information. The rapid flow of information that comes incessantly continues to make people reach the point of saturation and dependence on the media. This mediatization forms a dependency on the social process because society and the media cannot be separated from each other anymore.

Hjarvard (2016: 9) argues that from an academic perspective, mediatization will be understood as a process because various institutions both cultural and social (family, political, religious, etc.) become increasingly influenced by the media and the logic of the media itself. As noted by Schulz (2004: 88), mediatization relates to changes associated with communication media and their development. The processes of social change in which the media play a key role may be defined as extension, substitution, amalgamation and accommodation. Hjarvard (2004: 48), writes that mediatization implies a process through which the core elements of social or cultural activities (such as work, leisure, play, etc.) assume media form. Mazzoleni and Schulz (199:249) define that mediatization is also process oriented. Mediatization denotes problematic concomitants or consequences of the development of modern mass media (Strömbäck, 2008: 232).

In the political context, Asp (1986: 359) also uses mediatization to refer to a political system that is highly influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of politics.

Political mediatization is related to how political institutions and the behavior of political actors are shaped by the media's increasing influence (Strömbäck, 2011: 424). Political mediatization is politics that has lost its autonomy and depends on the central function of the mass media and is continuously shaped by interactions with the mass media (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999: 249). However, they also stressed that this was not media arrogance towards political power in political institutions such as parliaments, parties and so on. However, they (political institutions) are becoming increasingly dependent on the media and must adapt the logic of the media (Hjarvard, 2008: 107).

There are four conceptual dimensions of political mediatization. The first dimension is concerned that media is the most important source of information and communication channels. The second dimension is the freedom of media from other social and political institutions. The third dimension is the level which media content is influenced by media logic or political logic. The fourth dimension is the level that political actors are influenced by media logic or political logic. (Stromback, 2011: 425).

In summary, mediatization is understood as a theorization of media transformation which is focusing on influence of media institutions on practice and technology in various forms of social regulation, including politics, civil society, religion, popular culture, and art. With a detailed definition, Hjarvard formulates mediatization as a process on culture and society become dependent on the logic of the media and the logic of society, this process is further characterized by duality in media which institutionally gains its status and society at the same time becomes integrated into social life in other social institutions and cultural environment (Budiasa, 2017: 39).

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach based on the research problems described above. The qualitative approach being chosen aims to analyze the phenomena that are experienced by the research subjects holistically, and describe the phenomena in the form of words and languages, in a special natural context, by utilizing various scientific methods (Moleong, 2007: 6).

This research applied a critical paradigm approach to a case study that finding the alignments of the Metro TV and TV One in broadcasting news on blasphemy case by Ahok. In the media context, the critical paradigm views the media as not a free and neutral channel. The media are actually owned by certain groups and used to dominate other groups.

Discussion

The power of the media in constructing political logic raises the framing of news that loaded with interests. Yasraf Amir Piliang (2004: 133), explains that in the latest developments, there are at least two main interests behind the media, namely economic interests, and power interests, which shape the media content. Between the two main interests that drive the information presented and the meaning offered, there are more basic interests that are ignored, namely the public interest. The media which should play a role as a public room ignores the public interest due to the above interests.

In Reformation era, freedom of the press in democracy in Indonesia was marked by the issuance of Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning the Press, and Law Number 21 of 2002 concerning Broadcasting. Both of these laws have succeeded in encouraging the democratization of information while at the same time opening great opportunities for entrepreneurs to expand their businesses in the media sector, especially television media. A more developed political tendency requires the media as a means to convey political messages to the public. Most politicians assume that effective political communication tends to be achieved through the use of television media.

The ownership of media currently tends to be oligopolistic. Metro TV and TV One are national news televisions whose ownership is affiliated to certain political parties. Metro TV is the first news TV station founded by Surya Paloh who also serves as Chairman of the Democratic National Party (Patai Nasdem). While TV One is owned by Aburizal Bakrie who is the Chairperson of the Golkar Party Board of Trustees. Metro TV and TV One are two television stations, with news television genre, already showing their actions as conveying the ideology of their owners, which started since the Presidential election in 2014. The media really contributes and plays an important role in providing information to the public. This tendency sometimes makes the media in presenting information, become more dramatization, manipulation, speculation or even trying not to reveal the truth according to the actual facts (Ahmad, 2004: 72).

Theoretically, Shoemaker and Reese's views can be considered as references. In his book *Mediating the Message* (1991) suggest that theoretically there are five things that affect the content of the media. Two of the five things very obvious points that helped shape the content of the media in Indonesia, journalists (individual media workers) and media owners (organizational influences) (Masduki et al, 2014: 41). Paloh's labeling as the owner of Metro TV cannot be released. This naturally raises a polemic in the community in measuring Metro TV's independence and neutrality with Nasdem and Metro TV attached. The use of television media as political funnels is an effective practice of political communication in conveying ideology.

The problems appear when the media becomes a political vehicle for the owner who is also a head of political party. James Lull states that the media, in a critical view is seen as a battlefield of ideology between various groups and classes in society. Various ideological tools, in the form of discourse entities, are adopted and strengthened by the mass media, given legitimacy, persuasively disseminated often prominently to large audiences. In this process, ideas from a certain ideology will be presented repeatedly so that they get attention, gain importance, and strengthen their meaning and acceptance (Lull, 1995: 8-11). Nasdem used Metro TV in conveying its ideology. Various political advertisements to the coverage and appearances of Surya Paloh in it as the Party Chairperson became a routine commodity that can be seen on the screen.

The commissioner of Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPIP), Mayong Suryo Laksono, stated that television ownership is identical to business ownership, conglomerates and factually, it cannot be separated from political affiliation. KPIP as an independent institution in the supervision of television broadcasting in Indonesia has several times given warnings to Metro TV regarding the excessive proportion of Nasdem's political news and advertisements. The prominence of Surya Paloh as the Party Chairperson was positioned from a positive perspective as a figure in the restoration of Indonesia's change.

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) became a major issue in the Indonesian's news at the end of 2016 until the middle of 2017. The blasphemy case which snared him along with Ahok's nomination to become the Governor of DKI for the 2017-2022 period. The political escalation during the DKI Jakarta's election process was heated up, coupled with the issue of identity which was increasingly highlighted to bring down the electability of Ahok and Djarot. The Nasdem Party has declared from the beginning to be one of the parties carrying Ahok-Djarot. It has an impact on the presentation of news shows about the case of blasphemy by Ahok.

The framing of Ahok's case news was aired by Metro TV, highlighted the issue of Ahok's lack of intention to tarnish religion, Ahok's achievements in Jakarta development, national issues and intolerance as well as many other things aimed at trying to build Ahok's positive image to the public. Matters related to the negative sentiments from the community due to Ahok's statement did not become the focus in reporting. Metro TV framed news about Ahok only in terms of the law that was whacking him. They did not want to play with the politics of idealism and politic of identity. Metro TV showed the news of

Ahok's running for the Governor of DKI Jakarta. Various positive news about the performance of Ahok was framed to cover the blasphemy case that was wrapping him up. The media is free to choose which angle is being taken to be reported and which angle should not be. This is related to independence and balance principle in presenting the news.

The freedom of news framing selection was related with political forces behind the newsroom. The majority of the news broadcasted by Metro TV is Ahok's activities in the function of the incumbent Governor of DKI Jakarta, and political campaign in the function of a candidate for the Governor of DKI Jakarta. Most of the news about the achievements of Ahok as a Governor, and political strategies that were being implemented to raise a positive image in the community.

Don Bosco Salamun as editor in chief gave a statement about the tone in the news on Metro TV. In an interview with online media beritagar.id in November 2018, Don Bosco reinforced the position of Metro TV as a television station that supports parties and figures who have affiliations with Nasdem. The existence of Surya Paloh had an impact on the editor's political position in supporting one of the strongholds. The position as party leader and owner of Metro TV gives Nasdem a special privilege in getting the news slot of party activities.

Metro TV were received warnings from the Central KPI due to the excessive and uneven broadcast of activities or advertisements related to the Nasdem party. Mayong Suryo Laksono (Central KPI Commissioner) emphasized Metro TV over the excessive reporting tone. All nasdem party activities become a routine agenda in coverage of Metro TV so that there is an imbalance, fairness, and proportionality. Don Bosco stated that indeed the media must be objective, but the media themselves have the right to choose their orientation with a partiality for good reasons (beritagar.id, 2018). The principle held by Chief Editor of Metro TV raises a big question mark on neutrality and the principle of media balance. Media alignments for any reasons are unlawful to do in upholding objectivity in news report. Providing equal opportunities to both parties who are arguing with ideas is a concrete step in showing neutrality.

McQuail (2005) stated that media has function to disseminate information to the public should follow on the principles of independency, equality, diversity, truth, and quality of information, considering social order, solidarity, and accountability. Media owners or managers should ideally keep to the following six principles. First, the principle of independency, which means the freedom or independence of the media (editorial room) in producing and disseminating media content from the intervention of the owner and also other parties who have political and economic interests in the media. Second, the principle of equality, which has to do with media access. The public should have the same opportunity in accessing the media. In this case, there should be no special prioritization for the owners and/or affiliated groups, and also discrimination for the public in accessing the media, both in terms of receiving and sending information. Third, the principle of diversity requires the media to defend minority groups, able to maintain their existence, ensure cultural diversity and tolerance in society. Fourth, the truth and quality of information, refer to the objectivity of information (the level of correspondence with the reality of society), the significance or relevance of the information for the community. Fifth, considering social order and solidarity, by staying at the level of the role of the media for democracy and its alignments with the public interest. Sixth, accountability, show social media responsibility that involves the reporting or dissemination of media content and its impact on society (McQuail, 2005: 162).

But in fact, news can no longer be neutral but is influenced by the interests associated with the media. The neutrality of the mass media industry is largely determined by economic and political factors. The study of the political economy in the media was introduced by Vincent Mosco in his book *The Political Economy of Communication* (1998). The core of this study is based on the understanding of the political economy as a study of social relations and power, both in the production, distribution, and

consumption of resources. The resources can be in the form of print media, electronic media, books, tapes, films, the internet and so on (Mosco, 1998: 25).

TV One as one of the national news television media has a track record of alignments towards one political camp. This fact can be seen at the 2014 presidential election contestation, by becoming the political mouthpiece of the Prabowo as presidential candidate paired with Hatta Radjasa as vice presidential candidate. The ownership of TV One which was affiliated with the family of Aburizal Bakrie or ARB (Golkar Party), was a party that formed a coalition with the Prabowo-Hatta couple at that time. With the lure of getting the "senior minister" quota, ARB mobilized the power of the television and online media to drive positive public opinion about Prabowo-Hatta. The ideology contestation of Metro TV and TV One media owners was very strong, even frontally the two media positioned themselves as political tools of the two big camps at the time.

DKI Jakarta elections 2017 with the accusation of Ahok with the blasphemy case at the end of September 2016, made TV One as a media that specifically highlights Ahok's mistakes in interpreting Al Maidah's verse 51. TV One's framing of the Ahok case is a mistake made by someone who is not Muslim, trying to interpret the meaning of the verse Al Maidah 51. On the other side, Metro TV, which is in coalition with Ahok, is more inclined to highlight Ahok's performance as the Governor of DKI incumbent.

TV One is one of the televisions that supports the Anies-Sandi during the DKI Jakarta elections 2017. There is something interesting about TV One's tendency to Anies-Sandi's side (one of the governor and deputy governor of DKI Jakarta candidates). Although the Golkar Party at the time was a coalition partner with Nasdem, PDIP, Hanura, and PPP in carrying Ahok-Djarot, Aburizal Bakrie had secretly supported the nomination of Anies-Sandi, not officially from the Golkar Party. That support was shown when Aburizal welcomed Anies-Sandi at his residence in early February 2017. Aburizal claimed that the meeting was held because he and Sandiaga were both former Chairmen of the Indonesian Young Entrepreneurs Association (HIPMI). The second was done after Aburizal joined in celebrating the victory with Anies-Sandi in the second round of the DKI Jakarta Election on February 19, 2017. ARB clarified to the Golkar Party that his arrival at the event was due to the invitation by Gerindra Party Chairperson, Prabowo Subianto. The invitation came after the election was completed (Kompas, 2017).

The ARB support direction explains the tone of the news presented by TV One. Some of the news framings highlighted the issue of Muslims being hurt by Ahok's blasphemy. Of course, the issue of identity packed in the news on TV One, became a public commodity along with a wave of mass reaction that demanded justice for the actions taken by Ahok. TV One tended to support the action against Ahok organized by Islamic mass organizations.

The strong influence of television owners affiliated with certain parties makes the direction of television coverage more likely to be a propaganda of political programs. This is clearly seen on Metro TV, which cannot be separated from the government mouthpiece media because Nasdem is one of the government coalition party. Television media can not be separated from the ideology of capitalism, because all media operations require a lot of costs. Starting from the cost of employee salaries, electricity, transportation and other operational matters that require the media to obtain income to overcome these costs. This causes the media to become channels that cannot be value-free because they are full of interests, one of which is the interests of the economic sector.

The media partisan has become a political tool for who want to gain power, but on the other hand, the media can be a watchdog of their power. The media are referred as the fourth power in socioeconomic and political life. This is mainly due to the role of the media in expressing opinions and news that can affect social, economic, political life. According to Marxism, that the ideology of the media will go along with the ideology of the owner of the media. This view is supported by the number of media controlled by

business capitalists and helps organize the contents of the mass media. The mass media has the functions in spreading the dominant ideology, namely the class values that dominate it (Zulfebriges, 2003: 3).

Media is not a free channel, the media construct reality according to certain views, biases, and elements of partiality. The constructionist views the media as an agent of social construction that defines reality. In such a case, the two televisions (Metro TV and TV One) have different framing in constructing reality, one of which is from the perspective of media economic. McChesney as a media-political economy expert, stressed that the industrialization and commercialization of the media had a tremendous impact on public life. In the era of the victory of the market regime, the media can dictate public preferences about many things, goods needs, consumption patterns, lifestyles, even to political preferences, such as what kind of leader should be chosen (Sudiby, 2005: 117).

Mediatization of political economy oriented to media capitalism is directed at ownership, control and operational strength of the media market industry. The mass media industry is considered an economic system that is closely related to the political system. The various news agendas that are broadcasted in the form of Metro TV and TV One news framing are related to the need for profit, as a result of monopolistic tendencies due to affiliation to the interests of certain parties. Capitalism manifested in conglomerates and majority ownership dominates and hegemonized television media broadcasts clearly make the meaning of texts in television subject to distortion, misappropriation, and politicization.

The two big businessmen like Surya Paloh (Media Group) and Aburizal Bakrie (VIVA Group), are two conglomerate groups among several media conglomerates in Indonesia, in which the political background of these two figures, has been explained in the previous section. The point is that the media from an economic perspective cannot be separated from the practices of capitalism that support the operation of the two media. Advertising becomes the main source of income based on the rating data of each television.

Commercials from consumer products are the main target of television stations. Commercials slots from government agencies and state companies are a special attraction in addition to the advertisements of these consumer products for the media incomes. No wonder most television media, especially news television, take positions on the government side. Metro TV even became the mouthpiece of the government in its reporting. This was confirmed by Mayong (KPIP) that most of all television, especially news television, is leaning on government side. Metro TV is even stamped play a role more than TVRI. This is not without the reason, when it is indicated that there are many advertisement slots from government, ministries, and state companies that flow to Metro TV station. Mayong agrees that financial conditions in the television media are increasingly eroded by the threat of digitalization and social media. The approach to the government camp made a change to Metro TV's financial condition that is getting better.

TV One itself expects TVC (TV Commercial) from outside the government sector. TV One is always oriented towards rating to boost its media income. With a high rating index, it will attract advertisers to use slots on TV One. Potential advertising will bring high income to cover the company's operational costs. Keda (TV One Manager), emphasized that rating is the main indicator to attract advertising agencies to TV One. TV One makes many interesting programs with the genre of talk shows that attract public attention to watch this tv programs. TV One makes it closer to the public need of information with this conceptual strategy, although technically there are also many signs violated by TV One in order to increase rating.

Conclusion

Political mediatization positioned the media with the power to construct information in leading political institutions to join the logic of the media. It has an impact on the operational of the media and its alignments in shaping public opinion. The ownership of Metro TV and TV One which is affiliated with Nasdem and Golkar political parties makes partiality in reporting on the basis of specific objectives. The case of blasphemy by Ahok which at the same time as the election of the DKI Jakarta Governor 2017 cannot be separated from the escalation and political interests. TV One provides information to the public by highlighting Ahok's mistake in interpreting Al Maidah verse 51, while Metro TV is still become the mouthpiece of the government (the coalition party supporting Ahok) by continuing to focus on the law enforcement in the Ahok's case, not on its blasphemy material. Metro TV also continues to broadcast the issue of diversity to the public to ease the heated situation with religious demonstration.

The phenomenon of Ahok's news framing based on ideological and economic politics fades the press idealism which should maintains independence and objectivity in delivering news. As the fourth pillar in democracy, the freedom of the press are a form of popular sovereignty which cannot be intervened by force in any form. Victims in this polemic are people who have not been able to sort out factual information from reliable mass media.

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