

Local Wisdom: The Self-Reflection of To Lotang's People as Mass Media Audiences

Hasse Jubba

Islamic Politics-Political Science,
Universitas Muhammadiyah
Yogyakarta.
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
hasse@umy.ac.id

Jalaluddin Basyir

Faculty of Dakwah and
Communication, State Islamic
University of Alauddin Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
jalal.basyir@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Faisal

State of Islamic Studies of Fattahul
Muluk
Jayapura, Papua
faisalsaleh72@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

The *To Lotang* is the minority people who live along with local wisdom that signify their presence as well as their differences from majority society. The study is aimed to retain the knowledge on how the *To Lotang*'s local wisdom is manifested in the activity of interpreting information from the mass media which is not responsible socially nowadays and to ascertain some factors which motivate the *To Lotang* to have put their local wisdom as the authority for mass media. The method used is qualitative constructivism that emphasizes the construction of social reality as an approach study and the conception of Miles and Huberman which is the reduction of data, the presentation of data, and the drawing of conclusion as the analysis techniques of the study. The result of this study makes clear that the local wisdom of the *To Lotang*' is reflected not only as to have the symbol of the identity, but also to be the reference in a relation of social action that is worked on by mass media that cannot be denied in our social life. The implication of the study defines that local wisdom as the traditional discursive can displace the social fact that is built based on the ideas of modernism technocrats which are structurally taken for granted and developed as a certain paradigm.

Keywords: *Local Wisdom, The People of To Lotang, Mass Media, Identity.*

INTRODUCTION

The existence of humans cannot be separated from the presence of mass media. The mass media brings significant changes to the growth of humanity, for example, the ability for cultural development that is interpreted not only in the form of art and symbols but also in the sense of developing procedures and mindsets. Michael Schudson (2005) explained that the great effect of mass media presence is not on the effect that is caused on actions or beliefs, but that information gives enlightenment or knowledge in all social practices and matters of spirituality. The problem of this mass media is that the media is no longer considered capable in carrying out its social responsibilities and decides that responsibility directed more towards capital owners or authorities (Martina Topic and Ralph Tench, 2018). The dimensions of objectivity and equilibrium become expensive classy costs when the

orientation of the mass media no longer heeds the interests of the community.

The case of the "Islamic Defense Action of 212" in 2016 conducted by the majority of Muslims in Jakarta against the Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, for example, shows how powerful the mass media is in building public awareness of this case which ultimately made the Governor of Jakarta at that time preached guilty by the North Jakarta State Prosecutor's office and sentenced to two years in prison. Meanwhile, the existence of Islamic organizations, such as *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) and *Muhammadiyah* are not able to lead public opinion to counter the overflowing opinions of the mass media or if allowed to jealously participate in supporting mass media (Bungin, 2009). The expectation imposed on the *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI) as a preventive institution in preventing one of the above cases is considered not to run optimally and even seems to have occurred in the omission of the report. This fact received a quick response with the establishment of *remotivi.or.id* in 2010 as an interlocutor social media between the *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI) and the community, which strengthens that how weak this state institution (KPI) in carrying out its functions supervision.

The mix of facts above has quite clearly led us to realize how important an alternative solution is in building a good and productive audience awareness regarding the information disseminated by the mass media. One of the alternative solutions is local wisdom. It is said by Rini Darmastuti (2018) that local wisdom can also be used as a filter to deal with the effects of changing era, including the exposure of mass media. For this reason, positioning the idea of local wisdom as a reformative choice in overcoming the problems posed by the mass media needs to get special attention as it has been carried out by the people of *To Lotang* in the *Sidenreng Rappang* (*Sidrap*) area who boldly and optimistically utilize their local wisdom as a non-social institutions in filtering the flow of information from the mass media that is adjusted to the values of their local wisdom as well as the values of their spiritual wisdom (Jubba, 2019).

This research outline emphasizes the disclosure of the ability of indigenous people in solving social problems that seem to be contributed from the perspective of the mass media created. Institutions of religious authority or state

representatives that have had a huge influence on the public such as *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI), *Nahdlatul Ulama*, *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, *Muhammadiyah*, *Persatuan Gereja Indonesia* (PGI), *Konferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia* (KWI), *Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia* (PHDI), *Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia* (Walubi), and *Majelis Tinggi Konghucu Indonesia* (Matakin), are seen as experiencing a decline in trust so that the public tends to be divided into two which are the State public and the mass media public.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this study is more focused on constructive qualitative (Harramian, 2009), which is a research that focuses on understanding that objective reality is not the actual reality that must be accepted but the reality that experiences the intervention or construction of social agents. The results of this description will provide a real and concrete picture of the state or reality of the existence of local wisdom in the discursive siege of modern technocrats, such as the *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI), as a filtering medium for mass media information. What happens to the community of *To Lotang* related to the sustainability of local wisdom as part of their social institutions provides an overview of the construction of social reality built by the people of *To Lotang* in their interaction with other communities which tend to be mediated by mass media information propositions. This, in turn, makes people in this information era with no exception to the people of *To Lotang*'s lives like in a global village where people generally become so dependent on the mass media as information material as well as their social material.

The data has been obtained by interviewing mediated by social media so-called *Whatsapp* due to the location is too far to get with the informant. The selection of informants has been chosen deliberately with purposive sampling by contacting the informant, namely Jappi. Jappi is one of the residents of *To Lotang* who was born and raised in the community of *To Lotang*. Besides, brother Jappi (35) is also known as one of the descendants of devout community leaders there, so that it is very possible to obtain significant information about the object of this study. The proximity of the informant to the object of writing culturally can guarantee the validity of the information provided to the author. To get a comprehensive analysis, the Miles and Huberman analysis' model has been used in three steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The point is that the data obtained through interviews will be reduced according to the needs and relevance of the study. Furthermore, the reduction data will be presented comprehensively. After that, this data presentation discussed/analyzed merely to find important categories of this study. Finally, drawing conclusions based on findings and verification of data that are expected to have been able to provide a clear picture of the object of research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In general, the data obtained through interview shows that the existence of local wisdom is seen as a principle for the people of *To Lotang*, even though it cannot

be separated at all from their daily lives. As an inseparable thing reinforces that local wisdom has been internalized into a guideline of life in every social action both *To Lotang* people and other communities. The existence of interdependent socio-cultural provides a definitive impression of the *To Lotang* community's existence. For this reason, supporters of local wisdom are required to remind each other and commit themselves to run it to the next generation.

The local wisdom has a constitutional nature in shaping and supervising every act of its supporters including the people of *To Lotang*. For example, in watching, they respond to information conveyed by television media in ways that correspond to the values of their local wisdom, such as *Pakkutanangi alenarimadecengnge*; *Pakkanrei nawa nawae*; *Pangilena Pateppaeng*; and *Pasitinajang ngi gau'na*. They can be interpreted consecutively: Ask in the heart; Make use of thoughts/sort out things that are good or bad; Use considerations in good shape, and smoothing his/her actions. The values above clearly explain that the dominant influences of the information from television can be filtered more subtly to get accurate, correct and fair information. The urgency terms of finding data as follows:

NO	The Local Wisdom of <i>To Lotang</i> 's People
1.	<i>Pakkutanangi alenarimadecengnge</i> (To ask in the heart)
2.	<i>Pakkanrei nawa nawae</i> (To make use of thought/sort out things whether good or not)
3.	<i>Pateppaengngi pangilena</i> (To use considerations in a good shape)
4.	<i>Pasitinajangngi gau'na</i> (To delight his/her actions)

Source: The Researcher's Findings, 2018.

Local Wisdom and Mass Media

In discussions about local wisdom, the aspect of the mass media cannot be kept apart from the development and fall in local wisdom as an important part of the local wisdom system that exists in a community group. Today, with its increasingly dynamic population and demographic developments, local wisdom is at the lowest level due to the dynamics that tend to distance the value of local wisdom and bring the value of modernism closer to life (Rila Setyaningsih, 2017). The mass media with its accumulative ability influences the community to produce perceptions and even beliefs as set in by the mass media (read: *paternalism principle*). This finding is then contemplated by mass media supervision institutions that seem weak in their supervision, such as the *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI). This institutional system of supervision requires new ideas that have adequate integration and restoration capabilities, at least in the filtering mode or monitoring the information from the mass media. Sunarto, one of the media literacy activists from Diponegoro University stated clearly that local wisdom is one way to practice media literacy (Fitriyani, et al, 2014). This clarifies unequivocally that media literacy does not always have to come from the ideas of modernism which is a challenge and even a threat if it is not in line with the value of existing locality.

This traditional choice is not a form of deterioration from modernist and technocrat's ideas or matters caused by the mass media, but rather an expressive fundamentalist form which is trying to be expressed continuously to break through while maintaining the presence that the people of *To Lotang* try to maintain through these fundamentalist ideas. In its territory, the existence achieved by local wisdom is more directed to the subconscious of the people of *To Lotang* despite being faced with problems of reality that prioritize the value of modernism which embodies the high instrumental ratio of technocracy including institutional relations between the state and its people. In this modern era, the ideas of local wisdom are considered as being left behind and unable to keep up with the times (Sari Mawaddahni, 2017). Even the value or *ens perfectissimum* they have is an illusion that has no clear source, usually, a causality relationship that is considered to have a definite relation to the scientific explanation in it. On the other hand, the values of optimism and moral messages have shown by local wisdom which put it as a hope in the current flow of modernism and technocracy.

The fall of choices in local wisdom is subjective for the people of *To Lotang* in the limitations they have. In other words, local wisdom can increase the existence of their "*Being*" in front of other people who seem uniform with mainstream groups that reflect the life of society in general. A different and unique choice is a metaphor that shows existence itself, as said by Rene Descartes, "*Cogito Ergo Sum*" or "*I Think, Then I Am*". It is understandable why the notion of local wisdom is very prominent in the community (Dahlani, Ispurwono Soemarno, et al. 2015) of *To Lotang* because this idea has taken root in their lives and has even become a reference instrument in socializing with other communities, not at least in the interpretation of information disseminated through the mass media. For them, local wisdom is not only a norm value, but it also serves as guidance in filtering all forms of information from the mass media which currently tend to be wild, vulgar, and unbalanced in their reporting.

This was stated by the researcher informant that privacy considerations are needed when watching a television program, so that the information obtained does not plunge into incorrect things, for example, *Pakkutanangi Alena Rimadecengnge*; *Pakkanrei Nawa Nawae*; *Pateppaengngi Pangilena*; and *Pasitinajangngi Gau'na*. They can be interpreted consecutively: To ask the heart; To make use of thought/sort out things whether good or not; To use considerations in a good shape, and To delight his/her actions. From the perspective of the informant above, it can be understood that building good information starts from us without being influenced by the environment or others. This means that it is not easy to accept all the information conveyed by the mass media because this information may have a negative impact resulting in the removal of information neutrality. At this point, Islam also preaches us to always check and re-check the information obtained as Allah swt. mentioned in QS. Al-Hujurat 6:

"Hai...The faith people, when the fallacious people come into you and bring the news, you have

to then check in detail to avoid the calamity for people without rechecking that news that brings about the sorrow on your action".

This ayat requires us to always check out and examine information obtained, so as not to cause harm to ourselves especially for many people. At least the accuracy requires the reference that the people of *To Lotang* interpret as local wisdom.

The dynamics of local wisdom as a form of collective reflection of the *To Lotang* community have implications for the selective information and the social relations they build with other communities as a result of the presence of mass media (Putra, 2008). Local wisdom has not only the dimension of the locality of the *To Lotang* community which signifies their "*Being*", but it is also able to be presented as a medium of interaction with other communities or referred to a local genius (Sartini, 2004). In the end, this local wisdom can take over the role of a national institute, such as the *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI) which is considered to have failed to carry out the supervisory function properly. As the result what is done by the community of *To Lotang* makes clear that the wisdom in consuming mass media does not need to be based on a totalitarian institute that is formally top-down, but it can also be realized in the local wisdom of bottom-up level.

CONCLUSION

Local wisdom is a wise view of locality and always adapts its existence to a developing era. Because of its prudence, local wisdom can be implemented wisely and carefully in a variety of conditions including its relationship in the information controlling disseminated by the mass media as the people of *To Lotang* carry out nowadays. Finally, local wisdom does not only present as a manifestation of identity but also as cohesiveness in stemming the overflowing information. In another view, local wisdom is a solutive choice from the weakening of the current information controlling function.

In that case, local wisdom must be realized as the bottom-up accomplishment for those people who live away from the national institute or never meet up with the campaign of media literacy. On the other language, local wisdom can be used as the way of integrating our perspective both modern and local one. The people of *To Lotang* precisely promote to us that there has been a value matter of local wisdom which can be put into another thing of life. The thing is its capability to be a local filter institute for mainstream information from mass media that recently ruled by the national institute, *Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia* (KPI).

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