

Managing the Media Policy in the ASEAN Economics Community (AEC)

Hedi Pudjo Santosa

Communication Department of Diponegoro University
Semarang, Indonesia
(hedipudjos@gmail.com)

Abstract—On the National Press Day, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Jokowi, stated that the press has an important function of social control. Information always has two contradictory sides, just like ‘Jamu’. Although it tastes very bitter, it is a healthy vitamin. By giving information that is inconsistent with the fact will induce public distrust towards the authorities. The biggest challenge for the media, as one of the democracy pillars, is the non-partisan manner. The media ownership, centers on a handful of owners, will potentially give similar information which does not provide information diversity. The Indonesian media ownership has unique models, one of them is turning the information to become a tool for politic communications. The media policy, adopted by the media owners, should be parallel with the government policy, with no exception within the era of AEC. The adversarial role between the government and the media has produced counterproductive information that has led to public distrust.

Keywords—media policy; media ownership; media content; public distrust

I. INTRODUCTION

The (former) Minister of Industry, MS. Hidayat, in the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, stated in his welcoming speech on a breakfasting event with the stakeholders from the industrial sector, that the 2015 AEC aimed a single market and unified production base. This condition is characterized by the free flow of goods, services, production factors, investments and capital, as well as the abolition of trade tariff for ASEAN countries. AEC is an important moment for Indonesia as it broadens the market for national industrial products. The cooperation between the Ministry of Industry and the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce (Kadin) and other association or bodies, needs to be improved and to perform a common perception as an effort to strengthen the competitive forces, in order to compete within the ASEAN market.

Trust, which culminates to social and political matters, is an absolute requisition of good governance. Trust in symbiotic mutualism relationship will foster good governance. Three ongoing main causative mechanisms between trust and good governance are: (1) Society social relationship, (2) Economic efficiency relationship, (3) The Political relationship with legitimacy of a Democratic government that will deliver trust. Trust is a prerequisite for democratic good governance, and

the importance of society social relationship between trust and good governance will involve the development and maintenance of the civil society’s spirit. If the people in society do not trust one another and choose not to engage in meaningful social association networks, then they most likely have a low political legitimacy. In such a situation, the role of the media to either increase or decrease the society’s trust towards the government is crucial. How do we place the function of the media in this case? The Media is like a two-sided coin. On one side, the media has the capability to bring awareness to society, of fraud and deception. On the other side, the media is a reflection of society (media as a mirror). Bad media content is a reflection of a problematic society.

II. DISCUSSION

The essential function and role of the government is to provide the best service to society. The government’s paradigm has evolved from *rule government* into *good paradigm governance* which is in line with the world’s rapid development, as well as the increased complexity of problems faced by this country. Hence, a strong governance framework is required. Unfortunately, the ruling government has been depicted by some of the media as being a corrupt and problematic government. This depiction has become the primary of distrust against anything conveyed by the government.

The reform of bureaucracy is one way to build trust in society. The definition of reform of bureaucracy is a fundamental change of the system for the purpose of changing the old structure, behaviour and habits. The reform of the bureaucracy’s scopes are not only limited to the process and procedures, but also in correlating a change on a structural and behavioral level, as well as on personal and institutional behaviors. This is correlated with authority or formal power matters.

A bad government image is indicated by the number of corrupt, collusion and nepotism acts which generate society distrust onto good central and regional government institutions. One of the reformation issues that is initiated by the stakeholders is *Good Governance*, this term has gradually become popular amongst the private sector as well as the general public. This term has been frequently mentioned on many occasions and discretely interpreted by many parties, it has also turned out to be a popular concept in academic debates

and contemporary politics. On the other hand, some have interpreted the *Good Governance* as a performance indicator of a government body, company or community organization. The term is referring to its original meaning, Governing, which means directing, controlling, influencing public issues in a country. The relation between the media and the government, in order to achieve good governance, will extremely help the success of Indonesia in the AEC.

Edward Hermand (Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1990: 78) had a conceptual theory, that Money and Power were important tools to carry out an intervention and penetration against the media in accordance with the desire of a particular group, owners included. The connection between media ownership and media policy through the owners' penetration (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991: 231) can be seen within the media contents and its funding sources' relationship, such as *The Official Pattern* where the country has absolute control of the media. While, *The Commercial Pattern* model says that the media reflects the interests of the advertisers. *The Interest Pattern* model states that media content is a reflection of a financing party, such as a political party, religious group and others. In *The Informal Pattern* model, media content reflects the purpose of an individual contributor.

Croteau (2000:88) did not discuss much about media ownership relatively in his book, nevertheless the conglomeration concept and concentration concepts are deeply reviewed in Media/Society books. Meanwhile, McQuail did see an ownership model in Liberal Theory context (McQuail 2010:227), that ownerships can be fundamentally and effectively separated from editorial decision, while resource decisions, business strategies and some others can be determined by the owners, and the professional decisions can be fundamentally conducted by the editorial board.

The other complicated problems is the media groundwork, namely the ethical foundation, so that the ethical behaviour is conducted to oversee the work of the media. In the past, the Department of Information (*Departemen Penerangan*) had a substantial authority to direct the media in accordance with the willingness of the ruler. But now, such an authority is impossible to implement. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics (*Kominfo*), an institution that has the authority to regulate traffic information, can take over the work without violating the area of media ethics, so if various problems occur in highly technical areas they can be solved by appointed representatives. The most important thing to do is to establish a blue print that addresses the media management where commitment to the *state* existence is non-negotiable. This means, no matter who the rulers are, the commitment remains the same. Therefore, the media management policy in Indonesia must follow this direction. Indonesian journalism practices has not fully met the journalism ethics rules. Most of the media's performances indicate a lot of ethics violations performed by media practitioners. The temptation to breach the journalism ethics happens due to massive internal influences. These internal parties try to persuade their interests with events, such as game shows and any other ways.

Every company may have a different media policy. However, the companies will have no other option but to follow

the state policy when the country needs a unity of opinions. This is a form of media responsibility to their country. The only intervention carried out by the owners is at a technical practice level or *peace journalism*, not at a state policy level. Materializing media trust through conveyed news is a challenge that can be executed by choosing non-partisan resources where news accuracy is considerably measured and free from prejudice of particular groups. The other means is to maintain distance between news objectivity and the intervention of the capital owners with taking sides onto the greater interest of the public.

III. CONCLUSION

Within the era of AEC, the media's participation in realizing good governance is by maintaining news quality based on *peace journalism* implementation, by means, journalism practices taking sides with victims and other minority groups. Other than that, the media can actively oversee the governance (watchdog) on the basis of good willingness to develop the nation through conveyed news.

The biggest challenge for the media in becoming one of the democracy pillars, is the non-partisan behavior. Media ownership that is centralized by only a few owners, will generate a unified performance. This performance will not provide information diversity. One fundamental basic is to understand the media structure, the ownership-related questions and how the power of ownership is executed (McQuail, 2010: 226). Eventually, media ownership is believed to determine the media property. It can simply say that the media is a reflection of its funding parties, and the use of advertisements in the media is just one way of achieving that.

This opinion has further strengthened the supposition of unsterilized media policy from the interests of the owner's or funding parties. It is conceived that media content in Indonesia is often parallel with the wishes of the owners, and this kind of information control will, of course, unify the public's opinion on certain matters, so that the news generated is relatively homogeneous. The low information variability will make the media owners to have the power to direct the opinion in accordance with their interests, and even the conveyed opinion can potentially silence the opposite opinion.

REFERENCES

- [1] David Croteau and William Hoynes. *Media/Society: Industries, Images, Audiences*, page 88, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks California, USA, 2000.
- [2] John Downing, et.al. *Questioning The Media a Critical Introduction*, Sage Publications Inc., California, USA, 1990.
- [3] Ishadi SK. *Prospek Bisnis Informasi di Indonesia*, Pustaka Pelajar, Jogjakarta, 1999.
- [4] Philip Kitley. *Konstruksi Budaya Bangsa Di Layar Kaca*, Institut Studi Arus Informasi, Jakarta, 2001.
- [5] Denis McQuail. *Mass Communication Theory*, Sage Publications Ltd., pages 226-227, Washington DC, 2010.
- [6] Hince Panjaitan. *Memasung Televisi*. Institut Studi Arus Informasi, Jakarta, 1999.

- [7] A.Yasraf Piliang. *Sebuah Dunia yang dilipat: Realitas Kebudayaan Menjelang Milenium Ketiga dan Matinya Posmodernisme*, Penerbit Mizan, Bandung, 1998.
- [8] Narliswandi Piliang. *Televisi di Kantong Segelintir Pemilik, Pantau*, Jakarta, 2002.
- [9] Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese. *Mediating the Message, Theories of Influence Mass Media Content*, page 231, Longman Publishing Group, 1991.
- [10] Agus Sudibyo. *Ekonomi Politik Media Penyiaran*, LkiS, Jogjakarta, 2004.