

The Abandonment of Animal Conservation Ideology in Indonesian Television Programs

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Abstract— The mass media possesses significant roles and functions amongst a society. Referring to the idea of Denis McQuail, one of the roles of mass media is to be a reflection of the behavior of the people it represents. By looking at the media's perspective, we would be able to comprehend people's opinions and behaviors. Not only in the general aspects of life, but also within the specific one like environmental issue as discussed in this article.

In the context of environmental sustainability, especially related to protected animals, it could be argued that the role of the mass media in Indonesia is still far from their function as a public education facilitators. This research shows the weakness of mainstream mass media in understanding conservation ideology, which makes them easily exposed by harmful information and publishing messages against protected animals preservation within their entertainment programs.

Using an intrinsic case study model from Stake, accompanied by environmental journalism, environmental communication and animal conservation theories, this research uses a qualitative approach in exploring the understanding of TV media managers in the case of protected animals conservation. The subjects are Net TV and Trans7 TV who have used protected parrot birds in their entertainment program.

The results indicate that these media with their entertainment programs have violated the regulations on protected animals as stated in Government Regulation No. 7/1999 about the utilization and management of protected crops and animals, and also the Act No. 5/1990 about biodiversity and natural resource conservation. It is found that the media in general were only seeking sensation without noticing the regulations. This would create a significant adverse effect on their audience, which potentially lead to behaviors against the conservation.

Keywords—Environmental Communication, Protected Animals, Environmental Journalism, Mass Media, Case Studies

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been argued in many scientific research that television has a huge influence in shaping audiences' behavior. At the same time, it is argued that television programs' attitudes are also influenced by behavior patterns of the audiences. However, this argument cannot be generally applied to any TV program, since not all audiences' behavior

can be justified and used as a reference behind it. This especially happens to the program that is related to environmental issues and the effort of natural preservation.

In Indonesia, the issue of conservation of the nature has not attracted high attention, both the mass media and the audience. The issue would be taken seriously if it has direct and massive impact to human's life, such as floods, waste problems or starvation. Other issues that do not have clear effects on the ecosystem are seldom to be shared by the media. Instead of educating people about the relationship between sustaining environment and human's life, the media are often too focused on disasters and the casualties, which makes them abandoning more important information that might prevent the damages.

It is clear that environmental issues are not only related to disasters, but to many factors such as water, air, energy, forest or biodiversity. As parts of the ecosystem, each issue is linked to each other. A discussion about renewable energy, for example, is closely related to mining issues which often harmful to the nature. An eco-friendly renewable energy, like solar energy that has been considered so far as an environmental-friendly, would not create new mines. This is very different with the coal energy that is commonly used in Indonesia. Coal industry is a source of air pollution and also causes a lot of damage to ecosystem. In the process, coal industry was destroying natural forests and threatening the heterogeneity of animals and plants. Monoculture plantations, which were then created as the consequence, have made the soil becomes infertile and banished the animals from their habitat.

In 1990, the government of Indonesia issued the Act No. 5 about biodiversity and natural resource conservation. The derivative of this Act is the Government Regulation no. 7/1999 which is accompanied by an attachment on protected crops and animals in Indonesia. The appendix of this regulation contains the increasing number of conservation status of endangered wildlife.

One of the endangered protected species on the list is the yellow-crested cockatoo, one of endemic parrot species of Indonesia, especially in the Eastern Indonesia. In details, parrots which are included in protected animals list according to the Regulation no 7/1999 are:

- A. Large Yellow Crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua Gallierita*)
- B. Small Yellow Crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua Sulphurea*)
- C. Goffin's Cockatoo or tanimbar cockatoo (*Cacatua Goffinii*)
- D. Seram Cockatoo (*Cacatua Moluccensis*)

Unfortunately, regardless the punishment threat to the regulation's violators, many illegal hunters still remain to killed, traded, even smuggled these protected animals out of the country. Beside those hunters, there are still Indonesian people who do not know and understand about the regulation upon these four types of cockatoos, and the fact that these parrots are really in a critical condition. Included in these people are some managers of mass media.

Net TV, one of Indonesia's increasingly popular television stations, has published news about illegal parrot trafficking several times. In the news coverage it was clearly stated that the cockatoo is included as one of protected birds. However, it is found that the understanding is not followed by non-news divisions.

In one episode of a comedy program called International Class, a yellow-crested cockatoo was aired on 29 September 2016. In the show, the cockatoo became a houseboy's pet. This, of course, violated the Act No. 5/1990 as well as the Government Regulation No. 7/1999.

Another case related to the parrot show is a reality show entitled "The Holy Promise". This program was a reality show about the family of artist Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina. One of the program's episodes featured their activity in Bandung, where they attended Raffi Ahmad's cousin's wedding. The cousin lived in a very large house, even the largest in the area. It was very unfortunate when the episode show the situation inside the house, which full of protected animals. There were Yellow Crested Cockatoo, Peacock, even a 4-month-old Bengali tiger. On the show, the artist proudly shows the animals in his cousin's house without the understanding that the animals are actually protected and cannot be kept.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The normative theory of the mass media, as stated by Baran and Davis (2010), explains that a media system should operate in order to adapt to a set of ideal social values. Therefore, the ontology of this theory holds the opinion that what can be known is situational (or, as in the interpretative theories, local context). In other words, what is perceived as real and knowable about a media system can be known only to a particular social system in which it exists. The epistemology, how knowledge develops and rises, is based on comparative analysis - we can only judge the importance of a particular media system by comparing it with the ideal value supported by a particular social system, where it operates. Axiology of this normative theory does contain values. A review of the media system or part of the media system was then carried out under the explicit belief that there is an ideal operating model based on the value of the social system (Baran and Davis, 2010:17).

So far, Indonesia's social system has hardly supported the conservation of natural resources. Environmental issues and

their preservation have become very marginal in the perspective of the mass media. They prefer to cover social, political and economic conflicts rather than environmental issues. As mentioned before, the environmental issue would be published when it relates to massive disasters. This media practice, unfortunately, was unable to raise the root of the problem and failed to provide solution.

The idealism for protecting the environment often clashes with the interests of media owners and the audiences with different social system values. Each dominant group in society has its own perspectives in facing the ideal value of a social system. This resulted in some thought in seeing the mass media as a normative social institution (Baran and Davis, 2010: 126).

III. METHODOLOGY

This research was done by using case study method. Instead of using Robert K. Yin's (1987) description which is more commonly used as a reference for case study research in Indonesia, the researchers considered the model from Robert E. Stake (2005) would be more appropriate for this study. The novelty of the Stake case study formula compared with Yin, judging by its use in scientific research in Indonesia, has made the researcher attempt to offer an alternative, enabling it to enrich the scientific treasures in case study research.

Stakes in Denzin and Lincoln (2005:443) explain that case studies method is a common way of conducting qualitative inquiry, even though a case study research is neither new nor essentially qualitative. Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what to study. Stake (ibid.: 443-444) notes there are five requirements in the implementation of case studies; selection of issues, triangulation, experiential knowledge, context, and activity. Case studies were believed to optimize understanding by pursuing scientific research questions. The case study gained its credibility through a thorough triangulation of descriptions and interpretations continuously throughout the study period. According to the qualitative research community, case studies concentrate on the experience-based knowledge of the case and careful attention to the influence of social, political, and other contexts. For most audiences, optimizing an understanding of a case requires detailed attention to each of its activities.

The main conceptual responsibilities of qualitative case study researchers, according to Stake (2005: 459-460), include the following:

- a. Couple cases, conceptualize the object of study;
- b. Choosing a phenomenon, theme or issue (example: emphasized research question);
- c. Search for data patterns to develop issues;
- d. Conducting triangulation of key observations and basics to interpret;
- e. Choosing an alternative interpretation to search; and
- f. Develop a statement or generalization of the case.

The intrinsic case study is chosen to be implemented within this research because the researchers are seeking out a better understanding of a particular case. It is not because the case represents or describes a trait or problem this study was

chosen, but because the case, in all its peculiarities and custom, has its own appeal. Cases in this model are usually of major concern before formal studies begin. Intrinsic case studies usually begin with clearly identified cases. The purpose of an intrinsic case study is not to understand an abstract construct or a general phenomenon, nor to construct a theory. The intrinsic case study is implemented because there is intrinsic attraction or interest about a particular object. Using an intrinsic case study, this research conducted a chronology of media role cases in the education of wildlife awareness in protecting the audiences.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Mass media presentations, especially television, could create particular impacts on their audience. The show that presenting protected animals in some television programs have also provoked reactions from animal protection activists. PROFAUNA West Java, an organization for forest and wildlife protection, is one of the most responsive organizations in responding this kind of programs.

In the case of the Yellow Crested Cockatoo's appearance in International Class Net TV on September 29th, 2016, PROFAUNA West Java got the information just after as the episode finished. One of the audience contacted Rinda Aunillah, the Coordinator of PROFAUNA West Java. Rinda who was very responsive contacted the West Java Regional Broadcasting Commission to submit an official complaint. Another member of PROFAUNA West Java also contacted Net TV's Chief Editor, Dede Apriadi, explaining that the Yellow Crested Cockatoo is a protected animal that cannot be traded, maintained and consumed.

This report was responded promptly by Dede Apriadi, who then asked PROFAUNA to find a solution to solve this problem without causing an disturbance in the International Class program. PROFAUNA West Java then suggested Net TV to make one special episode about the delivery of the Yellow Crested Cockatoo bird to the Agency of Natural Resources Conservation (BKSDA) of Jakarta. This is considered as a means of education to the audience. Net TV then asked PROFAUNA West Java solve the delivery matter with the BKSDA while they asked for more time to make the submission script of the show. Finally, on November 28th, 2016, the International Class program aired the scene of the Yellow Crested Cockatoo Birds handover to BKSDA Jakarta with several narrations that the bird is a protected animal that should not be kept, hunted and traded.

Another case of protected animal appearance on TV that also involved the BKSDA was the Holy Promise program that aired on Trans7 TV. On April 30th, 2017, there was an episode of Raffi Ahmad attending his cousin's house, which was then known to keep some protected animals. This show was aired at 4pm to 5pm. At 18:15 the Coordinator of PROFAUNA West Java, reported the case of animal preservation to the BKSDA West Java followed up the next day by forming Task Force Units. On Monday, May 1st, 2017, BKSDA West Java's team evacuated 11 protected animals. The details are as follows:

- a. 7 green peacocks (*Pavo Muticus*)
- b. 1 Moluccan cockatoo (*Cacatua Moluccensis*)
- c. 1 small yellow-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua Sulphurea*)
- d. 2 large yellow crested cockatoo (*Cacatua Galerita*)

In addition, BKSDA is also considering to move the 4-month-old panthera tigris. However, this tiger is actually not included as endemic animals, and there are no clear regulation on these internationally protected animals. Meanwhile, BKSDA also found two blue peacocks (*pavo cristatus*) in sick condition.

On May 2nd, 2017, BKSDA West Java held a press conference about this arrest. A total of 9 media cover this press conference. In the occasion, the Head of BKSDA West Java, Sustyo Iriyono asked the press to help to inform the public about the importance of animal preservation.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The mass media is part of the structure of a society, and its technological infrastructure is a fundamental part of economy and power. Meanwhile, the ideas, images and information that are disseminated by the media, are clearly an important aspect of culture in the society. The theory of mass society has some basic assumptions about the individual, the role of the media, and the nature of social change. Based on the assumption of Baran and Davis (2010: 58), the research can be concluded as follows:

1. Media is a very important force in a society that can undermine some harmful social values and norms. To deal with this threat, the media must be controlled by a powerful decision maker. This applied to Net TV. The managers of the media accepted the allegation and felt responsible for giving improper information. There was a will to resolve the issue by creating another program about the delivery of yellow crested cockatoos. Meanwhile, Trans7 TV did not react at all about the seizure of animals at Raffi's cousin. Even Raffi himself did not give any statement related to the evacuation of animals that BKSDA conducted at his cousin's house after the show.
2. On the other hand, the West Java Regional Broadcasting Commission which is also given a report and request to monitor the presentation, apparently did not fully understand about these cases. In this case, the media can directly influence the thinking of most people, transforming their view of the social world. If the media educate the audience about animal preservation as part of the conservation of natural resources, it is expected that the people's way of thinking about conservation will also change.
3. When a person's thinking has been transformed by the media, all forms of bad consequences in the long run may occur - not only can destroy a person's life, but also create social problems on a large scale. It is vital for media managers and institutions that oversee media such as the Press Council and the Indonesian Broadcasting

Commission to understand the issues of conservation of natural resources and their ecosystems, because media influence is very strong to the public.

4. Most individuals are particularly vulnerable to the media because in mass society they are disconnected and isolated from traditional institutions that previously protected them from media manipulation efforts. The ideology of mass media is often trapped in sensation and business, and this can jeopardize the perception of its audiences. In the context of conservation, these media attitudes could potentially endanger nature conservation, because it triggered the audiences to possess these animals. The higher the demand to own protected animals, the higher the hunting rate in the nature.
5. Social damage caused by the media may be improved by the establishment of a totalitarian social order. To protect the earth from damage, all parties need to support the preservation of the earth. Many people want to help preserve the earth, but often do not understand how to do. That is the reason why the media must also disseminate the right information about the behavior of the audience to keep the earth worth living.
6. The mass media can not escape from activities that undermine the higher forms of culture causing a general decline in civilization. In the case of the Holy Promise, there has been an irony when Raffi Ahmad happily and proudly showed his cousin's hobby in keeping of

protected animals. Because the mass media affects audiences cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally, it is the mass media that was responsible for those changes

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