

Political Environment in The Equality of Journalism Culture

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Abstract. Political dynamics may influence the perspective and behaviour of journalists. Therefore research on relationship between politics and journalism is very important, especially due to press as a democratic institution. The research scrutinizes politics in relation to journalism culture. Political factors are observed from three dimensions: the role of state, political consensus, and individual political preference of the journalists. Dealing with journalism culture, the study focuses on the notion of equality as one of public communication values.

Keywords: Politic; Equality; Journalism Culture; Objectivity; Access

1. Introduction

The 1998 reformation movement, it could be said, is a milestone of press freedom era in Indonesia [1,2]. Social political changes the the way journalists think, and then affect their works as well. The social and political system has a relation to practices of journalism, to the behavior of journalists [3, 4]. There are a lot of studies that talk about the influence of politics. One of the reasons is because the press is regarded as a democratic institution [5]. The way of thinking, values, practices of journalism, and the artifacts is called as journalism culture by Thomas Hanitzsch [6]. A number of studies have been conducted in terms of the relations between journalism culture and politics. Some dimensions of journalism culture introduced by Hanitzsch could be said also deals with politics, such as an institutional role consisting of intervention and power distance. Hallin and Mancini connect political factors to journalist professionalism. There are five dimensions included the role of the state and political consensus [7].

In this study, three of the political factors (the role of the state, political consensus, and personal political preferences) will be linked with journalism culture. The journalism culture selected is the culture that develops equality as one of the values of public communication. The dimensions of equality are showed by Mc Quail in Media Performance. That is seen from several elements namely equality access for senders, diversity content, and objectivity [8]. This dimension is considered as a value that is part of the journalism culture. Relation between political and journalism culture is very important to be studied considering the fact that if the politics influence journalists too much, it is worried that

public service will be affected, whereas access, diversity and objectivity need to be done by a journalist.

2. Methodology

This study uses qualitative method. This method functions more to explain not to measure [9]. Researchers explored the views of journalists about journalism culture seen from the value of objectivity, equality of access and diversity content by linking it to the political dimensions of state roles, political consensus and personal political preferences. The data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews to journalists in Semarang who often cover political and government news. Interviews were conducted in August-September 2017. Sources are mentioned in initial names.

3. Discussion

Ideal values are still the main basis when journalists do their duties. Based on the interviews, it is known that the values that become the basis of journalism work: 1. Professional attitude, 2. Helping the community 3. Defending the truth 4. Journalism ethics standards and legislation 5. Good deed, 6. Giving information to the public, 7. Bridging functions, 8. Voicing something that needs to be delivered correctly, 9. Promoting good values, 10. Responding to something injustice. Source SG mentions that good deed becomes the underlying value when he is doing his job. "I work for good deed intention," he said. So, when he is covering news, he will think whether it will bring bad or good impact. Professional value is found in all source. Being professional means providing facts and data to the public. For source HD, the underlying values are idealism values such as voicing something that needs to

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be delivered correctly. Source IN called journalism as a noble job and has a great influence on the society. The journalism spirit value to deliver to society, uphold the good values of society. Although at this moment he feels there is a value degradation. Source TG, the value comes from two things namely the code of ethics and Press Law that become the legal protection as well as become the corridor. Does this political environment affect the journalism culture consisting of values then is applied in politics? All sources said the political and cultural relations of journalists are not linear in one but two directions. Culture of the journalists can influence politics, and vice versa. Differences in the degree of influence, according to sources, among others, based on educational background, age and socio-cultural and intellectual ability. In addition, other source mention the influence is also because the closeness between journalists with the newssources and the open attitude the activeness of the political party itself.

Journalism culture in this research is limited to three things namely objectivity, openness of access and diversity. Previously, it is also needed to see the meaning of objectivity for journalists themselves. In general, objectivity is upheld by journalists while working. The objectivity in question is coverage based on fact, as it actually is, not added, just like facts in the field. The journalists try to achieve that objectivity by looking at the facts that occur, also by providing both side cover and multi angle covering by involving many perspectives. Source HD, called objectivity to not favor one party only.

A number of journalists mentioned the influence of the role of the state in objectivity, both in terms of supporting objectivity and in terms of conducting certain action that had the potential to indirectly reduce objectivity on journalists. According to source A, the role of the state can be done with the rules tool. While source SG and IN alleges that generally if there is a media whose owner or editor in chief tries to be economically (advertising) close to the government, it was possible that the policy will be handed down to journalists. Under these conditions, the objectivity is tested. However journalists can still use strategy by inserting news. While HD and AF think that there is no relation between the roles of the state on objectivity. While the source L says the authority of the country related to the current news policy is not too interfering, unlike in the past time before reformation era. Nowadays, it is freer, democratic, but still there are some restrictions that must be kept from the reporters themselves or from some parties or the media. In general, a number of journalists said there is influence of political consensus on objectivity.

Actually the journalists are always trying to be objective, but media decisions are sometimes different. Source TG, the journalist who is in the field is trying to be as objective as possible but again the decision is in the media and journalists are difficult to fight the media line, especially if that media owners are also political

actors. While the political consensus on objectivity according to source MT in general, it affects the objectivity. So is the source Is, if there is a closeness of editor in chief and owners of media with political parties, then the potential for media influence will be high. Nevertheless some journalists claim to have their own way to keep their distance and keep writing objectively. For source MT personal political preferences will depend on emotional closeness to the party. While source HD mentions personal preferences on objectivity will also see the background of journalists. The objectivity plays a role there. Source IN preference has its effect if journalist leaning to one of party then nuance of news can be different from other party. Source AJ attempts to limit personal relationships with news sources so as not to be influenced by objective endeavors even though the news source is not good to communicate with.

Regarding access equality, most sources said they actually have provided an opportunity for all political parties to enter their media. But the closeness of journalists and the media with news sources became one of the causes. While some other sources mentioned that opportunity provided is still not equal as stated by source ST. He thinks the political officers and government officers usually have easier access to the media than the common people so that their portion of their news can be greater. Source SG states the place he worked is very open, anyone can enter as long as meeting the requirements of the office.

Source MT mentions all political parties have equal value, equal access is ideal, but in practice there are some lack of portions given, such as a party that is close to the media, then the portion may be greater than any other party that may not be close either emotionally or in business. Source HD mentioned he does not see whether it is a big party or not, has large or no mass but he sees the capabilities of human resources in political parties. While sources AF mentions not all political parties go into the newspaper, but it is more likely on the party's attitude that is aggressive to publish, but there are some that only alleged-sloping. Source AF mentions the role of the state in equality of access.

The same thing is said by source MT. Although he added when talking about the government, he will see both the supportive and the others than that will affect the portion of the news. Source IN mentioned the role of the state for the disclosure of information is very important and in fact the state has given an opportunity to the public. But its utilization depends on the community. Journalists actually want to cover all. However, source L said that from the side of the news covering we indeed accommodate all but it depends on what is delivered or what the contents are reported. Source AF mentions the ruling party is usually more dominant. But it does not mean that small political parties are not published, it depends on how the packaging of the parties is. More specifically is to the active parties. Source AJ states the effort of dominant

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parties is actually felt. It depends on the journalists to avoid the dominance. Source IN, the dominant party exists, because sometimes small political parties sometimes hesitate or close themselves. Source MT, saw there are some political parties that have not been media literate yet. This should be concerned. Source AJ mentions there is no influence between political preferences and equality of access. He considers all political parties in equal way. In accordance with journalistic standards. Even sometimes although the news resource may be difficult to contact or less friendly, he is still trying to approach. Even the editor media will syringe if it writes too much on one political party.

While the source SG related to political preferences, he says he is not a political person and not fanatical with political parties, as long as it is good for the country. Source AF mentions there was no political tendency. Journalists will be happy if all political parties are open, so the news will be rich, but there are some political parties even do not open, when they were confirmed, whereas for the media will be profitable news if all decide to open.

Journalists mention at this time news diversity news content exists, it could be seen from the diverse news. Source MT mentioned the content is already diverse, any content has been covered, government policies and media needs, all covered from the bottom up. Source AF saw the diversity of news is needed, to make it not boring. Source IN said it is already diverse. Source MT said speaking of diversity content in the media. Source IN mentioned there is role of the state in developing diversity. Source HD says there is influence of political consensus to the diversity news of the media. That is political party by looking at the number of party followers with the number of readers as well. Another

aspect of that. Source MT called political parties need a place to appear, but it depends on their party. According to source In, the political consensus automatically influences. For example, if there is a big party, then its magnet is also larger. Source HD said no relations between his personal political preference with diversity of news content. His interests as journalist to only address the issues of society.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data and analysis displayed above, it could be concluded that the journalists seem to have ideal values when carrying out his journalistic duties. However, the journalism values that exist in the journalists themselves tend to interact with various factors, both internal factor (e.g educational and social background) as well as external factors (including the factor of media policy). Furthermore, this study also suggests that the factor of political environment (i.e the state, political consensus and journalists' personal political preference) seems to affect culture of journalism.

This implies that if media owners and/or editor in chiefs have a close relationship with top political elite, especially those from the rulling elite, then journalism culture could be undermine primarily in terms of equality. Put in another word objectivity, equality of access and diversity of content may face serious challenge. In addition, it is important to stipulate that even though journalists work at such like condition, journalists often test the situation by employing their own way to present objective news coverage, equality acces to any credible source, and also diversity of content.

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