

# Media and Ulama

## Qualitative Studies of Phenomenological Traditions Concerning the Perception of Islamic Organizations to Media Neutrality in Indonesia

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**Abstract**—Since the reformation era, Indonesian mass media has a fundamental change. Not only in the increasing number of printed and electronic mass media but also qualitatively changing the nature and diversity of mass media content. In this reformation era, Indonesia became one of the fastest growing mass media industry. The growth of mass media in Indonesia is not only in the form of foundations and only prioritizes the ideal aspect, but also as company form that supported by professional management systems and using of advanced technology products and leads to commercialism. In addition, the mass media of Indonesia increasingly diverse forms. The media manager is positioned as a neutral party in every product journalism it produces, because neutrality is one of the most important messages in the life of mass media in Indonesia. However, publish a work of mass media journalism. The question is, how does the Ulama view media neutrality in Indonesia? To answer this question, the researcher conducted the research using qualitative approach of phenomenology tradition. Through interviews and observations to the Indonesian Ulama the results can be categorized into three aspects: cognitive, affective, and conative.

**Keywords**— *media; mass; mass media; islam*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Mass media are social institutions and mass communication vehicles that carry out journalistic activities covering the searching, obtaining, possessing, storing, processing, and conveying information either in writing, voice, images, sound and images, and data and graphs or in other forms by using printed media, electronic media.

One of the spirits that need to be preserved in mass media is neutrality. But the reality is not so, many parties in Indonesia who looked at the life of mass media in Indonesia at this time has left a neutrality. The view may not be true or wrong totally, because admittedly or not lately many product considered not have the value of neutrality by the community because, on the other hand mass media managers are self-proclaimed carry it he tried in every product of journalism that will submitted to the community has tried to be as neutral as possible.

One element of society that often feel aggrieved by the mass media coverage of Indonesia is the Islamic Organization. Islamic mass organizations consider the Indonesian mass media are not neutral after reading, and listening to journalistic

product that produced by mass media, while mass media managers insist that journalistic product which has fulfilled ethical journalistic criteria and fulfill the element of neutrality, thus about the neutrality of mass media in Indonesia still considered diverse. Then the question arises how the organization Islam in Indonesia interpret about the reality of mass media? To answer that question, research was done by using qualitative approach of phenomenology tradition.

The theories are used in this research are social action theory, symbolic interaction, phenomenology theory, and dramaturgy. The behavior and opinions of the *ulama* in looking at the mass media in Indonesia can be observed from the theory of social action initiated by Max Weber, a sociologist from Germany. According to Weber, social action theory focuses more on the subjective meaning that the individual context. Weber's statement implies that all the behaviors shown by the *'ulama* as long as they give subjective meaning are social actions that can be shown openly or closely.

To gain a valid understanding of the subjective meanings of social action, not merely to give one an understanding of his or her own motives, but to the empathy that can be obtained through the process of symbolic interactionism. The thought of the symbolic interaction theory of Mead is what will help explain how the Islamic scholars see themselves, will also explain how the *ulama* as a social organization based on both their own and others' view of themselves.

The Symbolic Interaction Theory is inspired by Darwin's philosophy of pragmatism, behaviorism, and Darwinian theory of evolution. Fisher said, symbolic interaction requires the existence of internal social processes (in person) in the form of self-appointment and interpretation. In other words, it is human beings who have the role to interact symbolically. A human can translate the symbols and symbols have been mutually agreed upon.

Alfen Schutz's phenomenology theory also guides in this study. According to Schutz, the social world is an interpretive reality [1]. Human action and all the events that have occurred are considered as a meaningful reality. Individuals as members of the community share a basic perception of reality through their interaction or socialization with other community members.

The Individuals in this case members of Islamic organizations in interpreting neutrality, not only determine its meaning based on the private world, but also the meaning that is outside the individual, that is other members of the community.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research requires facts and field data descriptions holistically not to generalize, the descriptive method is used. With descriptive method, this research has a purpose to describe systematically, factual, and accurately about facts character related to phenomenon studied.

To describe the data and facts in the field as a whole and holistic, this research is most suitable to use qualitative approach because this research reveal a phenomenon that concerns reality, one of which is behavior and personal opinion joined in Islamic organization.

Qualitative approach includes into the naturalistic inquiry that makes Ulama in research, because loaded by natural or natural content according to what is found in the field. Qualitative research conducted in this study essentially observes people in their environment, interacting with them, trying to understand their language and interpretation of the surrounding world ([2] and Garna, 1999: 23). Thus, this qualitative approach essentially observes the organizers of Islamic organizations in their environment.

Creswell [3] defines qualitative as an inquiry into a social process. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports, detailed, views of informant, and conducts the study in natural setting. "

From Creswell's description gives the understanding that the qualitative approach lies in the focus of the issues studied. Thus, research related to the behavior of Islamic organizations is more appropriate to be approached with qualitative research that allows obtaining deeper data by asking not only what questions, but revealing what elements.

According to Creswell, in the qualitative study there are four techniques for data, i.e. observation (ranging from nonparticipant to open-ended), document (ranging from private to public), audio visual materials (including materials such as photographs, compact disks, and videotapes [3].

In this study, the authors carry out observations in accordance with what is suggested by Creswell, which observes the organizers of Islamic organizations. In addition, participant observation. That is, the author is not just watching, but joining with them. In this case, because participant observation is not emphasizing on what is done by organizers of Islamic mass organizations, but how the organizers of this Islamic organization behave. According to Mulyana [4] participant observation emphasizes the logic of discovery, a process aimed at suggesting concepts or constructing a theory based on human reality. Mulyana further said,

Participatory observations are considered appropriate to examine how humans behave and view the reality of their lives in their usual, routine, and natural environments. Researchers try to understand the meaning of research subjects to their own

behavior and other people's behavior towards objects and the environment, for example, what is important and not important to them and how they treat these objects [4].

In this participant observation, the authors live with them (Islamic organization managers), accompanying informants wherever their habits going, communicating or interviewing with top officials, with other famous people while doing the coverage.

Technically in the field, the implementation of participant observation can be done by the author simultaneously or not simultaneously to the informant. Conducted simultaneously when the informant was both in an activity, both in the formal and nonformal.

This participant observation may also reveal the behavior of informants who seem to be concealed. While perceptions can be extracted through interviews. Therefore, besides participant observation, data collection in this research is done by interview, that is activity to get information by doing question and answer with informant. That is, the authors conducted interviews to the informants, both using Sundanese and Indonesian

The interview is a question-and-answer process with a specific purpose, which is done by a minimum of two parties, i.e. Interviewer who asks questions and who is interviewee (interviewee), which provides answers to the question [5].

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews and participant observations, the five scholars (Islamic organizations) who were made informants, showed that, the *ulama* against the neutrality of Indonesian mass media could be categorized into three categories, namely cognitive, affective and conative. For more details will be described one by one.

### A. Ulama Cognition

The cognition in this study relates to the aspect of *ulama's* knowledge of the ownership of mass media in Indonesia and the relationship of Indonesian mass media with the existing institutions in Indonesia. Ownership and media relations with the institutions in Indonesia that can affect the neutrality of mass media in Indonesia.

According to three informants (Muhammadiyah, Perti, and PUI), media ownership in Indonesia can be private, corporate, and corporate ownership. The mass media is privately owned, partly owned by individuals who have large capital. There is hardly any mass media in Indonesia whose owners are not conglomerates. Only small media owned not by a conglomerate.

According to them, social organizations, both religious and non-religious or certain groups, are incapable of mastering the ownership of mainstream media; either printed, electronic, or online-based, because to be able to have it required a very large capital.

"The mass media in Indonesia is almost entirely owned by individuals who are related to power and money. There is

hardly any mass media in Indonesia whose owners are not conglomerates," they said.

In relation to Indonesia's mass media relations with the institution, these three informants said that there is a relationship between Indonesian mass media and institutions, such as with the government, society, other countries, informants, Islamic organizations and non-Islamic organizations.

In the media relations in Indonesia with the government, the media in the attention of informants is the mainstream media, that is for the television watched by a very large audience, as well as the newspaper read by many people, they work together well with the government, even collaborate with the government. Because they have the orientation to reap the benefits as much as possible, that is for business interests. To achieve these interests, the media cooperate with the government and even support the existence of government.

According to the three informants, the mass media relations in Indonesia with the speakers are, indeed, quite good. The media simply rewards people who have contributed to the media. The media is aware of the importance of the existence of resource persons who are the source of information on which the information is very valuable to the existence of the media, because without the existence of the speakers, the mass media will lose one element of the communication processes.

#### B. Ulama Affection

Affection in this study relates to aspects of feelings, emotions and attitudes that arise in the informant after gaining knowledge about mass media in Indonesia. According to three *ulama* who become informants (Muhammadiyah, Perti, and PUI), the media owned by organizations is usually difficult to compete when compared with media owned by personal, because the media owned by individuals have a very strong capital as well as mass media owned corporations, also have strong capital, and they dare to spend a huge investment and do not feel disturbed in high operational costs.

According to the affection of three informants, a strong corporation can own and control the mass media in Indonesia. The corporation is also the owner of certain persons who have no "concern" about the progress of society in the aspect of religiosity.

The orientation of the existence of mass media in the world, as well as in Indonesia, is for business interests, to gain the most profit without regard to the impact of media. According to the three informants, the future of the nation and religion is not a priority of the current mass media in Indonesia.

According to mainstream media informants aligned, even docked to the government. Therefore, it is difficult for people to get an objective information that is enlightening. News broadcasted by the media mostly sided with the government.

The existence of Indonesian mass media, especially the mainstream media with the community, according to the three informants, in fact the community is difficult to avoid the principle and mission of the mass media that is oriented to pragmatism, which is pursuing profit as much as possible, so

that people can only accept what is served by the mass media. The community cannot control the current role and function of the media, in both Indonesia and elsewhere.

According to the three informants, the link between mass media and Islamic social organizations, mass media in Indonesia still puts Islamic social organizations as consumers in order to achieve their goal, which is to gain as much profit as possible. The relationship between the two can be regarded as a relationship of consumers and producers.

#### C. Konasi Ulama

The conjunction in this study is related to the tendency of action, which has nothing to do with the motivation of informants after knowing about the *nereralitas* of mass media in Indonesia. The connective effect is concerned with intention, determination, effort, effort that tends to be an activity or action. Because the form of behavior, then as it has been alluded to, conative effect is often called behavioral.

Conative effects do not arise directly as a result of exposure to mass media, but are preceded by cognitive effects and / or affective effects. The emergence of a conative effect after cognitive and / or affective effects develops.

According to the mass media informant who has been the most owned by corporations and confirmed for the interest of certain groups, that's why Aisiyiyah published Aisiyiyah Voice, while Muhamaddiyah has Muhamaddiyah TV.

In relation to Indonesia's mass media relations with Islamic social organizations, Muhammadiyah strives not only to be a consumer, by establishing institutions or companies in the media field, but in reality it is very difficult to exist. Operational costs are huge in the media business.

In the mass media relations in Indonesia with the speakers, PUI cooperates with one of television (Global TV) by becoming a resource in an event. Media relations with resource persons in Indonesia, quite well. The media simply rewards people who have contributed to the media. The media recognizes the importance of the existence of the informants who are the source of information, which is very valuable information for the existence of the media. Without the existence of the speakers, the mass media will lose one element of the communication process.

According to the three informants (Muhammadiyah, Perti, and PUI), the Indonesian people are expected to behave smarter in producing entertainment, even though it takes energy and effort very seriously and takes a long time, but it must be done.

In the assessment of the three informants, not every event that presented by the mass media has a truth value. People are expected to not directly believe what the mass media is showing. Society must make efforts to check again, to recheck all the impressions in the mass media so as not to harm us all.

Meanwhile, the *ulama* informants from NU suggested that Indonesian mass media should write balanced news; do not directly judgment. Indonesian mass media were also advised not to write news headlines containing "provocations".

While the *ulama* of Aisyiyah appealed to Muslims to make mass media as a partner of *da'wah*. Content contemporary *dakwah* according to community needs and applicative.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The clerical view on the neutrality of mass media in Indonesia can be divided into three categories namely, cognition, affection and conation. Cognition of Indonesian scholars against the mass media of Indonesia, is informative for him. Based on clerical cognition, mass media can help audiences in studying useful information and developing cognitive skills. Through the mass media, obtained information from the cognition of the scholars about objects, people, or places.

The degree of affection effect is higher than the cognitive effect. The purpose of mass communication is not simply to tell the audience to be knowledgeable about something, but more so. After knowing the information it receives, the audience is expected to feel it. Ulama who became informants in this study can feel the existence of Indonesian mass media.

The conical component is concerned with intention, determination, effort, effort that tends to be an activity or action. The effect of conjunction received by scholars does not directly arise as a result of exposure to mass media, but preceded by cognitive effects and / or affective effects. The emergence of a conative effect after cognitive effects and or effective effect on the *ulama*.

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