

# Local Press Control in Implementation of Environmental and City Policy in Kendari City, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** *This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach in explaining the function of local press control in news framing of the Kendari bay reclamation policy implementation. The results of the study revealed that the local press as a public information media, had not yet carried out its control function in presenting a news frame about the beach reclamation policy of Kendari City. The direction of the news tends to favor the interests of the local authorities and does not advocate for the interests of the surrounding community. Local press reporting that is not critical of the reclamation policy makes the city government more free to carry out sea fill activities that cause siltation, sea water pollution, disruption of marine life, and have an impact on major flooding every rainy season even though the rainfall intensity is not high.*

**Keywords:** press, policy, framing, environment

## 1. Introduction

Policy is an action taken by officials who have the authority. Policy as a way of acting intentionally by an actor or set of actors to deal with a problem or concern (Smith & Larimer, 2009; in Bake et al, 2019). Good and ideal policies for the community are the actions of the authorities who can solve complex problems or problems, even though what they do sometimes is contrary to higher rules (Sobur, 2002).

This explanation contradicts the policies of the Kendari City government, the leadership era of Asrun (Mayor) and Musadar Mapasomba (Deputy Mayor), who since 2015 held the Kendari bay reclamation policy as an option to address the flooding problem that continues to plague every rainy season with high intensity. The fact is that the Kendari bay reclamation activity actually hampered the speed of rain water entering the bay, and resulted in almost all residential areas in areas that are low inundated, not including public road bodies. The reclamation policy which became the priority of the city government did not solve the problem of flooding and was not pro-people because of the orientation of the bay hoarding to increase the land area of the bay. Because it is not pro-people, the reclamation policy received a rejection reaction from the people of Kendari. Despite the rejection, the reclamation project, whose budget uses the Kendari City budget, has continued until 2017.

In the implementation of local government policies, the role of the press, especially the local press, should ideally be a media capable of guarding every rare policy implementation so that the results benefit the people. That is where the press control function as a free press plays and plays a role in controlling public policy implementation (Siebert, et al, 1963; in Kusumaningrat, 2016). The press as a public mouthpiece through its control function should appear to publish public reactions to the implementation of the policy. The community proposes the construction of adequate drainage as an appropriate step to answer the problem of flooding that continues to hit the city of Kendari in every

rainy season. However, the hope of the community did not get any appreciation from the city government, including the local press, did not support the news regarding the need for drainage development in the Kendari bay area.

The contents of the news content released by the local press, more support the policy of the City of Kendari government to reclaim, while the public's critical response to the government policy which is considered not to answer the problem of flooding in the City of Kendari does not get support from the local press. This can be seen from the news frame that was sent down by two influential local presses, the KendariPos Daily and the Southeast Sulawesi People's Daily, more intensely raising the news theme in support of the city government when the polemic reclamation policy took place. It is therefore interesting to examine the extent to which the local press carries out its control function towards the implementation of the reclamation policy in Kendari City. The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the function of local press control in reporting on the implementation of the way the press does the news frame about the implementation of the reclamation policy in Kendari City

## 2. Theory Study

### a) The Press in a Democratic Country

In a democratic state system, freedom of the press is an essential requirement and at the same time becomes the main characteristic that illustrates that democracy is truly carried out consistently, in addition to law enforcement that is carried out consistently and fairly (Dahl, 1998). Press institutions are one means for citizens to channel their thoughts and opinions and have an important role in a democratic country in a sustainable manner. The essence of democracy according to Bake (2015) is the opportunity for the public to express their aspirations and opinions individually or through representative institutions to influence government decisions. The delivery channel can use various institutions, especially the press or the media

mas, including existing political institutions. In an ideal democracy according to Huntington (1994), and Dahl (1998) and Sorensen (1993) and Held (2006) that people's participation is needed that arises from political awareness to be involved and contribute to the administration of government, without being mobilized. The community is given the right to participate in determining government policy steps, especially in the local government.

One of the characteristics of a democratic country is having a free and responsible press as an institution that oversees the running of government in the framework of realizing good governance. Democracy can develop well according to Dahl (2004) if the press develops independently, and there is room and opportunity for every citizen to express his aspirations to influence policy-making decisions. To convey aspirations a strong communication network is needed between decision makers and citizens in utilizing public space. In this case, according to Richard, et al, in Little John (1996: 305) the press is very important in its position as a medium of communication between the people and reciprocal decision makers. In state organizations, especially those who adhere to a democratic system, there are interest groups that interact with each other where each party has different interests and roles in the administration of the state. The communication network according to Najib (2011) has the role of conveying information in decision making in groups or government organizations.

#### **b) Press and Public Policy News Framing**

The presence of the press in the administration of public policy has two dichotomous and conceptually dilemma positions. First, the press can play a role or function by the owner of power as a media in communicating every policy to all stakeholders (Edward IV, 2004). For the government, the press becomes a tool and a means of conveying information to smooth every step in the implementation of its policies, starting from the process of formulation, determination, implementation and evaluation of government policies. In this context, the press does not have independence in delivering the news, but only becomes an instrument of power. Therefore, any published information is sorted by government staff, especially those affiliated with the government, press funded by the government or press companies that are co-opted by the government due to financial dependency and strong ideological ties between the press and the ruling regime. Second, as part of civil society elements who have a strategic position in advocating for government policies in accordance with the social responsibilities of the press as stated Siebert, et al (1963) in Kusumaningrat (2016).

These two conditions can be observed from among others, the way the mass media or the press do news settings and make news frames on policy issues that are published to stakeholders. If in the first condition, the issue and theme of the news has an orientation to provide support for any government action in implementing policies. This is reflected in the way the news headlines or themes that are egalitarian, moderate and even propaganda in conveying every success of the government. While in the second condition, where the press as a government controller always sees the weak side of the policy, criticizes, and

provides information that is nuanced by the opposition to any government action in carrying out its policy. This is illustrated by the theme of public policy reporting that raises contradictory themes or headlines, provides objective criticism and constructs news according to the actual data.

According to Entman (1993) and Eriyanto (2002: 9), news framing is illustrated through two major dimensions, namely the selection of issues and highlighting aspects. Issue selection is the process of making information more meaningful, more interesting, meaningful or more memorable to the public. The reality that is presented prominently has a greater likelihood of being noticed and influences the audience in understanding a reality. Framing analysis is used to see how the media construct reality and is used to see how events are understood and framed by the media (Eriyanto, 2002: 10). There are two main framing essences namely how events are interpreted and how facts are written.

Framing analysis according to Entman (1993) and Eriyanto (2002; 11), is a text analysis method as well as quantitative content analysis, but both have different characteristics. In quantitative content analysis, the emphasis is on the content of a communication message / text. While the focus of framing analysis is the formation of messages or the meaning of the text. Framing looks at how messages or texts are constructed by journalists and the media and how to present them to the public. Framing analysis is the latest version of the discourse analysis approach, specifically for analyzing media texts.

The idea of framing was first put forward by Peterson in 1995. At first framing was interpreted as a conceptual structure or set of beliefs that organized political views, policies, and discourses and which provided the discourse of standard categories to appreciate reality. In the communication perspective, framing analysis is used to dissect ways or ideologies of the media when constructing facts (Etman, 1994; in Eriyanto, 2002; 11). This analysis examines the selection, highlighting and linking of facts into the news to make it more meaningful, more interesting, more means or more remembered, to accompany the interpretation of the audience according to his perspective. According to Robert Entman analysis of framing built in news publications uses four aspects as benchmarks, defining problems, diagnosing cases, building moral character, and treatment recommendations.

### **3. Research Methods**

The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach, using empirical data from the local press (KendariPos Daily and Rakyat Sultra Daily) which are the two most influential local media in Kendari City. Primary data were obtained through interviews with informants from the editor in chief, government elements and local media observers. Data analysis used the evaluation approach of news framing, interpreting texts and compiling news categories on reclamation policies. Stages of data analysis are sorting news, evaluating news texts, categorizing news content, presenting, interpreting news content, critical analysis and concluding frames for delivering news

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Speaking of policy, what is in everyone's mind is the answer to a problem that is happening, but it returns to the moral alignments of the policy-making officials themselves. Because not a few officials in the city government, use their authority to make a project that is a source of income for the officials themselves along with the convention, through the receipt or acquisition of project fees determined by the city government. If seen from the facts that exist in the midst of the many people who voiced refuse the development of the Kendari bay reclamation project, because it was considered not to touch the urgent needs of the community, and the media through its control function had taken part to publicize the complaints and actions of the refusal, but the development process of the project This will continue from 2015 to 2017.

In accordance with the analysis and evaluation of news framing published by the KendariPos Daily and Rakyat Sultra Daily media, as in the evaluation of news framing according to Robert N Entman (1993), it is known that from the four aspects or dimensions of measuring tools to understand news framing, the definition problem process leads to the disclosure of policy implementation problems. which is normative, raising the issue that is favored by the government, the diagnosis of the causes of the news is more directed to seeking information support that reinforces that the reclamation policy needs to be developed.

Moral judgment that is formed does not describe the position of the press as an institution that should advocate policies for the benefit of the public or the community, but only supports whatever the government does in connection with coastal reclamation is justified by the local media and is well reported in supporting the implementation of the reclamation policy. Giving recommendations does not lead to critical recommendations but rather normative recommendations for the sustainability of the reclamation project implementation. This was illustrated by, among other things, several headlines published by two local presses that raised the issue of the Kendra Bay reclamation policy. In the aspect of moral judgment, the local press collaborated with Kendari City government officials in publicizing the implementation of the Kendari bay reclamation project. Two elements, namely the local media and the city government, are more in favor of personal interests and benefit from the reclamation project fee than entrepreneurs working on the Kendari bay reclamation project. In this case, local media positioned itself as an authoritarian press because it collaborated with local government authority, as Siebert stated. , Peterson and Scharmm (1963) in Kusumaningrat (2016).

Local media tends to ignore the aspirations of the people, do not preach the will of the community in establishing policies to deal with flood cases in the city of Kendari. From the interview results it was revealed that the aspirations of the people want a policy of improving drainage to overcome flooding rather than by a policy of reclamation and / or sea accumulation in Kendari. The disregard for the aspirations of the public in media reporting, as well as the tendency of two local media to favor the government in reporting the reclamation policy shows that the function of press control is

not demonstrated by the two local press studied. The justification aspect of the lack of local press control over the reclamation policy is that the local media ignores the critical attitude of the citizens who consider the Kendari Bay reclamation project as not benefiting the people, because it does not answer the flood problem in Kendari City. The Kendari Bay reclamation project has actually made rain water obstructed to flow into the sea in Kendari Bay as a downstream area for flood water storage to the high seas in the coastal city of Kendari.

From the results of the evaluation and specific study as well as in-depth analysis of the contents of the news text contained in the two local print media in conveying news framing, it has not shown its control function properly. One feature of the media control function as a free and liberal press according to Siebert, et al (1963) and Entman (1993) is marked by his critical attitude towards phenomena that do not favor the interests of society. The media tends to deliver news in the form of constructive criticism and recommendations on government programs that do not favor the interests of the community as depicted in the preaching of the Kendari bay reclamation project that does not benefit the surrounding community. News that was revealed in two local media did not carry out any criticism and control over the implementation of the policy. The news delivered in connection with the reclamation case is nuanced in favor of the interests of the local government. This illustrates that the two local print media including the authoritarian press according to the concept of Siebert, et al (1963) illustrated from the title of the two local print media referred to that support every step of the implementation of the Kendari bay reclamation policy conducted by the Kendari city government.

After framing the environmental news especially the reclamation of the Kendari bay, the publication of two observed newspapers, the KendariPos daily and the People's Southeast Sulawesi daily, for a period of three years, from the January - December 2015 issue to 2017 until the 2017 tendency for news to favor the interests of the government or the authorities. This can be seen in the number of published news, the speakers only involve government elements in the interview, from the Mayor of Kendari City to technical officials at the head of the office level. It is very rare to publish critical news from organizations or communities or environmentalists, as representatives of the community in voicing the interests of the people in connection with the implementation of the Kendari Bay reclamation project. The community rejects the reclamation project because some reasons include not resolving the flood problem but instead aggravating the condition of flooding in larger volumes during the rainy season, the use of a useless budget, as well as the nuances of corrupt practices in the implementation of the Kendall Bay reclamation project.

Mass media alignments are created because there are various interests that play in the local media or press. Besides the ideological interests between the community and the state, the local mass media institutions are also veiled with other interests, namely the interests of capital from or business owners, the interests of the sustainability of employment for employees, and so on. That happened almost in all print

media, especially the two local media that were observed, namely the Fajar Group which included the KendariPos Daily and the Southeast Sulawesi People who were the holding of the Fajar Group. The source of income from funding from these two local presses is that around 70.00 percent comes from the government as the policy maker, which is obtained from speech advertisements, publication cooperation contracts, and newspaper subscriptions. So that good partnership relationships with leaders in the region need to be built, starting with the governor, district head and mayor (interview with LM Suardi 2018, director of Fajar Holding).

According to Suardi(2018), if the local media develops a critical attitude towards the city government then they will not get financial support from elements of the city government. For media that applies a critical attitude from every news they release, it is certain that the media will not get a share or allotment of publication collaboration with the government agency they criticize. That is what makes the media always try to be in line with the direction of government policy. As a result of the media alignments in reporting to the government resulted in increased government confidence to continue the development of reclamation because they feel supported by various parties including the local press, although it is not profitable for the people around the Kendari bay.

## 5. Conclusions

The results of the analysis and discussion can be concluded that the local press news framing in publishing the Kendari bay reclamation policy does not show its character as an independent media, advocating for policy and controlling the implementation of local government policies. The local media in Kendari actually showed its support for the government in the case of the implementation of the Kendari bay reclamation policy, by delivering news that benefited the government, especially the local authorities, by building a news frame as if the reclamation policy benefited the people, resolving the flooding problem and illustrating the success of the government in the development of the system. In terms of the fact, the reclamation policy is getting resistance from the community, because it does not provide a solution to the problem of flooding in Kendari City until now.

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