

**From Instrument to Agent: the Metamorphosis of Media's Role in Curbing Corruption  
in Indonesian Politics  
(Case Study on the Incident of Corruption by Kendal Regent Hendy Boedoro, Kendal  
Regency, Central Java Province 2005-2006)**

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***Dari Instrumen Menjadi Agen : Metamorfosis Peran Media dalam Membatasi Korupsi  
Politik di Indonesia***

Sebuah studi yang dilakukan oleh Rick Stapenhurst (2000) di Amerika Serikat dan di beberapa negara Amerika Latin seperti: Equador, Venezuela dan Brazil menemukan bahwa media masa memainkan peranan penting dalam pemberantasan korupsi. Akan tetapi, pertanyaan patut diajukan tentang apakah media masa memainkan peran sebagai agen ataukah sekedar instrumen dalam pemberantasan korupsi. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan tersebut dalam konteks politik Indonesia, studi ini melihat insiden korupsi oleh Bupati Kendal Hendy Beodoro sebagai studi kasus.

Sebagai metode, studi ini melakukan triangulasi metode dengan mengombinasikan analisis isi quantitative terhadap 2 (dua) surat kabar yaitu Suara Merdeka dan Kompas dan wawancara mendalam terhadap para jurnalis, aktivis Civil Society Organization's (CSO's), aparat pemerintah dan aparat penegak hukum.

Berdasarkan studi kasus yang ada, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa media massa tidak hanya mampu berperan sebagai instrumen. Namun, juga sebagai agen dalam pemberantasan korupsi. Pertama, media massa memainkan peran sebagai instrumen CSO's dalam pemberantasan korupsi pada awal gerakan anti korupsi. Kedua, media massa melakukan metamorfosis dengan mentransformasikan dirinya dari instrumen menjadi agen di tengah perjalanan gerakan anti korupsi yang ada. Peran media massa ini kemudian secara meyakinkan menjadi faktor kunci bagi keberhasilan gerakan anti korupsi yang terjadi untuk mengirimkan Hendy Beodoro ke penjara.

Akan tetapi, satu hal yang juga perlu dicatat di sini, peran media masa sebagai instrumen ternyata lebih dominan diperankan daripada peran sebagai agen. Hal ini disebabkan oleh konteks sosial politik media massa di Indonesia di mana pembatasan terhadap kebebasan media masih terus terjadi di setiap rezim pemerintahan di Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** media masa, metamorfosis, instrumen, agen, pemberantasan, korupsi.

### A. Introduction

Studies done by many scholars in many different countries found that culture is one of the most important factors which explain the practice of corruption (Lipset, 2000; Treisman, 2000, Verma, 1999). Basically, those studies argued that long-life cultural tradition has more influence to the practice of corruption than any other factors such as institutions and current policies. Furthermore, those studies suggested the importance of cultural transformation as a way to combat corruption which is to change phenomena of corruption from "*a way of life*" to be "*a fact of life*". Referring to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), which was formed in Hong Kong in 1974, the aims of transformation of the culture of corruption are as follows (in Cameron, 2005, 29):

"...to change people's behavior so that they will not engage in corrupt behavior *initially* for fear of detection (deterrence), *later* because they cannot (prevention), and *yet later* because they do not wish to (attitude change).

In parallel with those above studies, many scholars also argued that the long cultural tradition plays very important role in explaining corruption in Indonesian's politics (King, 2006; Smith, 1970; Snape, 1999; Xin, 2004). Essentially, they argued that the practice of corruption went along the Indonesian history. Corruption has been commonly practiced since the ancient times when Indonesia was still in the form of kingdom until the recent times when Indonesia has gained its independence for decades. Thus, the practice of corruption remains massively practiced despite the change in its political

regimes. Furthermore, those scholars argued that the basic values of that cultural tradition can be traced in the patrimonial culture at the Javanese Kingdom era.

According to Anderson (1972), in this patrimonial culture, the king (the ruler) has a central position in society and is viewed as having a right to accumulate properties for himself as there is no separation between the public and private property. Furthermore, the prosperity of the king is perceived as the prosperity of the society. As a consequence of this view, corruption is seen as the consequence of the view about power within society.

In the view of corruption as a matter of culture, mass media has been believed as an effective agent for cultural transformation (McQuail, 2005). Mass media not only can be seen as a mirror of cultural tradition within the society but also as the part of the society as well as its culture. Consequently, as the part of the society, the mass media can also change the culture of the society in which it exists. In parallel with McQuail, Anderson also argues that mass media plays very important role in the cultural transformation (Anderson, 1997). Meanwhile, study done by Stapenhurst (2000) in the United States as well as three Latin America Countries; Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil found that mass media plays a critical role in curbing corruption. The mass media not only raised public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies...but also investigates and reports incidences of corruption, exposed corrupt officials, prompted investigations by official bodies, reinforced the work and legitimacy of both parliaments and their anti-corruption bodies and pressured for change to laws and regulations that



create a climate favorable to corruption (Stapenhurst, 2000: i).

Referring to Stapenhurst's, this research tries to examine the role of mass media in curbing corruption within the specific context of Indonesian politics.

## B. Method

This study employs the case of corruption of Kendal Regent, Hendy Boedoro. This case is chosen because of these following reasons: *first of all*, this case is one of the biggest incident of corruption in Indonesian politics during the decentralization era. It involves the public budget as much as 30 billion rupiahs. *Secondly*, Hendy Boedoro was the first Regent in Indonesia whose case of corruption is taken over by the National Commission on Corruption Eradication (KPK). This KPK's take over is because of the failure of the local judicial process to handle this incident. This failure is due to the regulation number 32/2004 about Local Government in the article 36 saying that prior to investigating a Local Leader, the judicial apparatus has to get the permission from the President first. It has made the judicial process stuck in that point. This President's permission also became the reason of the stagnancy of the judicial process towards Regent or Major close to Kendal such as the case of Purworejo Regent and Semarang Major. *Thirdly*, the success of the anti corruption movement to send Hendy Boedoro to jail by bringing KPK in to take over the case actually shows the success of the local anti corruption movement. Meanwhile, one of the important factors that results in this success is the involvement of the mass media.

The term of mass media in this research refers to the printed media i.e. newspaper. Therefore, the content analysis will be done to the content of the

newspapers. Newspaper is chosen because it has the most important meaning for the CSO's anticorruption movement<sup>1</sup>. Based on the interview to the CSO's activists<sup>2</sup>, whether or not the newspaper covered their movements was a very important thing for them. The fact that the form of newspaper is in a printed form enables them to reread them over time, as well as record and duplicate them much easier than the radio or television does. When the newspapers covered their movements or reported the latest development of the case in the judicial process, those CSO's activists always read it, collect the clippings of the newspapers it and disseminate it to all other activists as well as the people. By doing those things, they're hoping that it can encourage these activists to keep on fighting and inspired other people to join the anti corruption movement.

Meanwhile, even though there are many of newspapers covered the incident by Hendy Bodeoro, this research will focus on two newspapers which are *Kompas* and *Suara Merdeka*. These two newspapers are chosen because they represent both local (*Suara Merdeka*) and national newspaper (*Kompas*). *Suara*

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<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is realized that the role of another media such as television is also important.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Novel the CSO's activists from GNPK, in December, 5, 2008 as well as interview with Bukhori, the CSO's activists from Pattiro in December, 13, 2008, as well as interview with Endro Arintoko, the CSO's activists from FKPPK, in January, 14, 2009. Endro is the person who still keeps all of the clippings of the newspapers related to the incident of Hendy Boedoro. In one of the interviewes, he saw and borrowed that collection of newspaper's clippings to the researcher.

Merdeka is the biggest newspaper in Central Java, a province in which Kendal Regency is located. This newspaper is head quartered in Semarang, a city next to Kendal which is also the Capital City of Central Java Province. Meanwhile, *Kompas* is the biggest newspaper in Indonesia headquartered in Jakarta.

The method used to analyze the content of the media in this thesis is content analysis. In addition, this research also used indepth interview to analyze the content of the mass media in its context which is the anti corruption movement. The sampling units of the content analysis is all articles in *Kompas* and *Suara Merdeka* since the first time it covers the incident in the newspaper until when it is taken over by KPK. The interview is directed to the journalists, the CSO's activists, the KPK's members, the civil servant as well as the ordinary people.

### C. Result

#### 1. Important Role of the Mass Media

From the first time the incident was reported by the mass media in July, 2005 until when the incident was reported as taken over by KPK in October, 2006, there has been 24 of *Suara Merdeka's* articles and 23 of *Kompas's* articles reporting the incident. The content analysis shows that the mass media does support the anti corruption movement by doing these following things: reporting the exposure of the CSO's movement about the existence of corruption of Hendy Boedoro, framing the article in CSO's movement theme, reporting the incident in such an unfavorable orientation and monitoring the work of the judicial bodies. The first article of both *Suara Merdeka* and *Kompas* would illustrate that argument.

In *Suara Merdeka*, the first article published toward the issue was about the civil society exposure which was reported in July, 8, 2005 entitled: "*Warga Kendal Geruduk Mapolda Jateng*" (Kendal's Citizen Came at The Office of Central Java's Police). The following content of the article would illustrate it more clearly as follow:

#### **Warga Kendal Geruduk Mapolda Jateng dan Kejati**

Tuntut Percepat  
Pemberantasan Korupsi

#### **Bupati Dilaporkan**

Sementara itu, secara terpisah kemarin, Aliansi Masyarakat Kendal (AMK) juga melaporkan dugaan korupsi dana pinjaman BPD Jateng dan dana APBD 2003-2004 sebesar Rp 45 miliar yang dilakukan Bupati Kendal Hendy Boedoro ke Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK). Dugaan korupsi yang dilakukan Boedoro tersebut, dilaporkan oleh Joko Kartono dari AMK. Dia mengatakan, sebelumnya mereka sudah melaporkan ke Kejaksaan dan kepolisian setempat, tapi tidak ditanggapi. "Sekarang kami adukan ke KPK," ujarnya.

#### **(Kendal Citizen Came at the Regional Office of Central Java's Police and Attorney**

Crying for the  
Acceleration of  
Corruption Eradication



### **The Regent Was Reported**

Meanwhile, took a place separately from that demonstration, The Alliance of Kendal Community (AMK) was also reported the allegation of corruption on the loan from the Central Java's Bank and Kendal APBD's budget 2003-2004 as much as 45 billion rupiahs which is done by the Kendal Regent Hendy Boedoro to the Commission on Corruption Eradication (KPK). That corruption was reported by Joko Kartoko from AMK. He said that, they have previously reported their finding to the local Police and Prosecutor but didn't get any response. "Now we report it to KPK," he says.

.....

From the title and the content of the article above it can be seen that the theme of the article is about the civil society movement and it reports it in an unfavorable way. Corruption is perceived as a negative practice, therefore the content of the article supports the idea of the CSO's movement. Furthermore, the article above also tells the reader about the exposure of corruption by the CSO's which was reported to the KPK and explicitly mentioned the name of Hendy Boedoro.

Meanwhile, the first article of *Kompas* toward the issue is also about the corruption movement entitled: "Korupsi

Kendal: WARGA ADUKAN DUGAAN KASUS KORUPSI BEKAS BUPATI (Kendal's Corruption: The Citizen Report the Case of Corruption's Allegation of the Former Regent) which is published in July, 22, 2005. Furthermore, this following first paragraph of the article would illustrate it more clearly:

#### **Korupsi Kendal**

**WARGA ADUKAN  
DUGAAN KASUS  
KORUPSI BEKAS  
BUPATI**

Semarang, Kompas  
Puluhan warga dan pegawai negeri sipil (PNS) yang tergabung dalam Forum Komunikasi PNS Peduli Kendal (FKPPK), Kamis (21/7), berunjuk rasa di Kepolisian Daerah Jawa Tengah dan Kejaksaan Tinggi Jateng. Mereka mengadakan dugaan korupsi yang dilakukan bekas Bupati Hendy Boedoro selama 1999-2005. Akibatnya, Pemkab Kendal tahun 2004 mengalami deficit sebesar Rp. 72 miliar.

#### **Kendal's Corruption**

**THE CITIZEN REPORT  
THE ALLEGATION OF  
CORRUPTION OF THE  
FORMER REGENT**

Semarang, Kompas  
Tens of citizen and civil servant who are associated in The Civil Servant's Communication's Forum Care for Kendal (FKPPK), Thursday (21/7, did a

demonstration in Central Java's Police's office and Central's Java's Public Prosecutor's office. They report the allegation of corruption which was done by the former Regent Hendy Boedoro which took in charge since 1999-2005. As a result (of that corrupt practice), Kendal's Government suffered from budget's deficit as big as 72 billion rupiahs in 2004.

From the title and the content of the *Kompas's* article above it can be seen that the theme of the article is about the civil society movement. The theme is not only reflected from the title but also from the content of the article. Meanwhile, the name of Hendy Boedoro which is suspected as corruptor has been explicitly revealed since the first paragraph, meaning that it does report the exposure of the CSO's movement. Furthermore, the article reports the incident in such an unfavorable orientation by saying that corruption has made the state suffered budget's deficit.

This media media's coverage has important meaning for the success of the anti corruption movement as follows: *first of all*, the mass media has kept the spirit of those activists burning. The demonstration toward Hendy in the charge of double budget corruption was last in 1,3 years since July 2005 (when the corruption was officially reported by ASA to KPK) untill October 2006 (when KPK finally took over the charge). During this 1,3 years those activists keep doing the demonstration every three weeks. The demonstration was done in various place: Kendal, Semarang and Jakarta. What made this activist has the energy to do that very long

demonstration? Here is where the mass media played role: the media coverage kept the motivation of those activists. Everytime the mass media reported their demonstrations, it gave them a feeling that their voice has been heard and the public has known. By being covered by the mass media, it was no longer only the inner circle of the activists who knew about the corruption of Hendy but the public also knew it. For those activists, everytime they saw their demonstration in the mass media, they feel like regain the new energy to do the next demonstration. Therefore, everytime the media covered their demonstration, they always documented it, duplicated it and disseminated it not only among those activist but also to the public. They gave the copy of the news coverage on the street, on the mosque during the Friday's prayers, among the government's official and on the Hendy's basis.

*"....Pemberitaan media sangat membuat kami termotivasi. Membuat semangat kami tetap terjaga. Kalau aksi kami masuk koran biasanya kami akan klipng itu dan kita share kepada teman-teman. Kalau tidak diberitakan rasanya getun (menyesal--red). Ya, buat apa kita teriak-teriak kalau nggak ada yang dengar?...Nah berita yang masuk di koran itu biasanya kita fotokopi dan kita bagikan di pinggir-pinggir jalan, ke kantor-kantor atau di masjid di sela-sela sholat jumat. Agar masyarakat tahu tentang keberadaan hal itu..."<sup>3</sup>*  
(...the media coverage really motivated us and keep our spirit burning. If our demonstration is covered by the newspaper we

<sup>3</sup> Interview ith Endro Arintoko, one of the CSO's activists in March, 3, 2009



are used to document it and then we shared it to our friends. When it happened that our demonstration was not covered, we really felt disappointed. What's the point of crying for (the anticorruption toward hendy) if nobody heard?..We also shared the copy of the newspapers (that reported our demonstration on the existence of corruption) to the people on the street, to the people in government's office and to the mosques during Friday's prayer...)." "

Secondly, the mass media has inspired more activists to join the movement. There were actually many intellectuals and activists who have a high political awareness in Kendal, but not all of them know about the existence of corruption by Hendy. Nevertheless the media coverage has made those activists aware about the existence of corruption and begin to pay attention and seriously discuss about the issue. Many of those then decided to join the movement and went down to the street involved in the demonstrations. The involvement of Novel, one of the activists of Muhammadiyah is one of the examples:

*"...Saya mendapatkan sms dari kawan bahwa Suara Merdeka baru saja memblow up kasus hendy. Dan itu kemudian saya baca dan membuat saya tergerak. Kok begini ya kondisinya. Tidak bisa dibiarkan. Lalu saya dikusikan dengan kawan-kawan yang memiliki keprihatinan yang sama dan akhirnya kami mulai melakukan aksi-aksi itu..."*

(...I just get a message from my friend that Suara Merdeka has just

exposed the corruption of Hendy. I read it and it inspired me. We might not do nothing in this situation. Then I discussed it with another activists who have the same concern. And finally we begin to do the demonstrations...)"<sup>4</sup>

The interview above illustrated clearly how the mass media has inspired more activists to join the movement. The same things are also admitted by another informants such as Bukhori<sup>5</sup> and Endro Arintoko<sup>6</sup>.

Third, it inspired the ordinary people to support the movement. Besides those little number of activists who has a high political awareness in Kendal, the media coverage has also inspired the ordinary people also supported the movement in term of fund raising. The funding of the demonstration in Kendal didn't come from the elite or some certain individuals but it was generated from the ordinary people which voluntarily gave some of their money. They did not go down to the street to join the demonstration but they were willing to support was by giving the donation in the fundraising of the movement. This action was done because of their awareness about the existence of corruption. In this point, the mass media did have much contribution to build this kind of awareness.

Fourth, besides supporting the work of the CSO's movement, media also monitors the work of the local judicial bodies. The media reports the development of judicial process day by

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Novel, one of the CSO's activists in June, 10, 2010

<sup>5</sup> CSO's activists from Pattiro, Kendal in the interview in December, 13, 2008

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Endro in March, 3, 2009

day and, in case the local judicial official fails to handle the incident, the media

pressure the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to take over the charge.

This media monitor can be seen from the fact that most of the media's article are about the development on the judicial process in the local level as illustrated in the table below:

No	Newspaper	Period	Number of Articles	Theme
1	Suara Merdeka	July, 8, 2005- October, 30, 2006	24 articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 CSO's movement</li> <li>• 1 IMT</li> <li>• 16 Legal Theme (12 Local, 4 KPK)</li> </ul>
2	Kompas	July, 22, 2005- October, 21, 2006	23 articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 CSO's movement</li> <li>• 2 IMT</li> <li>• 18 Legal Theme (14 Local, 4 KPK)</li> </ul>

From the table above, it can be seen that 16 of *Suara Merdeka's* articles from July, 8, 2005 until October, 30, 2006 are framed in the legal theme (the judicial process). Meanwhile, from those 16 articles, 12 of them is reporting the judicial process in the local level. The same thing happens in *Kompas* in which 18 of its articles (since July, 22, 2005 - October, 21, 2006) is framed in legal theme with 14 of them reporting the judicial process in the local level.

Fifth, the media coverage also pressures the KPK to take over the charge. The fact that media has been continuously reporting the incident in the local as well as national level has been the important consideration for the KPK to take over the charge. It is an evident that the local judicial bodies have failed to handle the charge quickly in one hand, and that the incident has taken a lot of public attention in another hand. Based on the law number 30/2002 about the KPK article 9 point b, it is said that the take over by KPK is done when the judicial process by regular body is going slowly without a rational reason.

Furthermore, in the article 11 point b, it was said there that the KPK would handle the case of corruption that raised concern and attention from the public. One of the indications that an issue raised public attention is when the issue gets a lot of media coverage. This interpretation of the law is like what M Jasin, one of the KPK has told:

"Ya, banyaknya pemberitaan media merupakan salah satu indikasi bahwa suatu tindak pidana korupsi telah meresahkan masyarakat. Semakin banyak pemberitaan maka semakin tinggi atensi di sana. (the massive media coverage is indeed one of the indication that a case of corruption raised public concern. The more media's coverage, the more the public gives attention.)"<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the role of the mass media is merely the instrument of the Civil Society's movement. It can be seen from the first article that is covered by the two newspaper above showing

<sup>7</sup> Interview with M Jasin, February, 27, 2009



that its first coverage on the incident is about the CSO's report and finding. The media simply reports the findings of another institution, meaning that the initiative of the exposure of corruption doesn't come from the media itself. This lack of initiative is recognized by the journalists of the two mass medias as follows:

"....saya mulai meliput karena pada mulanya memang saya melihat ada demonstrasi di Polda terkait masalah korupsi itu, setelah itu barulah saya meliput secara berkelanjutan (*I report the incident in the beginning is indeed because I see the demonstration (of the CSO's) in the office of Central Java's Police. After that, I report it continuously.*)"<sup>8</sup>

In this chapter, I would discuss the role played by the mass media. A question to be answered is on whether the media plays role as an agent or just as instrument of the civil society in the anti corruption movement?

## 2. The Metamorphosis of Mass Media's Role

### *Role as Instrument*

Based on the content analysis as well as the interview, I would argue that in the beginning of the anti corruption movement, the mass media has been used as an instrument in combatting corruption by the coalition of local civil society organizations (CSO's). In this period, the mass media action or inaction very much depends on the action of the

CSO's. These following evidence would support that argument:

*First of all*, the initiative to expose the existence of corruption doesn't come from the media, but from the civil society organizations. The coverage on the existence of corruption is not the result of media's investigation but the findings of the CSO's.

*Second*, the article that merely tells the CSO's movement is then continued until some next articles in the early coverage of both medias.

*Thirdly*, based on the interview with the journalists of both media, they recognized that the movement was indeed started by the CSO's. Yas, the journalists of *Suara Merdeka*, for instance, telling that the his first coverage on the incident was inspired by the existence of the demonstration of the CSO's that was going on in the office of Central Java police crying for the incident of corruption by Kendal Regent to proceeded as soon as possible. The same thing was also recognized by Burhan, *Kompas's* journalists, that said that he begun to report the movement after the movement has been growing big enough and worth reporting<sup>9</sup>.

*Fourth*, based on the history of the movement, it is clear that the CSO's movement has long existed before the media coverages. It is even already exists before the incident of Hendy on the case of Kendal's double budget, the case that sent Hendy to jail, is raised to the public.

### *Role as an Agent*

In the middle of the movement, the mass media no longer simply serve as an instrument but also act as an active agent. This following evidences would support the argument:

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Yunantyo Adi, *Suara Merdeka's* journalists in February, 26, 2010. The same thing is also said by Burhan, *Kompas's* journalists in the interview in February, 27, 2009

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Yas in February, 27, 2009.

First of all, the theme of the coverage no longer merely about the CSO's action. They begin to report the incident with a different theme, for instance legal theme.

Secondly, the mass media chooses to keep reporting although the CSO's no longer continues the demonstration. Based on the interview with the CSO's activist, the demonstration of the CSO's and their movement stopped when the KPK already took over the charge. The CSO's continuously did the demonstration every 2 - 3 weeks within 1,5 (one and a half) years since July, 2005 and stop in October, 2006 when the KPK took over the charge. But the media keep reporting the development of the charge until September 2007 when the Regent is punished.

This fact that the media keep reporting it until end indicates that the media has adopted the CSO's agenda as its agenda. The media has been working together with the CSO's to consistently influence another element such as: the local police, the local prosecutor, the KPK and the public to make it as their agenda too. Moreover, the mass media is still continuously report the incident although the CSO's no longer does demonstration.

In a simple way, the agenda setting which is done by the media can be seen as follow:

CSO's Agenda==> Media's  
Agenda==> Public Agenda==> Local  
Judicial Body's Agenda==> KPK's  
Agenda

Begin from the CSO's agenda, the CSO's then used the media as their instrument to expose the existence of corruption in order to break the public's silence and the inaction of the local judicial bodies. In the beginning of the

movement, the media was actually merely reporting the work of the CSO's but in the middle of the movement, the media started to adopt the issue as their agenda. At this point the media no longer played role as an instrument but also as an agent.

Then the media keep reporting it and keep informing the public and influencing them to support the agenda. The public supports the agenda by donating to the movement. The media also keep monitoring the work of the local judicial bodies by monitoring the progress of the judicial process. When it happens that the local judicial bodies was so slow in handling the charge, the media helps pressuring those bodies to give up the charge to KPK and to pressure KPK to take over the charge. Finally, the media keep reporting and monitoring the work of KPK.

In summary, there is a metamorphosis of the media's role from being instrument that supports the work of CSO's into an agent that not merely support but actively monitor and pressured the local judicial bodies and the KPK.

### 3. Some Conditional Factors

Even though, the media transforms itself as an active agent in the middle of the movement, overall the media follows the agenda that was initiated by the CSO's. If there is no initiative from the CSO's to expose the incident of corruption, there would be no coverage on it. Therefore, the role as an instrument is the dominant role played by the media. But the question then is: why the media behave in such a way? Why is the initiative not coming from the media?

It is because of the absence of the ideology of independency of media towards the political regime. The media



never act as a real watch dog as it is in the libertarian press. Instead the ideology of the mass media is: "compromism". As long it is about the political regime, they always try to do compromism. They are always cautious politically and try to avoid direct confrontation against the regime. Another consequence of the absence of the ideology of independen press is the absence of ideology "combatting corruption".

Both *Kompas* and *Suara Merdeka* never stated combatting of corruption as their ideology. They never intentionally look for the charge of corruption, doing investigation on it and doing exposure towards it. As the ideology of the mass media is compromism. This ideology of "compromism" or the absence of the ideology of independency as well as the absence of the ideology of combatting corruption from within the mass media is resulted from these following factors:

*First of all*, the unprofesionalism of the mass media. Based on the findings, it can be seen that the media coverage actually did not fulfill the standard of journalism. Aware about this, the media prefer to be very careful in covering the allegation of corruption of a powerful man. Beacuse they know that they would easily beaten if that powerful man sued them on the name of character assasination (pencemaran nama baik).<sup>10</sup> The media never do an investigative report because it is difficult, time consuming and energy consuming. Instead, they prefer to get news instantly.

*Secondly*, the media is the part of the corruption itself. It is widely known that there is a practice of bribery between the government and the journalists in Indonesian journalism. Kendal Regency is no exception. In the case of Kendal

regency, the practice of bribery is done by these following ways: *first of all*, giving the journliasm the tranportation medium by giving them motorcycle for each journalists. *Second*, giving the journalists monthly fund for giving them allocation for communicataion. *Thirdly*, giving the journalists facility in government's office<sup>11</sup>.

*Thirdly*, it is historical trouma in which the media is always lose as long it is to face the powerful man in the regime. It made the media always act cautious politically.

As argued by Pasaribu, the long practice of repression towards the regime has resulted in the type of journalists that is used to work with this following style<sup>12</sup>: (1). Easily affirm the information form the news source, especially if the news source is the government officials, (2). Ignoring the existence of another news source that has possibility to provide another version of the story, (3). Selecting the news source based on the hierarchy in the bureaucracy, (4). Check and recheck is done more as a confrimation rather than for pursuing the truth.

This argument of Pasaribu meets with media coverage on Kendal case. Both media, *Kompas* and *Suara Merdeka*, as shown did not report the news profesionally. They tend to be one sided

<sup>11</sup> These findings is as told by Abdus Salam, the Head of Public Relation Burreau of Kendal Regency 2006-2007. This finding is affirmed journalists and some of the CSO's activists in many interviews in the different time and places.

<sup>12</sup> Pasaribu in Maxim D Prabowo. 2004. *Mengembangkan Civil Society Dengan Press?* Renai Journal Sosial Humaniora dan Politik Lokal Tahun IV No. 4 Edisi Musim Labuh Oktober 2004 page 149-158.

<sup>10</sup> There are alot of cases in which the media got lost in such case.



in a sense more to cover the version of the government side such as police, judicial official or the government.

*Fourth*, it is because of the law that is not giving a back up for the strong position of the mass media. The law about journalism is still using the general law instead of specific law of journalism as it is regulated in UU 40/99. In so many cases, the judicial process on an allegation of journalists or media it is always using the general law.

*Fifth*, it is the market orientation of the media. The mass media mainly thinks about the market. They don't cover a news if the market don't like it. So, instead of covering news about corruption that has high risk they prefer another theme that is market friendly but with no risk the news value. Which is to say to find any news that would get a lot attention from the readers or is already raise public attention. Kendal is considered as only one of the regencies in Central Java Province. Whatever the news came from this regency would be seen as having news value if it really raises attention from a wide society. So, the media waits until the incident really get a lot of attention from a wider audience.

It is like what Burhan, Kompas's journalist says as follow:

*"Space kami terbatas. Hanya 8 halaman untuk berita lokal yang khusus berbicara tentang Jawa Tengah. Kendal itu hanyalah salah satu Kabupaten di Jawa Tengah. Jadi kami harus mempertimbangkan pemerataan. Kami baru akan memberitakan sebuah peristiwa jika itu memang benar-benar menarik....(Our space is limited. It is only 8 pages for local news that*

*specifically talk about Central Java. Meanwhile, Kendal is only one of the regencies in Central Java. So we have to be selective to decide whether cover or not covering an event. We will report an event if it really got a lot attention from the public.)"*<sup>13</sup>

#### D. Conclusion

From the analysis above, it can be concluded as follows: *first of all*, mass media did support the anti corruption movement through its coverage both in the form of articles and photos. *Secondly*, the media's support that was reflected in its coverage did play important role in the success of the anti corruption movement. *Thirdly*, there was a metamorphosis of media's role in curbing the incident of corruption from being an instrument that merely support the work of the CSO's movement in the beginning into an active agent that monitors and pressure the local judicial bodies and the KPK in the middle of the movement. *Fourth*, the role as instrument was played more dominantly by the media as the initiative of the movement did not come from the media but from the CSO's activists. *Fifth*, the absence of the initiative from the media was caused by the absence of the ideology of independency of media towards the political regime. The media never act as a real watch dog as it is done in the libertarian press. Instead the ideology of the mass media was: "compromism". *Sixth*, there were some factors that resulted in the ideology of compromism of the media, which is the external factors (socio-political factors and socio-

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Burhan in February, 27, 2009.



economical settings) as well as the internal factors (ideology and profesionalism).

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