

Press in a political year

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Can the press be neutral in politics? It takes work. Owners will evaluate the news content as with the classical Marxist media theory. So, when many media owners enter the political arena, the news face will be “colored.” The beginning of the news will significantly depend on the political leanings of the media owners.

When media owners direct news content to politics and specific choices, this is what makes the media not neutral. Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel advised that the press should side with truth, justice, and society. This doctrine is certainly not easy to implement during media controlled by a few people. Ironically, in the Indonesian context, media owners are already affiliated with certain political parties and have close ties with specific presidential/vice presidential candidates. So it is certain that the media cannot be neutral in reporting.

This media neutrality needs to be responded to by readers critically. Readers need to understand that every story has context. It is the context of the news that deserves many notes. Readers need to have a set of knowledge to be able to criticize any information that appears.

News is undoubtedly not value-free. Every report has a producer. In every production process, people behind them have a social background coupled with media ideology, which is always inherent in every coverage. News coverage also contains elements of framing. Framing is a way for the media to highlight various news with a specific purpose.

Understanding the above is necessary for media ownership which is getting closer to political parties. Especially amid a political year, every reader must be more critical in reading the news. This critical attitude makes the reader understand and be able to position himself when opinionated and behaving. When readers are critical of the information, social life quality improves because the interests of a handful of elites do not easily lead society.

The process of bringing opinion through the media certainly has an effect. Someone can be opinionated excellent, or bad, depending on the direction of the press. That is, the media can easily frame a good or bad candidate. When the press can change everything, then political reality is an illusion. The reason is that there is nothing perfect and terrible.

The media’s attitude dramatically influences the good and bad of a candidate in the reporting process. Therefore, a critical attitude towards news is an important keyword, especially in a political year. The year in which each candidate reveals an angel’s face and hides the devil’s beginning. Though the devil’s face in him is more dominant than the face of an angel. Acts of deception conjure themselves up to be good, and hiding bad things for the sake of votes becomes a necessity in political years. Every political party and presidential candidate will continue to compete to be close to the people as a source of voice; even though previously they mostly dressed up for themselves and their group, there needed to be more work for the people. Work for the people is only shown in the media and is in the spotlight of the media that has colonized specific candidates.

Although it is difficult for the media to move away from many interests, the breath of news should continue to be on a footing of truth and humanity. This breath can guarantee an upright democracy, as one of the functions of the media is the fourth pillar of democracy. However, if the media continues to be in the shadow

of certain political parties and candidates, this will alarm the growth and development of a dignified life. The media, which should be a torch of civilization, has instead become a mouthpiece for specific political forces. The power of the press should be for the benefit of life, not just to satisfy the thirst for power seekers.

In the end, when the media is in the power of a few people affiliated with a specific political group, the people need to be critical. This critical attitude can “awaken” the press to return to the right path. That is the path of virtue that leads people to enlightenment.