

Conference Paper

The Militia's Strategy in Using Public Information Space (Media Strategy of Militia to Reform the Organization Image in Bali)

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Abstract

This study examines the media strategy developed by the militia in Bali, a civil troop organizes itself into a security service. Bali has experienced massive tourism industrialization meaning security services are required. Unfortunately, these groups are often associated with "premanism" (thuggery). In the period of 2012 – 2016, these militia groups spent much energy reforming their organizations' image. Various strategies have been developed, using public information space to expose their organizations' brand of populism. The research question then, is what media strategy has the militia adopted to reform their organizations' image? To answer this question, data was collected by interview, observation and documentation. This research found that the types of publicity used by mass organizations in Bali are primarily pure publicity and paid publicity. Pure publicity can be seen at every celebration of religious holidays. The three main mass organizations in Bali seem to compete to congratulate the holidays with large billboard campaigns on the edge of the highway. On most occasions, the billboards also display photos of the leaders of these mass organizations. These leaders claimed that the initial purpose of installing the billboards was both to show a sense of tolerance towards other religions and to highlight the existence of these organizations. Paid publicity is usually undertaken in the form of advertorials. Meanwhile, they also use social media to publicize their social activities. Different from the traditional media they use, their social media represents their populist image as a tolerant social organization under the cultural wisdom "Ajeg Bali", reflected by the use of Balinese Gods, weapons and colors as their symbols.

Keywords: Media strategy, Militia, Public information space.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The presence of Mass Organizations (Ormas) became a phenomenon at the beginning of the climate of democracy in Indonesia. Previously, they acted as a mobilizer for independence, with Social Organizations (Ormas) such as Boedi Oetomo and Nahdatul

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Utama. Today, community organizations continue to be regulated in Law No. 17 of 2013 about Community Organizations.

The existence of Ormas in Bali emerged in the era of the 1970's when a number of young people in Denpasar formed an organization or a group called "Armada Racun". This organization emerged as a counterpart of the powerful TNI Children who are headquartered in Jalan Sudirman Denpasar and called themselves AKOS (Anak Kolong Sudirman). "Armada Racun" tried to control the entertainment centers in Denpasar and Kuta. To gain protection from the higher authorities, Armada Racun then allied with the Pemuda Pancasila organization.

Most members of Armada Racun had experienced how Bali faced modernity through influences from the West such as style of dress, lifestyle and association. The members of Armada Racun were known as the Balinese "fashionista", with a style partially influenced by the group The Beatles, including features such as long hair and bell-bottom flared pants. Their activities included listening to music, riding motorbikes and playing sports.

Later, involvement of Ormas members in a number of violent incidents, such as fights which led to deaths, which lead to a growing negative public perception of the organizations in Bali. At that time, there were three large organizations that often attracted attention: Laskar Bali, Baladika and Pemuda Bali Bersatu.

Criminal cases involving the various Ormas have continued, which has helped to sustain the negative image. A survey conducted by Udayana University's researchers in 2016, highlighted how widely they were distrusted. Taking place in 9 districts in Bali, the survey showed that more than 50% of people on the island had a negative perception of the three mass organizations (Laskar Bali, Baladika and Pemuda Bali Bersatu). 70% of people also felt annoyed with the billboards installed in their area. (Dwita, 2016)

The use of billboards to gain publicity has stimulated debate among society. Chief of Police in Bali stated that he would forbid the installation of Ormas billboards, as he considered the images to be troubling for society. This negative impression of Ormas has continued to develop since many members of these Ormas are reported to be involved in criminal activities.

Thus, the billboards developed by these mass organizations receive considerable attention both from local communities and outside the region, particularly the billboards which are located on the side of the highways containing pictures of members. The figures featured are often well-built with black tattoos which appear intimidating, so it is not surprising if the public perception of this mass organization is negative and closely associated with thuggery and violence. The billboards reinforce the organizations'

images as dangerous organizations which threaten the community's safety. Despite this, and the Chief of Police's statement, the publicity on the billboards took place, and the number of members of these community organizations continues to increase.

It cannot be denied that the billboards contribute to the development of the organizations. As stated by one of the leaders of Baladika Ormas, the publication is important to its existence as it attracts the masses to join. "By displaying strong people or figures with power and influence, people believe that the organizations could help them both in improving their economic life and self-security".

To put it simply, the people who join the organizations are those who need employment, but are lacking a good education so use their physical capital to work and feed their families. According to the Baladika Advisory Board, the publication of the "strong man" behind their organizations is crucial to building public confidence in the credibility of the organization. The figure is someone whom they believe to be able to meet their expectations if they join the organization. In Bali, there are three mass organizations known to provide security services to a number of restaurants, cafes and other entertainment venues in Bali. Not only that, other illegal practices such as *tajen* (cock fighting), also involve mass organizations to secure the game. Potential members hope to be part of the activities of these organizations, since this game has a huge circulation of money.

The visuals of the publicity are also based on the organization's internal agreement regarding the logos used, colors and other elements which appear in the billboard. The dominance of black is used to show strength, as well as the use of a logo based on the weapon from Dewata Nawa Sanga, which in Hinduism is the weapon of the guardian Gods in every direction of the wind. The logo is used as an organizational identity and most members of Laskar Bali use the logo as a tattoo on their hands. The weapon symbol of Dewata Nawa Sanga is not only used by the mass organization of Laskar Bali but also the Pemuda Bali Bersatu. Laskar Bali uses the symbol of the "Trishula", the weapon of the God Sambu, ruler of the northeast direction, while the united Pemuda Bali Bersatu use the symbol of "Bajra", the weapon of God Iswara, ruler of the East.

The use of logos and other symbols on billboards on the side of highways creates an impression on society. Communities that are exposed to these billboards are unconsciously identifying these organizations with weapons, power and violence. Soemirat and Ardianto (2004) explained how the process of forming a person's image is affected by the cognitive effects of communication that is based on knowledge and information received by the audience. It does not directly change the behaviors, but tends to influence the ways in which our image of the environment is organized.

The image of these Ormas then, is organized in such a way to make an impression on the public, both internal and external. Internally, the image of the organization is built to gain a good perception of the company and to develop loyalty among members. As for the external public, the image of the organization is built for the purpose that the organization can be accepted positively in the middle of the public. Although the image itself cannot be directly counted since it is public thoughts or feelings.

It needs to be understood that the process of image formation of the organization is the perception of reality. In order to get the desired image by the organization, according to Kotler (2000), there are 3 selections processes when perceiving something:

1. Selective attention, since a person will perceive something based on his attention, therefore the organizations have to create information which attracts the attention of the target audience.
2. Selective distortion, since there is a tendency for a person to sort through information based on his or her personal interests and direct information based on the previous mindset related to the information.

3. Selective retention, since a person will easily remember the information given repeatedly, the organization is required to create information that is not boring although repeatedly submitted.

The formation of images by mass organizations in Bali is not only done through billboards, but also through publications in local newspapers. As Soenarko, Chief Editor of the Bali Tribune explained, these mass organizations often send incidental news about their organizations, such as the anniversary of their organization. The news submitted is advertorial, so there is a certain amount of expenses to be incurred by the mass organization. The expenses incurred by the organization are acknowledged by the leader of Pemuda Bali Bersatu to be largely derived from the personal donations of members. He acknowledges that there is indeed a budget allocation for publicity but is incidental, adapted to existing activities. The amount of budget allocation is adjusted to the activities and financial condition of the organization, but certainly the funds come from donors generated by the organization independently.

From these facts, it is interesting to study exactly what media strategy these Ormas use to reform their organization image, and how successful they have been. This study focuses on Pemuda Bali Bersatu, one of the Ormas that has a consistent media coverage and publicity since 2015.

1.2. Methodology

This study used descriptive descriptive method. In accordance with the principles of qualitative research, this research was trying to interpret the media strategy mapping carried out by mass organizations in Bali.

In qualitative research, the data collection process was carried out through various techniques. However, this research used more methods of observation, interviews, documentation and combination / triangulation.

Determination of the informants was done through purposive sampling, which appointed people based on certain conditions. Data collection techniques were obtained through in-depth interviews with a number of informants of the study, including: Chairperson of “Pemuda Bali Bersatu” Organization, Advisory Council of “Baladika Organizations” and one of the chief editors of mass media in Bali. In this method, the researcher first made a list of structured questions to be submitted to the resource person.

As a complement to interview techniques, this research also collected data through documentation techniques. The document was a source of data used to supplement research, in the form of written sources, films, pictures (photographs), and monumental works, all of which provide information for the research process. According to Sugiyono (2008; 83) document studies are complementary to the use of interview methods in qualitative research. The credibility of the results of this qualitative research will be even higher if it involves / uses the study of these documents. In this study, the document study focused on the data on the process of forming the media strategy of those organizations.

After carrying out data collection, the next method was triangulation. Triangulation is the most commonly used data validity check method. This method was done by utilizing something other than data for checking or as a comparison to the data. In this process, researchers, besides collecting data, are also able to test the credibility of the data, with various data collection techniques and various data sources.

2. Result and Discussion

2.1. Media strategy of mass Organization in Bali

In their publications through the media, mass organizations (Ormas) in Bali strive to display a positive image, such as caring for others in home building programs, activity in youth and sports programs and providing assistance to victims of natural disasters. But their own publicity has not been able to improve the image formed by the framing of news in the local print media. The volume of news in the print and online media about fights and other violations that often cause death, present more negative image of mass organizations in Bali, as shown in the survey conducted by Udayana University's FISIP political science researchers. The results of citizens' perception of three mass organizations in Bali in 2017 found citizens' perception of Pemuda Bali Bersatu only rated 15.1% positive, 33.6% negative and 51.3% no answer or did not know. The perception of Baladika was not much different. Only 13.8% were positive, 34.9% negative and 51.3% did not answer or did not know. Similarly, citizens' perception of Laskar Bali was 14.4% positive, 34.6% negative and the rest 50.9% no answer or do not know.

The survey results are consistent with negative news in the mass media such as newspapers and online media. Even the media policy in reporting on mass organizations is not regulated directly, and pressure on mass media coverage from the various Ormas happens not only in Bali but Indonesia generally. According to the editor of one mass

media in Bali, pressure from mass organizations also occurs in Jakarta so that each media has different sensitivities and gradations.

The involvement of political figures or “strong men” in these mass organizations also became an important note for journalists and the media. Although the involvement of these figures were not published, observations by journalists when covering the news have shown that there were political figures with links to the organization. The figures are members of parliament, politicians and even the head of the region. The involvement of these influential players was reinforced by the emergence of billboards featuring photographs of such figures from democratic processes such as elections. The support of these mass organizations for the regional head and legislative member candidates strengthened the assumption about the relations between the figures and the organization. However, some opinions disagree as to whether the mass organization are used as a political tool. They emphasized that the tendency of mass organizations is to support anyone if there has been an agreement, so it cannot be said that the mass organizations are purely political tools.

This opinion of the existence of these mass organizations is not only for political interests but also for the progress of the Balinese economy condition. Mass organizations exist as a form of response from Balinese society to the development of the island. Bali has a record of economic growth above the national rate so it attracts many people to come to Bali, which brings up the competition to work in Bali. As the leaders of mass organizations, both Pemuda Bali Bersatu and Baladika recognize that the organization also has an interest in helping its members by creating job opportunities. It is confirmed that these Ormas in Bali are currently involved in the security business of a number of restaurants, cafes and night entertainment. The organizations even prepare training for security personnel so their members can be more professional and compete with other professional security providers. Moreover, Pemuda Bali Bersatu has a “Pusbakum” (Legal Aid Center) for its members who need support when it comes to legal issues.

Job opportunities created by this organization are not only limited to security services but also the provision of other labour power such as waiters and so forth. One of the mass organizations did not deny the existence of illegal practices such as the secret circulation of drugs.

However, one area of this employment for members comes from the circulation of drugs which is regulated from within the institution itself. The struggle for territory within prisons then, often occurs between one or another mass organizations. Despite the attempt to appear positive in providing employment opportunities, these facts form the image of mass organizations in Bali as organizations that are closely connected with

violence and other illegal acts. The image is then reinforced by the publications of the mass organizations and their billboards installed at the side of the road, thus allowing the public to get exposure from the publication.

2.2. The impact of the publicity to organizations' image

The publicity of these Ormas in Bali was undertaken in two ways; namely, publicity through mass media and outdoor publicity such as the billboards campaign installed on the side roads throughout Bali. Publicity is a popular term not only in the Public Relations world but also in the everyday world. In Judith Rich's view (in Lesly 1992: 257), there is no limit to the creative space of publicity, other than ethical limits. The publicity function cannot be separated from mass communication function. There have been several attempts to systematize the main function of mass communication, following Lasswell's (1948) initial attempt, which provides a summary of the basic functions of communications, such as environmental surveillance; connecting parts of society to respond its environment; and transmitting the cultural heritage. The function of social control refers to the dissemination of information and objective interpretation of events to avoid undesirable events both within and outside the social environment. The function of social correlation refers to the effort in providing interpretation and information that connects one social group with another social group in order to reach a consensus. And the function of socialization refers to the inheritance of values from one generation or group to another.

In political communication there are four types of publicity. The first is known as pure publicity in which political groups popularize themselves through community activities within natural social settings. For example, the month of Ramadhan and Idul Fitri is an annual cycle of activity that shapes reality as it is. Candidates or individuals and organizations can take advantage of the opportunity to market themselves, by for example by saying "Happy Living in the Month of Ramadan" or "Happy Idul Fitri" along the name of the organization or a photo of the candidates. The more of this form of pure publicity broadcast in the mass media, the more popular a person or organization can become. Second, free-rider publicity comes through access to, or riding on, other parties' activities to popularize themselves. This can happen, for example, by appearing as a speaker at a forum organized by another party, sponsoring the anti-narcotics movement, participating in sports events held in a voting area, and so forth. Third, tie-in publicity comes from utilizing extraordinary plain news. For example, the event of a tsunami, earthquake or flash flood can provide tie-in publicity. Candidates can

portray themselves as people or parties with high social concern and invoke sympathy in audiences. An extraordinary event attracts the media so being participated in such event greatly benefits the candidate. Fourth, paid publicity is a way of popularizing themselves through the purchase of headlines or programs in the mass media. They can, for example, install advertorials, spot ads, column ads, displays or even blocking time programs in the mass media. Obviously, this requires a special budget for media spending.

The types of publicity used by mass organizations in Bali are primarily pure publicity and paid publicity. Pure publicity can be seen at every celebration of religious holidays. The three main mass organizations in Bali seemed to compete to congratulate the holidays with the billboards campaign on the edge of the highway. More often, the billboards also display photos of leaders of these mass organizations. Leaders of these organizations claimed that the initial purpose of installing the billboards was both to show a sense of tolerance towards other religions and to show the existence of these organizations. Paid publicity is usually undertaken in the form of advertorials.

Publicity carried out by these mass organizations will have an impact on the image of the organization itself. According to Soleh Sumirat and Elvinaro Ardianto (2002), there are four components of image formation, among others:

1. Perception interpreted as a result of observation of environmental elements associated with a process of meaning in other words. Individuals will give meaning to stimuli based on their experience of stimuli. This perception ability can continue the process of image formation. Perceptions or views of individuals will be positive if the information provided by stimuli can meet the individual's cognition.
2. Cognition, which involves the individual's self-belief about the stimulus of this belief, will arise if the individual can be given enough information that affects the development of cognition. Motivation and attitude that will move the response as desired by the giver stimulus.
3. Motives are the circumstances around person that encourage the individual's desire to perform certain activities in order to achieve the goal.
4. Attitude is the tendency to act, perceive, think, and feel in the face of objects, ideas, situations or values. Attitude is not behavior but a tendency to behave with behavior but is a tendency to behave in certain ways, attitude has a driving force or motivation attitude determines whether people should be pro or con to something, determine what is liked, expected and desired, evaluative means it contains fun

or unpleasant value, attitude is also calculated or changed. Image formation in an organization can be described as follows:

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(Sumber: Soemirat & Ardianto, 2002: 114)

Publicity conducted by mass organizations (Ormas) using billboards can indeed show the existence of these mass organizations. But the impression of tolerance that they attempt to present is precluded by the current image of the organizations. The intended image of the mass organizations as friendly and tolerant of other religions has not been achieved. Their publicity had not displaced the image of the organizations associated with violence and other negative things.

Failure to change the organisations' image may be due to what was displayed on the billboards. The dominance of black, symbols of weapons and figures displaying tattoos and large muscular look. Tattoos in Balinese society have a negative meaning, because they are usually associated with criminals. Besides the negative reporting of the mass organizations in news events, their own images have also influenced impressions of these mass organizations.

3. Conclusion

In building their image, mass organizations have undertaken some publicity to build a positive impression. Currently the existing image in the community is still negative, as shown by the results of a survey in which the people of Bali expressed a negative perception of the organizations. And so does the tendency of the coverage activity of this organizations in the local and online mass media that often expose negative news about the organizations involved in violence, drug trafficking and other crimes.

Publicity carried out by these mass organizations is often done through billboards installed on the side of the highway, displaying their identity. This publicity has attempted to show the existence of the mass organizations and to build a positive image as organizations that value tolerance to other religions. This has been seen through congratulations offered during various religious holidays. However, this publicity has been unable to replace the negative image associated with these mass organizations. The publicity can be categorized as successful because it showed the existence of this mass organization, with the increase in the number of members of the organizations.

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