

Producing Radio Programs, Mainstreaming Gender Equity: A Case Study of *Radio Sonora Semarang*

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Abstract: There has been an increase in discussion about gender mainstreaming-related issues on media. Mass media producers' awareness about gender equity has remained questionable, even regarded as not presenting gender equity as expected. This study attempts to focus on how the production of news programs in Radio Sonora Semarang regarding the issue of gender equality, particularly to what extent the role of women in the process of radio program production. Using a qualitative approach and conducting interviews with Radio Sonora's journalists and the production program team, the findings have revealed that Radio Sonora Semarang highly upholds the values of gender equality in the production process of its programs. There has been mutual respect amongst media workers both men and women in the radio Sonora during program production process. Indeed, women can take roles equally to men without leaving their nature as women.

Keywords: Radio Sonora, program productions, radio journalism, gender equity.

Abstrak: Pengarusutamaan gender di media radio masih menjadi perdebatan. Program-program dan proses produksi program dinilai belum menghadirkan kesetaraan gender seperti yang diharapkan. Kajian ini mendiskusikan bagaimana produksi program berita di Radio Sonora Semarang terkait isu kesetaraan gender, khususnya sejauh mana peran perempuan dalam proses produksi program siaran. Menggunakan metode kualitatif dan melakukan wawancara dengan wartawan Radio Sonora dan tim produksi program, studi ini menemukan bahwa Radio Sonora Semarang sangat menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai kesetaraan gender dalam proses produksi program-programnya. Wartawan perempuan memiliki peran dan posisi vital di radio Sonora FM Semarang. Pekerja media, baik laki-laki maupun perempuan di radio Sonora selama proses produksi program, saling menghormati. Ringkasnya, jurnalis perempuan di radio ini memiliki peran yang setara dengan laki-laki tanpa meninggalkan kodratnya sebagai perempuan.

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Introduction

Radio is an audio medium that is considered cheap and popular as people can listen anywhere. It is one of the mass communication media that still has its own market; starting from civil society, students, employees, officials, adults to children, to politicians both men and women. In some areas this radio media has rabid fans. Through its programs, it is able to bring fans not wanting to leave the radio program they like.

The development of radio journalism in Indonesia in terms of age was considered a “newborn”, namely when the information minister M. Yunus Yosfiah issued a letter no. 134/SK/MENPEN/1998 on June 5, 1998. It contains the reduction of the "broadcast" to relay news reports from 14 times to 3 times a day, granting permits for private radio stations to produce and broadcast their own news, allowing relaying of foreign radio broadcasts; as well as the use of terms, intonations and journalistic language styles that are appropriate for captive listeners of the radio. (Ardianingtyas & Hartono, 2013).

Before the 1950s, when television in Indonesia was more popular compared to radio, many people thought that broadcast radio was on the verge of death. Nevertheless, radio has adapted to the changing world, by developing mutually beneficial and complementary relationships with other media. Willian L. River argues that although radio is increasingly being pushed by television and print media, it still has fans (Ardianingtyas & Hartono, 2013). At around the 1980s, through the policy of the New Order government that advertising programs on television were prohibited, radio rose again and even experienced a boom for broadcast radio with many companies placing advertisements on the radio (Rihartono, 2015).

In 1960, radio station entered an important period with the development of broadcast technology using FM frequencies. FM technology was actually invented in the 1930s, but at that time only a few radios could receive FM broadcasts. Although the range is lower, compared to AM FM broadcasts produce a clearer sound with stereo sound effects. This advantage in turn encourages AM station owners to switch to FM broadcasting. The peak of the success of FM

broadcasting can be seen from the 1993 data published by Straubhaar which said that 77% of music listeners were in the FM broadcast area (Ahmad, 2015).

Nowadays digital technology continues to undermine the existence of radio station. It is important to note that in order to win in the media industry business battles in today's cyber era, radio journalists must at least implement several strategies, in terms of financial management, marketing, operations, and human resources management. Indeed, the survival of radio as a medium of public information that has remained effective cannot be separated from the innovations carried out by radio media actors, strong work culture, creativity, and leadership (Ulfa, 2016).

With regard to the function of mass media, including radio, Alexis S. Tan has classified into four, namely to provide information, educate, influence and provide entertainment. Meanwhile, according to McQuail there are six perspectives in seeing the role of mass media for social life, *first*, mass media is a window on events and experiences. It means that media is seen as a window that allows the audience to see what is happening out there, or the media is a means of information to find out about events. *Second*, media is often regarded as a mirror of events in society and the world, implying a faithful reflection. The mirror of various events that exist in society and the world, which reflect what they are, therefore media managers often feel innocent if the media is full of violence, conflict, pornography and various other vices. *Third*, viewing the mass media as a filter, or a gatekeeper who selects various things to pay attention to or not. Television always chooses issues, information or other forms of content based on the standards of its managers. *Fourth*, mass media are often seen as guides or interpreters that translate and show directions for various things uncertainty, or multiple alternatives. *Fifth*, mass media as a forum for presenting various information and ideas to the public, thus enabling responses and feedback to occur. *Sixth*, mass media as an interlocutor which is not only a place for dissemination of information, but also as communication partner that allows interactive communication to occur (Khatimah, 2018).

Further, based on the characteristic of broadcast within radio station, Rachman has divided into two types, that are, broadcasts of artistic works and journalistic works. Radio as journalistic work can be interpreted as the process of producing news and disseminating it through radio, whilst radio as a means of entertainment such as listening to music.

Regarding the news production process, Masduki describes it as follows; *first*, the existence of news planning encompasses determining the topic, division of tasks whose materials are found in other media, in the form of facts, and a bibliography. *Second*, covering news in the field, namely observing events, conducting interviews, and recording atmospheric data. *Third* is news production. It is conducted through data selection, script writing, and editing/mixing such as combining text reading sounds, source sounds, and music illustrations. *Forth*, news broadcast includes news reading by presenters in the studio and reporters in the field. *Fifth*, news of the whole news production process.

Theoretically, mass media has a pivotal role to construct reality, and in doing so it has an obvious effect on the audience. An important effect that marks the use of mass media by the audience is the emergence of awareness and knowledge about a topic or issue. The emergence of this awareness and knowledge is often not realized by the public as a result that is indeed desired by the mass media through the presentation of a certain topic as a result of the construction of reality.

Currently, mass media producers' awareness about gender mainstreaming has remained questionable, even regarded as not presenting gender equity as expected (Dewi & Aminulloh, 2016). Basically, the concept of gender is distinguished from the concept of sex which is biologically determined, brought from birth, and given from God as a man or a woman (Astuti, 2016). The concept of gender as an inherent trait of both men and women is socially and culturally constructed. Therefore, it is considered that the examination of the role of radio in mainstreaming gender equity is important.

This study attempts to focus on how the production of news programs in Radio Sonora, Semarang regarding the issue of gender

equality, particularly to what extent the role of women in the process of radio program production.

This study discusses gender equality in the production process of news programs on Sonora radio, Semarang. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach. Bogdan & Tailor as quoted by Moeleong defines qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words. The main data was collected through interviews with several teams of Radio Sonora Semarang. It was intended to get and construct meaning in a certain topic (Adilla, 2019) as well as to verify the results (Saidi & Puspitasari, 2020).

Additionally, documentation such as photos, recordings of news programs, and other similar written works was also utilised (Subandi, 2011). In this regard, there were five resource persons to be interviewed; Rulita Vida (Head of Program Sonora FM Semarang), Hanindya Nurinisa, S.Ikom (Broadcaster), Victor Yoga Widiyanto (Station Manager), and Muhammad Bayu Aji Pamungkas (announcer). In regard with the theory used in this research is gender equality and structural functionalism theory.

Methodology

Sonora FM Radio News Production Process

One radio station that has been on the air for a long time is Radio Sonora FM. It is firstly aired in Jakarta on August 8, 1972 at a frequency of 92.0 FM, marking the birth of (late) P.K. Ojong, the founder of Kompas with Jakob Oetama. Sonora's broadcast hours are from 06:00 to 00:00 WIB. Starting from the initiative of (late) P.K Ojong and created by (late) Gerald Tunggono with Jos Tanubrata, Sonora started its first broadcast on August 8, 1972 on the MW line using a studio on Jl. Gajah Mada 109, West Jakarta. Along with technological developments, on March 5, 1988, Sonora switched to FM with a frequency of 100.9.

Results and Discussion

To meet the needs of listeners, since the beginning of August 2000, Sonora has been broadcasting non-stop 24 hours.

In 2004, the government reorganized the use of radio broadcast frequencies. To that end, since August 1, 2004, Sonora occupies a new frequency on 92.0 FM. In terms of broadcast content, Sonora has two main pillars, namely information and entertainment with a balanced composition. The information presented is mainly what is needed by the majority of the public, whether they are on a trip or not, in accordance with the characteristics of the fast radio media. For example, traffic conditions, riots, fires, floods, politics, human interest, etc. Likewise, for the entertainment pillar, selected music is presented that can be enjoyed by most listeners. With Sonora's concern for social problems, especially in helping people affected by disasters or disasters, Sonora received an award from the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) in the form of the 2002 International Broadcasting Excellence Award which was presented on April 10, 2002 in Las Vegas, United States.

Since April 1, 2007, Sonora has launched a new logo, schedule and programs. The broadcaster's appearance, the intimacy and trust in the various information conveyed, enabled the public to recognize his uniqueness through the voices of the announcers, such as the voices of Bung Eddie Dipo, Ms. Susan, and others. His particular information is traffic problems. Prior to the 1998 reform, Sonora was the only radio station in Jakarta that provided music and information (not news yet, because news was only RRI's product). During the Malari case in 1974, the Gulf War in Arabia in 1990 and the May 1998 riots, there was a lot of information on Sonora that became the grip of the citizens of Jakarta, Indonesia and the world. Even during the May 1998 riots, it seemed as if several Jakarta radio stations were blind to information, this radio became the only audio media requested by the DKI Jakarta Regional Government and the DKI Jakarta Regional Military Command, to be broadcast non-stop.

After the reformation took place, many radio stations made broadcast formats similar to Sonora, namely: there is music, there is information, there is news, there are talk shows, there is coverage, there

are reports/broadcasts from outside the studio, and there is Foxpop. The key to Sonora's success is its useful, trustworthy broadcast material, and it's presented without being "as is".

Currently a national network, which includes: Salvatore Surabaya, Bikima Yogyakarta, Atmajaya Palembang, Sonora Pangkal Pinang, Bornera Pontianak, Mercy Semarang, Ria Solo, Raka Bandung. Also included are Serambi FM Aceh, B-Post FM Banjarmasin, Garantung FM Palangkaraya, Sumasli Purwokerto, Millennium Bandar Lampung, and Kalimaya Bhaskara Malang, as well as the Smart FM network. Sonora Radio Semarang is a national private radio network that broadcasts in several cities in Indonesia. In Semarang, Radio Sonora is broadcast from the Amaris Pemuda Building on the frequency of 98.9 FM as a means of information and entertainment.

In producing a news program, Sonora Radio Semarang has three stages, namely pre-production, production, and post-production. Post-production involves looking for current issues, finding ideas, and determining the theme and content of the news material to be covered. Not only the Program Section Head, other parties such as reporters can also submit suggestions as coverage material. However, all that must be done first is called research. Research is carried out on a thing or event that is considered interesting to be covered as material. (Fanastar, 2015). Whilst, the production stage is the process of summarizing the latest news from several *Kompas* group news portals or official government/service portals. With regard to post-production, it is stage that the news workers have to upload the results of radio media products to the broadcast application as well as broadcast on air according to the time schedule.

The Role of Women in the Program Production Process

The increasing participation of women in the labor market is not a coincidence. This is because the role of women in the labor market has traditionally been quite large, especially in rural areas and particularly in the agricultural sector. The increase in the percentage of

working women is caused by two main factors, namely an increase in the supply side and the demand side

First, from the supply side, the increase was caused, among other things, by the increasing level of education of women and accompanied by a decrease in the birth rate. This is also driven by the increasing social acceptance of women who work outside the home. Second, from the demand side, economic development (from the production side) requires female workers, as does the textile and garment industry. Meanwhile, another phenomenon that is increasingly encouraging the entry of women into the workforce is due to the higher cost of living if it is only supported by one support for family opinion. This phenomenon is starting to surface and is clearly visible, especially in families living in urban areas. (Wibowo, 2011).

In the structure of Sonora Radio Semarang itself, there are women who have an important role in every activity carried out by the radio. In the production process women are involved in production activities ranging from VO to editing recordings, women can also be news reporters just like men.

Radio as a mass media has the power to assist women's empowerment programs through its various broadcast programs. It is through this broadcast program that the mission of empowering women and socializing gender mainstreaming should be carried out. The most important element in radio broadcasting is program content. Program content is a crucial aspect in capturing listeners. The content and broadcasting style of each broadcast must be different. It is this content and broadcast style that is a tool to get as many audiences as possible. Even Sonora Radio Semarang is very open for women to develop their careers. In addition to the positions mentioned above, there are several positions at Sonora Radio Semarang that have been occupied by women such as Music Director, Program Director, Finance, Marketing, and even the highest position, namely Station Manager.



Figure 1. ‘The women's team of Sonora Radio Semarang is broadcasting’

Even the Sonora Radio Semarang team strongly agrees and is open to women holding positions or superiors with the conditions of integrity, responsibility, and capacity. This clearly shows that women's duties are only in the realm of managing finances, and only at the household level. Actually the position as a leader for now is not only for men, even now the position as a leader is wide open for women.



Figure 2. ‘Broadcasting process carried out by female broadcasters’

This is very clearly seen in the ideology of our nation, which is contained in the values of Pancasila in the 5th precept, which states "Social justice for all Indonesian people". From the 5th precept, it is very clear that the ideology of this nation implies equal rights for all people, both women and men. Rights and obligations are not only owned by one particular group, but are intended for every element of society (Fibrianto, 2018). Women are important human resources in improving the quality of life. The development of a country as a whole is highly dependent on the involvement of women in the development

process. The status of women in society is a true index of a culture, the level of social religiosity and spirituality. Mainstream media such as radio, although in terms of the number of viewers, are decreasing, radio is still the only media that can be enjoyed while doing other activities (semi-engaging). Information obtained through media such as newspapers, radio and television can shape public opinion about the world. The image and role of women in radio can be a benchmark for the perception of women. Sonora Radio Semarang itself has 4 women's teams. In the implementation of the production process, radio programs do not really uphold gender equality. Women in radio program production have equal roles and positions with men without losing their nature as women, such as leeway in granting maternity leave. In communicating also trying to create cohesiveness and self belonging to the company as a team in the office regardless of stereotypes.



Figure 3. 'News reporting process involving women'

The team of Sonora Radio Semarang realized that the team was united not because of their gender. The Sonora Radio Semarang team agreed that men and women should have the opportunity and their rights as human beings, to be able to play a role and participate in all activities, because they are aware that gender is the view that everyone

should receive equal treatment and not be discriminated against based on identity.



Figure 4. ‘Social service by Sonora Radio Semarang team’

This increase in awareness and understanding must be accompanied by the representation of women in state institutions, especially policy-making institutions. Considering that women still experience inequality in the fields of education, social, politics, and economics, it is only because of the development of Indonesian people's knowledge about gender itself, still very slow.

Although women are placed in domestic roles in the family environment, the position of Indonesian women in the family environment is always secondary. Due to the role as breadwinner, the position of the head of the household will generally be left to the man/husband, unless the woman is a widow or there is no man in the family. The existence of differences between women and men is natural so that they cannot change and are universal. These biological differences provide indications and implications that the two types have different roles and tasks.

Basically everyone agrees that women and men are different. However, gender is more emphasized on the differences in roles and functions that exist and are made by society. In the reality, there have been differences in roles between men and women that give birth to differences in social status, men are superior to women through social

construction (Aldianto, 2015). Nevertheless, women can participate in the tasks that are done by men. The implementation of gender equality within organizations of Sonora Radio Semarang is proof that women can also carry out tasks regarded as men's responsibility. Even women who work at Sonora Radio Semarang have important positions and positions in institutions, they do not leave their nature as women. There is no discriminatory behavior carried out by the male members, even all of them respect and appreciate the differences that exist.

Conclusion

Everyone agrees that women and men are different. However, gender is more emphasized on the differences in roles and functions that exist and are made by society. In the reality, there have been differences in roles between men and women that gave birth to differences in social status, men are superior to women through social construction. Nevertheless, women can participate in the tasks that are done by men. The implementation of gender equality within organizations of Sonora Radio Semarang is proof that women can also carry out tasks regarded as men's responsibility.

Radio Sonora Semarang highly upholds the values of gender equality in the production process of its programs. Women journalists have vital roles and positions on Sonora FM radio Semarang. There has been mutual respect amongst media workers both men and women in the radio Sonora during program production process. Indeed, women can take roles equally to men without leaving their nature as women.

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