

The Practice of Environmental Journalism by Tribun Jateng On Reporting Illegal Mining In Batang Regency

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ABSTRACT

The Environmental Issue has become a sensitive problem in Batang Regency. This is due to the fact that Batang Regency has several national-scale industrial projects, such as the Batang Integrated Industrial Estate. The development of these projects has also led to the increasing activities of illegal mining in Batang Regency. The issue of illegal mining has also become an environmental concern raised by Tribun Jateng. This research is expected to find out how the Tribun Jateng addresses this issue from the side of Environmental Journalism. Environmental journalism is a journalistic activity that reports on environmental issues and invites all parties to contribute to the environmental conservation movement. This study uses phenomenology theory which re-expresses the phenomenon experienced by someone directly and is then expressed again in a more understandable way. This research was found that journalists have an understanding of the definition of Environmental Journalism, and the issue of Illegal Mining is considered something that needs to be addressed together. Tribun Jateng journalists admit that there are many obstacles when reporting on this issue. Among them are many sources or related parties who are not willing to be interviewed. There are also several warnings not to report on illegal mining issues. The informants hope that with this reporting, more people will be aware of the losses caused by the impact of illegal mining. Thus, more decisive actions can be taken.

Keywords: Enviromental Journalism, Tribun Jateng, illegal Minning, Batang Regency, Phenomenology Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Batang Regency has become one of the targeted regencies for investment in Indonesia, especially after the presence of Batang Integrated Industrial Estate. The presence of national-scale projects in Central Java has contributed to the resurgence of mining activities in Batang (Arifianto, 2023). As a region that also has a national-scale projects, mining activities in Batang are also increasingly rampant. Unfortunately, not all mining activities in Batang Regency have official permits. Even many mining activities have violated the Batang Regency Regulation No. 13 of 2019 concerning the Batang Regency Spatial Planning Plan for 2019-2039. Some of them have even been closed up to 20 times and still operating (Fadli, 2022).

However, illegal mining activities were once halted in Batang for two months (August-September 2022) since the Ferdy Sambo case emerged. Previously, the relevant parties such as the Batang Regency Parlemtary had conducted inspections several times in several illegal mining sites, but the results were nil (Muslihun, 2022). Unfortunately, this did not last long, as illegal mining activities resumed in October 2022. According to data from the South Serayu branch of the Central Java Provincial Energy and Mineral Resources Agency, there are only six mining locations that have Mining Business License for Production Operations in Batang Regency. These six locations are located in Gringsing District. Meanwhile, there are two mining locations with Mining Business License for exploration or research, located in Kedungsegog, Tulis District (Buwono, 2022).

However, in reality, many mining activities have been found outside the eight points mentioned above. For example, on October 7, 2022, mining activities were reported in the Brokoh Village, Wonotunggal District, and Kecepak Village, Batang District. Previously, when visiting Batang, the Central Java Regional Police Chief, Irjen Pol Ahmad Luthfi, had warned and would take firm action against illegal mining activities in Batang if they were still operating (Indriani, 2022). Illegal mining activities were also found in Tumbrep Village, Bandar District, and Sukomangli Village, Reban District, in November 2022. This is despite the fact that the activities had been halted for several months after the Ferdy Sambo case emerged (Bernardi, 2022).

The issue of illegal mining has received a lot of attention from various online media in Batang Regency. Media such as Tribun Jateng, Detik.com, RMOL Jateng, Ayo Semarang, Radar Semarang, Radar Pekalongan, and several other media have reported on the issue. Although not focusing on environmental issues, Tribun Jateng is one of the media that is intensive in reporting on this issue. From September to December 2022, this media has reported about 13 news articles on illegal mining in Batang. According to Similar Web data, Tribun Jateng has a decent performance. The online media website has been visited 3.8 million times, with an average visit duration of three minutes. Although not focusing on environmental issues, Tribun Jateng is quite intensive in reporting on the development of illegal mining in Batang Regency.

As one of the mass media in Batang Regency, Tribun Jateng is responsible for presenting information that can encourage the community to take actions oriented towards environmental sustainability. Mass media through its news becomes a mass communication tool that has a role as a communicator and pioneer of change in the public (Khatimah, 2018). Media also becomes an agent that can provide insight on how to live in harmony between humans and the surrounding environment. Not only education, mass media is also responsible for supervising various activities and public policies that can have a negative impact on the environment. However, if the information presented is biased towards certain groups' interests and ignores other groups, it can lead to conflicts between parties such as entrepreneurs, government, and society.

Therefore, in reporting environmental issues, it is necessary to support it with the application of environmental journalism. Based on the above phenomenon, the researcher wants to see the extent of environmental journalism practices carried out by Tribun Jateng, especially by using phenomenological studies when reporting illegal mining activities in Batang Regency. This study was chosen because phenomenology looks at communication from other people's experiences that are then interpreted by the researcher (Kasemin, 2016). Thus, this study can describe the practice of environmental journalism from the perspective of journalists' understanding, interpretation, and experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental Journalism

The practice of environmental journalism is considered important to be applied in Indonesia, as there are still many incidents that do not prioritize environmental sustainability (Sulkhan, 2018). Environmental journalism, according to Cox, is rooted in environmental communication, which studies how individuals, institutions, communities, and cultures receive, understand, shape, convey, and use messages related to the environment. It also explains the symbiotic relationship between humans and the environment (Dewi, 2011). Environmental journalism is defined as journalism that reports or informs about steps to address environmental issues. It not only monitors the process of addressing environmental issues but also ensures that solutions emerge in the future (Sudibyo, 2014).

According to Atmakusumah, environmental journalism has three missions. Firstly, to raise public awareness about environmental issues or problems in their surroundings. Secondly, mass media becomes a means of educating the public to understand the importance of their role in preserving and managing the environment. And thirdly, the press has the right to correct and control environmental issues (Iqbal, Saefullah, & Muchtar, 2020). To present environmental journalism, according to Anderson, both the news and journalists must have knowledge about the environment and the local culture of the surrounding community (Fajar, 2011).

In this study, the researcher will use the theory of Environmental Journalism put forward by Abrar (1993). In this theory, the mass media strategies in reporting environmental information are also conveyed. There are five points highlighted by Abrar (1993), first, how journalists overcome coverage obstacles for environmental issues; second, whether public opinion influences reporting on environmental issues; third, minimizing management's role in reporting environmental information; fourth, prioritizing the interests of readers in reporting environmental information; and fifth, combining education and supervision in environmental news.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research methods are believed to be more appropriate for revealing the actual social reality that occurs in the field, especially in research related to human communication behavior (Kuswarno, 2005). In this regard, the researcher will use phenomenological study. According to Alfred Schutz, the object of social science research is basically related to interpretation of reality. Therefore, as a social researcher, it is necessary to interpret the observed reality (Farid et al., 2018). This approach is chosen because phenomenology is considered appropriate for dissecting environmental journalism practices into the object of research this time. Phenomenology is a study that seeks to find answers to a phenomenon, where the focus of phenomenology includes two things, namely textural description and structural description (Haryono, 2020). Textual Description covers everything experienced by the research subjects about a

phenomenon. The experiences are objective aspects that are factual and empirically happened. Meanwhile, structural description is how the subject experiences and interprets their experience. This is subjective and related to opinions, judgments, feelings, hopes, and other subjective responses from research subjects (Hasbiansyah, 2005).

Data collection for phenomenological research can be done in several ways. According to Creswell (2007), there are four ways to collect data that can be done, such as observation, interviews, document studies, and audiovisual. In terms of data collection, the researcher used three methods, namely interviews, audiovisual, and document studies. The interview was conducted with Tribun Jateng journalist, Dina Indriani, who has been on duty in Batang since 2018. Meanwhile, for document studies and audiovisual, news related to illegal mining in Batang from September to December 2022 was taken, where there were around 12 online news and 1 video news. As for data analysis, the author conducted a systematic search and compilation of data so that it could be understood by readers (Sugiyono, 2011).

RESULT

The results of this study will present data related to interviews with Tribun Jateng Batang journalist, Dina Indriani, as well as data from documents and audio-visual news related to illegal mining in Batang Regency. The following is a general transcript of the questions and answers conducted by the researcher with the source.

Q&A between Researcher and Source:

Question: Do you understand the definition of environmental journalism? Have you ever received education or training related to this?

Answer: As far as I understand, environmental journalism is journalistic activity that reports or raises issues related to the environment. With the hope of raising awareness and addressing these issues. I have never received training related to this.

Question: When reporting environmental issues, do you change your writing style or tend to be the same as your usual writing? And have you studied related insights?

Answer: I still use the same presentation style as other issues for this issue. I also try to learn about regulations related to mining and excavation in Batang, such as regional regulations or RTRW. In addition, I often discuss with other media colleagues to sharpen the issue.

Question: What is the editorial response to the environmental issues that you have covered?

Answer: My editorial team supports coverage related to environmental issues. Even in some coverage, I received instructions to cover illegal mining. The news that I write also gets good attention and tends to be published. Because in some other areas, Tribun Jateng is also focused on covering illegal mining. Because for us, this environmental issue needs to be highlighted by various parties to find a solution immediately.

Question: During the coverage of illegal mining, what are the obstacles faced?

Answer: Many parties who are not openly willing to be interviewed. Especially from illegal mining actors. There were even offers to stop the news coverage with the lure of a fairly large amount of money. In addition, sometimes we are limited by distance, so we are constrained when reporting on the unrest that occurs in the community.

Question: Are you personally interested in reporting on environmental issues? Or just carrying out editorial duties?

Answer: Regardless of any issue, if the news has an impact on many people, then with enthusiasm, I feel obliged to report the issue. However, regarding environmental issues, again, both I and the editorial team feel obliged to educate and inform the public to be more aware of the environment around them.

Question: In your opinion, can the news you present influence the actions of various parties to follow up on the issue of illegal mining?

Answer: The use of social media has expanded the insight of my news to the public. In addition, together with other media colleagues, we are intensifying this issue. So, this issue was immediately responded to by the government. Such as the inspection related to what was carried out by Municipal Police of Batang and also the Batang Police. Even a FGD on illegal mining discretion was held. In addition, many people held demonstrations because they were more aware of the potential environmental damage due to illegal mining.

Question: Did you employ any different message agenda or framing when reporting on illegal mining?

Answer: I used a message agenda when covering the focus group discussion organized by the Batang Regional Leadership Communication Forum on the issue of illegal mining discretion. From that event, I chose to take a stance and make the opposing opinion on this discretion the headline of the news story. This is because we considered that there would be more negative impacts if this discretion for illegal mining was approved, and it could result in the spread of environmental damage or impact.

Question: To what extent did you involve the public in reporting on this issue?

Answer: I involved the public as sources and also treated them as readers. In some of the news stories, we also included opinions and reactions from the public, as well as the turmoil that occurred within the community. I also tried to provide information that was easy for the public to understand, including defining some unfamiliar terms used in the reporting.

Question: From the news you reported, do you have a different perspective or material from the local media in Batang?

Answer: Most of the news coverage was quite similar, and if there were any differences, it was only in terms of further development. This was because we usually covered this issue together with other media outlets. It was quite risky to cover this issue individually, especially since I personally have received some threats and offers from various parties to not report on this issue.

Question: What is your hope for this issue?

Answer: The emergence of mining activities is an inevitable result of the presence of industrial zones and the development of an area. However, it should be dealt with wisely by enforcing existing regulations. If there are any violations, or even stubbornness, the law enforcement agencies are expected to be more responsive in their actions and impose sanctions that have a deterrent effect. Currently, many actions are only taken when an issue has been blown up in the media or social networks.

Table 1. Documentation of Reporting by Tribun Jateng Regarding Illegal Mining in Batang Regency

No.	Date	Headline	Source
1	Jumat, 16 September 2022	Galian C Ilegal Dihentikan, Kepala DLH Batang: Masyarakat Bisa Manfaatkan untuk Lahan Tanam	A Handy Hakim, Head of Department of Enviroment of Batang Regency
2	Selasa, 27 September 2022	Galian C Ilegal Diisukan Akan Beroperasi Lagi, Pj Sekda Batang Minta Pengusaha Harus Urus Surat Izin	Ari Yudianto, Acting Regional Secretary of Batang
3	Selasa, 4 Oktober 2022	Tegas! Polda Jateng Bakal Tindak Galian C Ilegal Yang Masih Berani Beroperasi	Irjen Pol Ahmad Luthfi, Central Java Regional Police Chief
4	Kamis, 6 Oktober 2022	Dinas ESDM Provinsi Jateng Pastikan Tambang Golongan C Legal di Batang Hanya Ada Enam Lokasi	Supriyadi, Staff of South Serayu branch of the Central Java Provincial Energy and Mineral Resources Agency
5	Jumat, 7 Oktober 2022	Ancaman Kapolda Jateng Tak Digubris, Penambangan Ilegal Kembali Beroperasi di Batang, Ini Buktinya	Andre, Citizen of Brokoh Village. Supriyadi, Staff of South Serayu branch of the Central Java Provincial Energy and Mineral Resources Agency
6	Sabtu, 8 Oktober 2022	Sidak Galian C Ilegal di Batang tak Temukan Aktivitas Penambangan, Bocorkah? Ini Kata Kasat Reskrim	AKP Yorisa Prabowo, Head of Batang Police Criminal Investigation Unit Brokoh and Kecepak Village Aparatus
7	Selasa, 15 November 2022	Tolak Tambang Ilegal Gol C, Puluhan Warga Desa Tumbrep Batang Gelar Demo hingga Pasang Penghalang	Taryono, Citizen of Tumbrep Village Nasrudin, Head of Bandar District Supriyadi, Staff of South Serayu branch of the Central Java Provincial Energy and Mineral Resources Agency
8	Kamis, 1 Desember 2022	Takut Terjadi Longsor, Warga Lakukan Aksi Tutup Paksa Tambang Galian C Ilegal di Polodoro Batang	Turin, Head of Polodoro Village
9	Selasa, 6 Desember 2022	Detik-detik Penambang Galian C Ilegal di Batang Kabur Saat Didatangi Satpol PP, Alat Berat	Muhammad Masqon, Head of District Law Enforcement Municipal Police of Batang.

		Ditinggal (Dilengkapi Video)	Andre, Citizen of Brokoh Village.
10	Selasa, 13 Desember 2022	Usulan Diskresi Legalkan Penambangan Gol C Ilegal saat FGD, Kejari Batang Ingatkan Ada UU Minerba	AKBP Irwan Susanto, Batang Police Chief. Ridwan Gaos N, Head of Intel Section Batang District Attorney
11	Rabu, 14 Desember 2022	Tolak Diskresi Tambang Ilegal Gol C, Pj Bupati Batang Lani : Ya Kalau Tabrak Aturan Tidak Berani	Lani Dwi Rejeki, Acting Regent of Batang
12	Kamis, 15 Desember 2022	Pemkab Tolak Diskresi Tambang Galian C Ilegal di Kawasan Hulu Kabupate Batang	A Handy Hakim, Head of Department of Enviroment of Batang Regency

DISCUSSION

Overcoming Coverage Challenges on Environmental Issues

According to an interview with Dina Indriani, it was mentioned that she has not specifically received training related to environmental journalism. However, she has a general understanding of environmental journalism. To develop her knowledge about the environment, she also often discusses with fellow journalists and reads local regulations related to environmental management in Batang District. However, Work performance must be in accordance with the specifications and requirements of the company technical, safety and environmental regulations (Sagala & Mulyono, 2021). Regarding news presentation, she admitted that she did not change her news presentation style much. However, in some news, she also uploaded supporting videos.

Regarding universalization, she said that she has been able to apply this so far. The coverage of illegal mining is supported by the media where she works, Tribun Jateng. She has also been assigned several times to cover illegal mining, although some of them are news that she made without instructions from her superiors. Regarding pressure from some parties, she admitted that she had received several threats not to publish news related to illegal mining. However, she continued reporting because she received support and security assurances from her company. She also mentioned that Tribun Jateng is not related to parties involved in illegal mining activities, so it does not affect the facts of the news they publish.

Considering Public Opinions in Reporting on Environmental Issues

From the news reported by Tribun Jateng, some of them took opinions from related parties, especially public opinions. Dina admitted that some of the news she released was feedback on information or complaints from residents. According to her, the source of information from the public is the main source of information in reporting on illegal mining issues in Batang. After receiving the information, she then conducted observations and field surveys to see in more detail how the issue was developing. Regarding the public's perspective on environmental reporting, she said that although it has not had a big impact, with the intensity of reporting on this issue, more and more people are becoming aware of the importance of voicing their opinions. As a result, more information about illegal mining in Batang can be revealed.

Minimizing Management's Role in Reporting on Environmental Information

In line with the second point, regarding journalists' autonomy, Tribun Jateng also gave Dina the opportunity to explore coverage on illegal mining. Regarding the change in

message agendas, this was also done by Tribun Jateng, where they did agenda setting to raise the issue of rejecting discretion for illegal mining. This began to be echoed by Tribun Jateng after the FGD initiated by the government through Regional Leader Communication Forum on December 13, 2022. In the FGD, there was a proposal from the government to use discretion to legalize illegal mining. Some of the Regional Leader Communication Forum officials present were both for and against this proposal. However, Tribun Jateng made the opinion of the representative of Batang District Attorney, as the focus of their reporting. At that time, they also rejected the proposal for discretion because of the Mineral Mining Law. After that, Tribun Jateng also followed up on the rejection of the proposal for discretion by Acting Regent of Batang and Head of Department of Environment of Batang Regency. So, currently, the proposal for discretion to legalize illegal mining in Batang is just an idea and still uses the previous regulations.

Prioritizing readers' interests in reporting environmental information

In terms of readers' interests, the news is presented in a way that covers both sides. Although some news articles may have only one source, they are supported by follow-up articles that are coherent with the previous reporting, in order to balance the news. However, from several news reports, there is no direct information from business owners or actors involved in illegal mining in Batang as sources for the news. In addition, regarding information pluralism, it is said that this cannot yet be maximally done because the coverage of illegal mining is still carried out with other local media in Batang Regency.

Combining education and surveillance elements in environmental news

In this point, Tribun Jateng also captured the reality of environmental issues before any movement was taken by the relevant authorities. Dina Indriani had reported on illegal mining activities that were subsequently followed up by Batang Police and Municipal Police of Batang. In terms of cost-benefit analysis, there were also some discussions, such as when reporting on the analysis of the profits and losses caused by mining, or the discourse on discretion in illegal mining. As for the activities of government agencies, the news also informed about the steps taken by Batang Police, Municipal Police of Batang in cracking down on illegal mining activities, as well as the solutions offered by the Regional Leader Communication Forum.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study can be concluded that although not specifically discussing environmental issues, Tribun Jateng implements several environmental journalism coverage strategies. This can be seen from Tribun Jateng's autonomy in allowing journalists to report environmental issues, maintaining media and journalist independence to report according to the existing reality, and also involving public opinion that is affected by illegal mining activities. However, there are still some points that have not been applied, such as the absence of specific training provided to equip environmental journalism coverage, and the lack of news that takes different sides or different presentation styles than other media presented by Tribun Jateng.

Although not fully implementing environmental journalism, indirectly, Tribun Jateng's reporting also has an impact on the follow-up actions of related parties. Such as the discourse of illegal mining discretion that was not realized, and illegal mining activities that temporarily stopped after related reports. Tribun Jateng journalists also hope that in the future, related parties will not only act to resolve current problems, but also prepare prevention measures for things that will happen in the future. Considering the growth of the industry in Batang Regency, which will continue to develop.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

This research was conducted by the author without any influence or conflict towards any parties.

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