

Framing of propaganda and negative content in Indonesian media

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Abstract The robust development of information has enabled communities to continue to use the internet in various aspects of life. An essential element of information source is social media, which has become an inseparable part of our daily activities. It can be used for various things, one of which is propaganda in politics. Such propaganda impacts the dissemination of misleading information that does not necessarily conform with the core function of mass media. Nevertheless, conflicts of interest caused by media authorities continue to confuse the public regarding information released based on facts or made only for hoax distribution. The purpose of this study was to analyse framing in online news related to propaganda problems and harmful content using the Entman framing method. The practice of hoaxes in cyberspace became a sensational topic after the expose of sites that provided paid hoax news and hate speech in Indonesia during the Indonesian presidential election in 2014. The neutrality of mass media is necessary in order to provide accurate references for the public and to filter out misleading hoaxes. The role of the media institution influences the neutrality of the media. Active participation from the community is also essential in media supervising. Furthermore, the community perceive comfortable in delivering their political participation.

Keywords: mass media; political participation; framing

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INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of the internet of things, the positive side of identity and political struggle of the Internet is still arguable (Lim, 2014). The Internet of Things (IoT) is a network of connected devices equipped with specialised software, actuators, sensors, electronics and communication systems. IoT systems are capable of tracking the physical environment, transmitting incidents and data from the physical world to the remote network for practical decision making. IoT has received considerable attention in recent years and has been the building block for many emerging domains, such as smart cities, smart industries, and smart homes (Arshad, Azad, Abdeltaif, & Salah, 2020). Younger and more educated people use various tool to access the Internet, mainly via smartphones (Puspitasari & Ishii, 2016). New mobile phones technology have been sufficiently represented in the Philippines and Indonesia (Barendregt & Pertierra, 2013).

Digital media has become an important space for Indonesians to discuss powerful issues of identity—such as what it means to be indigenous and the place of Islam in Indonesian politics and society. Religion politicisation has created assumptions that Prabowo-Sandi can represent Islamic political interests better (Sebastian, 2019).

Confidence in traditional journalism is decreasing in Southeast Asian. As a result, social media outlets such as Facebook and WhatsApp has become the primary source of information for voters. A combination of wider internet access and decreasing confidence in traditional news sources is transforming the region-wide dynamics of democracy (Tapsell, 2018, AsiaGlobalOnline, 2018).

Social media are playing an increasingly important role in political campaign communication strategies by reporting information on political preferences and opinions of political actors and their public followers (Nulty, Theocharis, Popa, Parnet, & Benoit, 2016). With more and more people using social media to obtain news and political information, whether social media helps users learn about politics has become an essential question (Lee & Xenos, 2019).

Indonesian politics is acquainted with the sights of militia groups at political rallies, demonstrations and government celebrations (Duncan, 2017). Furthermore, Duncan stated that the mass media is not only an ink, sound, or visual streaks but also aims to influence the audience to act according to expectations. The mass media seems to be an endless influential factor of public opinion. The presentation of news and information, however, sometimes takes a form of unrealised propaganda. The media actions can lead to ignorance. People may identify themselves as a persecuted group. For example, they may feel that they are oppressed people or nation. The media's mistakes may lead to destructive social action.

In addition to media conflicts stemming from private interests, the presence of conflicts may also occur from the quantity and speed of news in the internet era. At the present day, there seems to be a competition

in reporting an event by registered mainstream media institutions and new media which yet to have official legibility and factual verification. Based on data released by the *Dewan Pers Indonesia* (Indonesia Press Council) in 2016, there were 1645 mainstream and new media. Those media were divided into certain categories, which are 76 official and factually verified media, 289 official media, and 1280 factually unverified media (Isnanto, 2019).

Judging from the massive conflict in the election period, it certainly did not only emerge as a result of propaganda in the mass media. The spreading of the hoax and fake news on sensitive issues related to the issues of sexuality, religion, race, and groups (SARA) triggered various conflict in the community. An example of a hoax that caused conflicts in Indonesia is the hoax about the fire in vihara and Klenteng (Klenteng are Traditional Chinese Temple) in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra in July 2016. Another example is hoax about the influx of Chinese workers in mid-2015 which leads to the citizen undermining the credibility of the government.

The presence of false information can undoubtedly be considered as a threat to national integration. Hoaxes in the mass media may be the cause of public distrust in the news outlet as there were suspicions that the media were used as political tools by its owners. Issues on conflict of interest by the media owners may lead to audiences' confusion and doubt of the news' accuracy. Conflict of interest in the news outlet further emphasizes the belief that mass media is used as rhetorical devices to attack opponents, while false news is made based on a non-factual event but displayed like credible and intentional to mislead the audience (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017)

Based on data released by the Ministry of Communication and Information in 2017, the number of public complaints related to harmful content on news sites, social media accounts, smartphone applications, and other tools increased almost nine times in 2017. *Sarachen*, the hoax syndicates and hate speech newsmaker, were exposed on the same year. This condition seems to be a clear depiction of the potential threats hoaxes possess for national security.

Hoax is not a new topic in journalism. Alex Davies (in Gunawan & Ratmono, 2018) argued that the origin of the term "hoax" was still debatable. The Oxford English Dictionary recorded that the term hoax comes from the word "hocus," which means a deception act through implication or fiction that is enticing and mischievous, which plays trust. The hoax content is considered damaging and decreasing public trust. Sometimes, hoax exposes scandals that raise polemics involving politicians and government officials. According to Marcel Broesman (in Gunawan & Ratmono, 2018), in the mass media coverage, hoax may be caused by several factors, such as the journalists' individuals, media institutions, or news sources that misled the journalists. Nevertheless, mass media must provide balanced news following the principles of peaceful journalism to deescalate conflicts and curb hoax and fake news.

The purpose of this study was to analyse the framing of media in countering propaganda and negative content in media outlets. Furthermore, the news examined in this study were related to the underlying assumptions that mass media provides trust and comfort for the citizens' political participation.

In the digital age, creative use of social media has grown in popularity, mainly in its association with political participation (Zhu, Chan, & Chou, 2019). The news, both on social media and mass media, indirectly influences the public's political participation. Moreover, the development of the internet today increasingly helps the flow of information and seems to strengthen the people choice. For example, the news on mass media that supports the competing presidential candidates.

Some affiliated mass media may exploit the news to support their chosen candidates. The media may present the positive side of their candidates, such as theirs. In contrast, they may display the negative side of their candidate's rival to raise their number of supporters. Data released by PolMark Research Centre in *kompas.com* on the damage to friendships due to differences in votes for the presidential candidate showed that the verified media should provide neutral space as a tool to filter the news that discourages potential candidates. This idea encourages mass media to remain in the corridor of its function, which is to inform, educate, and entertain without causing disunity.

METHODOLOGY

This research used descriptive qualitative analysis method. The method was chosen because it can provide a complete and detailed depiction. Therefore, the research objectives were expected to reveal hidden facts based on supporting data on how the media maintain neutrality and gain public trust during the 2019 presidential election.

Qualitative research is focused on investigating and understanding the significance of social or human issues in which specific individuals or organisations are considered to have emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By using this approach, the result of the research is expected to close to reality through the collected data. Thus, the process of analysis was extracting facts to observe the symptoms that occurred in the aspects studied. The neutrality of the mainstream mass media can be formed and become a mean for a filter for the public in their political participation.

The method of analysis illustrates how the media presents problem formation in connection with the exclusivity of the media in presenting the efforts or process of problem formation to the public. Framing is a way to find out how to convey a story to the media about an event by seeing how the event is discussed and framed by the media (Sobur, 2001).

The basis of the framing method is an attempt to highlight the problem. When an event occurs, it should be noted that the emphasis is

placed on the accent emphasis and additional grammar that can attract the audience to remember it. Framing makes ideas, or events more easily understood, noticed, remembered and organised by the public, because of the thought formation process.

Entman categorised framing into two specific dimensions: the choice of issues and the distinction or importance from reality or issues of certain aspects. Press framing is achieved by choosing those topics and avoiding specific issues. Framing is an approach to find out how journalists select issues and write news from specific perspectives.

Table 1. Two Elements of Media Version of Entman Version

Issue selection	This aspect is related to the selection of facts. From reality, which aspects are complex and diverse, which aspects are chosen to be displayed? This process takes into account the parts that are included or excluded. Not all aspects or parts of the problem must be displayed, so reporters choose certain aspects of a problem.
Highlighting certain aspects of an issue	This aspect is related to the fact of writing. When certain aspects of an event/issue are chosen, how are these aspects written? This is closely related to using certain words, sentences, pictures and images to be displayed to the audience.

Source: (Eriyanto, 2002)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Massive productions and circulations of hoaxes emerged with the presence of the new media. Hoaxes were more widely circulated during elections. The existence of hoaxes in cyberspace began to become a hot topic when several hoaxes and hate speech sites in Indonesia were exposed during the 2014 Presidential Election. These sites included "saracennews.com", "postmetro.co", "portalpiyungan.co", and "NBCIndonesia.com". These sites pretended to criticize the incumbent, but actually, they were spreading false information.

The administrators of the hoax sites argued that the virtual world provided a space for them to voice their aspirations or criticism. Unfortunately, the criticism was riddled with hatred commentary. As a result, it was difficult to distinguish between objective fact-based criticisms and hate speech.

The spreading hoaxes did not only involve the administrators of the site, but some people were involved voluntarily. According to Sekor and Walsh (in Gunawan & Ratmono, 2018), these volunteers were the hoax consumers who placed themselves as conspirators and became one of the elements of success in spreading hoaxes.

The production patterns of hoax sites depended on news outlets in the mainstream media. Frequently, hoax sites did not make and produce their news. The hoax site administrators relied on observing news in mainstream and conventional media, in which they would identify issues that might later be used to cause controversy. The primary purpose of this activity was to hinder their rivals in any possible way. Some hoax

sites even use certain mainstream media as a source of references and then twist the original news.

The modus operandi of the hoax sites was to choose news from the mainstream media, and the rearrange or modify it. The modification process was carried out in various ways. First, the administrators of hoax sites presented accurate news mixed with fictional issues. Notably, they utilised issues that can mobilise sentiments and trigger hate speech. Second, the administrator of hoax sites did not alter the original news but might change the headline of the article to make it more dramatic and provocative. Some of the readers did not read the entire contents of the article; therefore, the controversial title might lead the readers to give false judgement. Third, the admins wrote a piece of substantial news with legitimate source, but then used language that was dishonest, emotional, or triggering. Fourth, the admin changed the title or the caption of the photo to be more provocative and tendentious. Fifth, they used images of an unrelated event but arranged it as if the news and images were somehow related to provoke the readers.

The research published by the Indonesian Telematics Society (Mastel) in February 2017 shows the massive circulation of hoaxes through social media. Mastel's research showed that the public received 92,4 per cent of hoaxes through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Path, Line, Whatsapp, and Telegram. Hoax contents were also discovered through chat applications (62.8 per cent), emails (3.1 per cent), and websites (34.9 per cent). The hoaxes were also found in mainstream media, but not as many as in the new media. The breakdowns of percentage were 8.7 per cent from television, 1.3 per cent from radio, and 5 per cent from printed media.

Implications

Political participation is a process of political communication carried out by the community in order to distribute their rights in implementing the principles of democracy. It is a way of the government of providing access and freedom for their citizens, which is absolutely necessary for a democratic state. The freedom to participate in politics is also a characteristic of political modernisation in a country. The common misperception is an idea on the implementation of political policy can only be carried out by a group of elites. The truth is, the involvement of citizens who vote in the elections is crucial. Although, later in the formulation of state policy, the voice of citizen may not be considered in the process.

As a democratic state, political participation shows the legitimacy of a community in the development of a country. Every vote given by the public through elections can be one of the efforts in developing the country. Every citizen has their preference which is considered as the smartest choice to distribute their aspirations. Citizens' voices are also crucial for those who compete in practical politics. In addition, the

number of votes obtained can help political actors to continue their political career in government.

Citizens have control over the government through elections because the level of citizen control is generally not in the realm of practical politics. Political participation is one way to fulfil political rights for citizens. The act of fulfilling political rights is included in the freedom for every citizen to express their opinions. This right has been stated in the 1945 Constitution article 28: "freedom of association and assembly to express thoughts through oral and written and so determined by law".

Efforts to increase public interest in distributing their political aspirations can also be made through socialization and political education. The role of social institutions turned out to be important amidst the efforts of political literacy carried out by the government. In addition, mass media also play a role in education and political socialization.

After the reform of the information disclosure era, there is no doubt that press freedom is more pronounced. The media can gain access to information more easily and in a balanced way to convey the government's policy message to the public. It can even be said that through mass media, communication between the government and the public can be facilitated. Therefore, media neutrality is absolutely necessary as a link for communication and outreach to the public. Thus, the information provided is correct and does not cause misunderstanding. Furthermore, public trust in the media can grow and encourage the public to use their political aspirations.

Reflecting on the problems that occurred in the 2014 Presidential Election, conflicts of interest threatened the neutrality of the media. Also, a large number of non-credible and illegitimate media appeared. Such media may confuse the audience. Media affiliation with certain political parties makes the neutrality of the news presented questionable. Finally, the practice of media propaganda developed with various negative issues regarding media neutrality.

The public was confused in determining which media are neutral and balanced. One of the reasons for the confusion was that in the 2014 presidential election there were differences in the results of the quick count in the two media in which both media founders had different political affiliations.

Therefore, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission or KPI as the media watchdog must maintain media neutrality from political interests, maintain media credibility, and avoid conflicts among political party supporters. On 18 February 2019, KPI contacted MetroTV and the MNC TV group about media neutrality. KPI demanded clarification on violations that occurred in the field observation of the products of the two media journalists (kpu.go.id, February 20, 2019). Then, in order to ensure comfort in obtaining information from the media, KPI also appealed for the media to provide better quality information, especially regarding elections. (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, 2018).

KPI's efforts were indeed in line with the application of the prevention of negative propaganda that might be used in the media. Propaganda is an important thing that is important to investigate because it is seen as a powerful way to influence political decisions (Sutanto, 2014). Collective behaviour is the framing of public opinion about the value of an issue without considering physical closeness. Significant symbols provide stimuli which leads to the production of a reaction. In society, propaganda is seen as a tool that can overcome social disruption as a result of technological change that is very fast (Bachtiar, A. Y., & Savitri, 2015).

According to communication experts, the practice of propaganda is divided into three types based on its characteristics, namely "White Propaganda", "Black Propaganda", and "Gray Propaganda". White Propaganda is honest and sporty propaganda in delivering content based on legitimate sources. Typically, this propaganda comes from known sources and is characterised by softer persuasion methods that conform to standards and techniques in public relations and biased presentations in an argumentation (Bachtiar, A. Y., & Savitri, 2015). Black propaganda is a type of propaganda that is cunning, fake, dishonest and makes negative arguments to accuse opponents by using false information to bring up negative responses related to their opponents. Meanwhile, Gray Propaganda is a form of persuasive direction whose source is not very clear, which raises doubts. This type of propaganda appears in advertisements that seem to state that they are neutral, but will continue to provide misleading information.

In 1920, the media explicitly designed to reach the broad society were formed. This kind of media was targeted for the people with low economic levels because these groups were considered to have a higher dependency and need for mass media compared to high economy communities. People with a high economy have more diverse opportunities to access information and even can ask directly from expert sources. Therefore, they are considered to have a lower dependency on mass media.

The media is a market where wisdom is sold freely. In fact, not infrequently the contents of this media can be dangerous. This statement implies that newspapers do not always contain the truth. News content depends on the perspective and facts chosen. The content of the news presented is considered to be able to influence the reader to act in accordance with the direction of the media as if persuading the audience continuously (Bachtiar, A. Y., & Savitri, 2015).

The role of the media in delivering propaganda is sometimes subtle. This happens when media institutions obtained the wrong information and then broadcast it to the public. Thus, the media's mistakes become the public's mistakes, who believed in the media because they were not able to identify the mistake. Often, community members take positions that are too personal. Many people see news represent their position as an intimidated group. Mistakes and misleading information in the media

are considered influential on some tragic social events; therefore, media regulatory bodies, such as the Press Council, KPI, the Indonesian Journalists Association, and PWI are vital in minimizing and evaluating media errors before they become a long-standing problem.

The mass media compiles news that is considered necessary. Although in reality, not all news content is needed by the public. News selection is needed to match the needs of readers. The composition of news content will later influence the mindset of the reader, and ultimately the effect will make a change in the community.

McQuail considers the mass media as a window of experience that broadens his view. Therefore, the public is expected to understand what is happening without the need for linguists to intervene. Also, the mass media are expected to write their news based on journalism rules concerning writing with 5w + 1h (what, who, where, when, why and how). This must be done so that readers will be able to understand the contents of the news.

The mass media has various roles, including sharing information (to inform), both on current problems and information about a person's new ideas and thoughts. During an election, politics are an important issue that continues to be sought because the public needs to know the political actors who are competing in the election. The role of the media is also needed to quell the opposing fanaticism of supporters. An example of news that extinguishes such conflict is balanced reporting and informing peaceful campaign efforts, such as the peace campaign carried out by young Solo entrepreneurs who state '01 + 02 = Us' (Isnanto, 2019).

Furthermore, another role of the media is as an educational channel (to educate). Through its reporting, the media tries to provide information that enlightens and broadens the reader's insight. For example, the news about "*Bahaya Hoax Sangat Dahsyat, Jadilah Pemilih Cerdas!*" (The Dangers of Hoax is Very Powerful, Be Smart Voters!) (Wibisono, 2019). The headline showed that the role of the media in the context of political education in society is a mean of conveying information that as smart voters, people must plan their vote for the right candidate. So, they can aspire their ideas and obligations as citizens.

The third role is for entertaining (to entertain). The media is needed to write news that does not require deep thought, for example, for sports news. The last role of the media is to influence the people (to influence). Independent and free mass media will efficiently carry out the control function on public policy. The media has a control function which must be used to influence the people to take part in monitoring the state. The media does not only controls the authorities, the government, the parliament, the judiciary, the military, but also matters in the community itself (Bachtiar & Savitri, 2015).

The significant role of mass media in informing and influencing their readers is done through its news content, which is expected to be free

from the dangers of hoaxes. Propaganda efforts in the media may be intended to encourage provocative public response. If a hoax site is in a relationship with politicians and critics who often criticize and conflict with incumbents, then it is very likely that the mass media has a political affiliation for several reasons.

On current media news titles, such as "*Amien Rais Serang Jokowi: Kalau Memori Nggak Kuat, Jangan Bohong!*" (Amien Rais Attacks Jokowi: If (Your) Mind Is Not Strong Enough, Don't Lie!) (Sidik, 2019) and "*Amien Rais: Pemerintahan Jokowi Sudah Hancur Lebur*" (Amien Rais: Jokowi's Governmental Has Been Melting Down), it can be seen that the media were currently trying to avoid the elements of propaganda and hoaxes. The decision to write the name Amien Rais on the title was an attempt to deliver precise information so that the media does not mislead its readers. Those media implied that the headline does not represent the media's view, but rather what a politician named Amin Rais represent. This is an act of avoidance of hoax propaganda and news (Adhitia, 2019).

Furthermore, in the article "*Jokowi Tunjukkan Pena yang Dianggap Alat Bantu Dengar*" (Jokowi Shows the Pen That Is Accused as Hearing Device)" and "*(Klarifikasi) Jokowi Pakai Alat Bantu Komunikasi Saat Debat Kedua*" (The Clarification on) Jokowi Uses Communication Devices during the Second Debate Issue), it can be seen that the titles of the news are still unprovocative and free from propaganda and hoaxes elements. Both articles contain a piece of information so that the public does not become worried about the issues that developed after the second round of the presidential election debate (Dewi, 2019).

Without news articles about clarifying suspicious allegations against presidential candidates, there was no doubt that the news would trigger a conflict between the supporters of two candidates who compete in the election. Some of these articles were examples of articles that used framing techniques to emphasize facts in their headlines. The body of this article presented facts, unprovocative, avoided propaganda by political interests and did not use false sources.

CONCLUSION

The neutrality of the mass media is needed, so citizens can have references to filter hoaxes and false news. Institutions such as the Indonesian Press Council, KPI, AJI and PWI have an essential part for the media. These institutions ensure the quality of the news presented by the media per the journalistic code of ethics. Also, with existing supervision, media workers can avoid pressure from groups that have conflicts of interest. So that the mass media can maintain its function to educate the public under the applicable legal references and also become a tool to filter out provocative news by irresponsible groups. However, the act of monitoring media neutrality will no doubt be easily achieved with the help of public participation. So that the public will

always get a sense of security and comfort when using their political participation.

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