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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



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**MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR THOMAS ENDRES- CONFERENCE CHAIR
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On behalf of the School of Communication at the University of Northern Colorado (USA), it is my pleasure to join with our wonderful TIIKM colleagues and invite you to the 2nd World Conference on Media and Mass Communication (MEDCOM 2016). One exciting feature of MEDCOM is that media educators and practitioners have the chance to share interdisciplinary ideas with colleagues attending the simultaneous International Conference on Education (ICEDU).

This year's MEDCOM theme – “Technology: Its Impact on Media and the Way we Communicate” – opens the door to many lively presentations and discussions on critical communicative, relational, pedagogical, and of course, technological issues facing us today. Technology in media serves to both unite us together in a world grown increasingly small, and divide us as we use and abuse the technology to alter and bias mediated messages. It is our responsibility as media scholars to investigate these ideas. Please review the list of potential tracks offered on the conference site and know that your research and your perspective is welcomed and valued.

We look forward to an enjoyable and educational gathering in Bangkok. TIIKM staff are working hard to provide us the best in professional accommodations and leisure opportunities. Bangkok leaders tell us that the city, with its many brilliant temples and palaces, looks as if it were designed by angels. Come see for yourself!

Prof. Thomas G. Endres

Director,
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University of Northern Colorado,
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THE FACEBOOK PAGES OF PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2016: DISCOURSE ON NETWORK SOCIETY'S POLITICAL VOICE AND LEGITIMACY

Cecilia Fe L Sta Maria-Abalos

University of the Philippines Baguio

Abstract

The “network society,” as located in the net space, is currently being used for varied political agenda in the Philippines and has gained political power for its users in the disbursement of information, raising political opinions and possessing the capacity to unify a political stance. With the coming Presidential election in the Philippines, the net space is once again being utilized to deliver political platforms of the candidates which may influence greatly the turn-out of the election. Given the current trend in the net space, this paper is not exactly about who wins the presidential election, but more so about the net space and the “network society” that focuses on this primary question: How is political opinion being shaped? This paper is a reading of the Facebook pages of Philippine Presidential candidates for 2016. Textual and discourse analyses as methods used to elaborate on: network centre and de-centre, social morphology and personalization of politics. Providing a re-definition of communication, this paper then provides the inextricable links between the network society's identity, power and culture as it exacerbates discussions on political voice and political legitimacy in the net space.

Keywords: social media, political communication, Network Society, Philippine Presidential Elections 2016

INTRODUCTION

This coming May 9, 2016, the Filipino people will be voting for its 16th President. Filipinos aged 18 above will be selecting from this list of official Presidential candidates:

Jejomar Binay – POLITICAL PARTY: UNO – United Opposition and the current Vice President of the Philippines

Rodrigo Duterte – POLITICAL PARTY: PDP Laban and the current Mayor of Davao City

Grace Poe- POLITICAL PARTY: INDEPENDENT and the currently serving as Senator.

Mar Roxas – POLITICAL PARTY: LP- Liberal Party and currently the Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary

Miriam Santiago – POLITICAL PARTY – PEOPLE'S REFORM PARTY and currently serving

as Senator

Campaign season in the Philippines has always been colourful and all Filipinos are usually glued to varied media types: TV, radio, newspapers, etc., watching and listening to the candidates' platforms. If not, varied face-to-face communication is conducted, from formal public debates and forums to informal and lay discussions.

Year 2016 will not only bring to light the track of the country's state when a new President assumes the position but what also needs to be examined further is the re-shaping of political opinions among Filipino voters who are now engaged in a new form and space of communication that is pivotal in the construction

of political opinion. This year is not only crucial for the change of political hands in the country but more so in the shift of communication access and use of

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many Filipinos that will set a precedent in shaping the new political public sphere that has re-located to the net space.

Moving away from the usual mode of visibility in television, radio and print, what is being rampantly used as source of information is the net space. Blogs, online news, etc. are among the online spaces explored by Presidential candidates as a vehicle for disbursing information about themselves and their political platforms. Because Filipinos are now relying greatly on information sourced from the net, Presidential candidates have found a faster, cheaper and more accessible means of communicating to the public: the Social Networking Sites (SNS), specifically the Facebook. With visibility in the Facebook, we are now witnessing a trend in the way political opinion is being shaped.

This paper then takes primary concern on media visibility of Philippine Presidential candidates in the net space, specifically in the Facebook. A content analysis of their Facebook pages, Presidential candidates' posts, links, comment threads, etc. were monitored from the official filing date of candidacy in October 2016 until February 28, 2016. The reading of their Facebook pages enabled the elaborations on the shaping of political opinions of individual Facebook engagers, expounding on the following:

The current space of the public sphere in relation to the shift in the use of space

Re-definition of communication based on its salient features in the online space that is contributory to the shaping of political opinion

Re-construction of citizens' identity, power and culture, and,

Personalization of politics in the net space in relation to political voice and political legitimacy in the net space

The New Public Sphere

Habermas (1996, cited in Castells, 2008, p. 78) says that "between the state and society lies a public sphere, 'a network for communicating points of view.'" As part of a society, citizens essentially should form a public sphere that can serve as an arena for communicating political issues in order to make a strong political stance to "articulate their autonomous views to influence political institutions in society" (Castells, 2008). The public sphere, because it is

"between the state and society," (2008) acts as a mediating body that provides check and balance in the implementation of certain political policies. Key elements imperative in the forming of a public sphere are: space and communication exchange and flow. The space acts as the venue or arena for individuals to conglomerate in order to communicate freely, exchanging varied points of view on political issues in order to arrive at a rational decision that will be articulated and hopefully to influence political policy making and implementation.

All Presidential candidates are currently visible in the online space, through the Facebook, which presents a different set of features. The net space, which is not bounded by a specific political territory, is now "constituted around a media system" (Castells, 2008). In this shift then, this media system, en sans the net space, possess the "capacity of social movements to change the public mind" (2008) but is very much dependent on the kind of political debate and discussion emanating from the net space. Moving away from the Information Age, Castells (2000) explains that the current state of society revolves around technological information that is located in the net space. Constituted by a "paradigm around microelectronics-based information/communication technologies" (2000, p. 5) wherein individuals are networked and the dominant activities circumvent around information as space proviso.

The net space has produced a social group who can be active social actors that are bounded by information. It has constructed a global structure that is not bounded by national or political territorial time and space. It may be owned by certain administrators and net providers but the massive use of individuals and groups who are "networked" or connected through access of common information, albeit a common locale and time, may possess the power to influence political opinion. The net space then has produced a new public sphere.

Re-definition of Communication

Hypertext

What strengthens this new public sphere is the use of symbolic communication or hypertext as means for exchange and interaction. As part of their binding communication culture, net users are medium-oriented because knowledge and information is located in the net space as a “medium wherein

technology becomes indispensable” (Castells, 2000, p. 14). The medium or the net space is constructed around a set of symbolic codes with images, memes, videos, minuscule comments and dialoguing becomes the net space’s form of communication that further strengthens their “shared cultural codes” (2000, p, 21).



Figure 1. Sample of Hypertext Through A video

Given the space considerations in the net; to cite a few, photos, videos, images and other links become the basis of meaning exchange. Facebook engagers then establish a “cultural meaning” online. As examples, LIKE or SHARE becomes synonymous to agreement and showing of support. Noticeable is that most of the posts with photographs of the candidates or poster-like images tend to earn more number of LIKES and SHARES. Facebook supporters and followers of the Presidential candidates tend to take

partiality towards posts that contain less written texts. Given the nature of the net space, accommodations for hypertext become a clear preference and a communication choice. Observing this trend of meaning exchange in the net space shows a trend that sets aside text-heavy and elaborated forms of language because the medium or the net space takes parlance to hypertext, it reconstructs a new social morphology for communication. Reliance to information presented in the net space becomes a

“social logic [that] becomes that of a competition and struggle for information” (Castells, 2000).

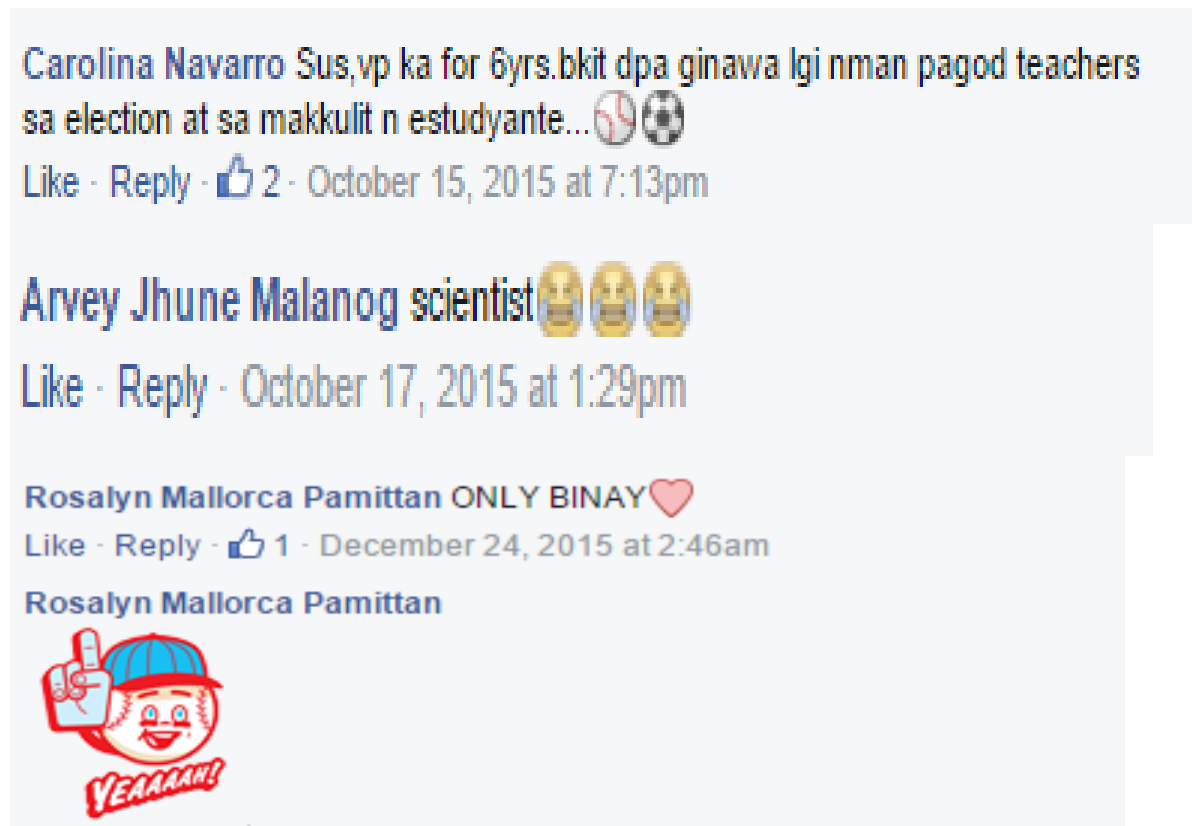


Figure 2. Comments with Memes as Replacement for Worded Texts

Observable in the Facebook pages of Presidential candidates are comment threads utilizing hypertexts. Facebook users tend to reply with comments by posting another image (e.g., heart, facial expression emoticons, and other images). In the net space, words are replaced with images to elaborate on a certain opinion. This is acceptable for Facebook users because they understand such meanings. Communication exchanges then take on a different

social norm or communication cues that are different from that in the offline space.

If communication is not through exchange of symbols and images, the threads present a series of comments that attempt to do discussion taking the hypertext as the springboard for information.

**Grace Poe**
November 7, 2015 · 🌐

These leaders and I share a commitment to build a society where no Filipino will be left behind, a country where everyone will be able to reap the fruits of economic growth and enjoy life in a safe and progressive environment. Together, there is nothing we cannot achieve for the country #WalangMaiwan #PGP2016



48k Views

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

3,220 people like this. Top Comments ▾

**Danica Dawn Caseres Caberte** Go, Senator Poe! We believe in your cause and we are with you all the way! 😊
Like · Reply · 👍 41 · November 7, 2015 at 10:21pm

**Sheenos Lagundi** POE till the end.
Like · Reply · 👍 1 · November 8, 2015 at 3:03am

**Amante del Mundo** Yang si Amando Doronilla, hindi lang na-appoint na official ambassador sa Timbaktu-- sa panahon ni Arroyo (sa kabilang ng backing at suporta ni Arroyo) ay nagpuputak-putak ngayon laban sa isang malakas na kandidato sa pagkapangulo na gaya ni Grace Poe.
Sino ang gusto niya, si Binay na maka-People's Republic of China o si Roxas na mahinang lider-- laging palpak ang sinasabi?
Like · Reply · November 8, 2015 at 7:03am · Edited

**Gerv Aguilar** The nine member tribunal is composed of three Supreme Court justices (Carpio, De Castro, and Associate Justice Arturo Brion) and six senators (Sotto, Villar, Cayetano, Nancy Binay, Bam Aquino, and Loren Legarda) its like an impeachment process.. a number games. carpio already said that grace poe is not natural born citizen.. cayetano also said its easy for her to decide if the DNA test is possitive. im sure 100% with this people to decide grace poe will be disqualified.. i bet my 100 pesos in my wallet
Like · Reply · 👍 1 · November 8, 2015 at 11:58am

**Voltaire Balbastro** All the way to the States ?
Like · Reply · November 9, 2015 at 12:22am

Figure 4. Comments Not Related to Main Post

In Poe's post in Figure 4 that shows a photograph of herself with a statement that says "*No Filipino will be left behind*" and citing that all Filipinos should be part of economic growth, garnered more than 3,000 likes. Comments posted is not limited to expressions of support. Instead, it became a platform to talk about Poe's citizenship and to bash other candidates.

What is evident in these kinds of Facebook pages is presentation of limited information but with conversations and replies of Facebook users with extreme and nonsensical comments. Because this is primarily used as a source of information for most voters, posts such as these elicits more questions and confusion about information contained in the post and in the thread of comments.

If this is the current direction of communication social morphology, Facebook users then tend to rely solely on the information provided in these pages and are tentatively satisfied with these posts. When a user is on Facebook, he/she is usually surfing other sites that may not have anything to do with the topic being discussed in the page. The liking and showing support and non-support, the comments posted which are usually left unanswered provides limited access to pertinent information that is very much needed in forming a political opinion.

Castells notes that the "predominance of social morphology over social action" may lead to a problematic communication social morphology (2000, p. 16). Considering that this kind of communication is currently happening in the net space, this may be consequential to apathy. The struggle for information in the net space, as limited to hypertext becomes an individual struggle whether to pursue further information with regards to the post or to stop and leave the post and become satisfied with this information. Because the new public sphere is medium oriented, and information presented in the net space becomes the ultimate source, what emerges is the practice of automatically taking in of information without weighing the information presented.

Foucault (1977, in Thompson 2005, p. 39) says that the spread of information in the net space becomes a new training and form of discipline in thinking and processing of information because this space tends to "normalize the power of the gaze". Meaning, what information is available in the new public sphere and

the way people communicate with this new kind of social morphology may be actualized in social practice. A social structure built on information and totally reliant to the medium is perceived as dangerous because people tend to take in information that is only available. Though the users may post questions, ample weighing of information, such as, if this information is accurate, thorough, sincere, etc. cannot be wholly provided by the new public sphere. Though users of Facebook may post opinions and questions online, translating it to social action is not an assurance.

Such reliance to hypertext is consequential to the way people will think and formulate their political opinions that is only provided by the overt hypertexts present in the net space. Contextualizing these statements in this paper, Facebook users then, due to their reliance to available information, may actually decide on whose Facebook page provides the most information or the catchiest types of information which may not exactly be logical.

Flow and Spread Resulting to "Equity"

Castells notes that "networks dissolve centres, they disorganize hierarchy, and make materially impossible the exercise of hierarchical power without processing instructions in the network, according to the network morphological use" (2000, p. 19). Rampant use of hypertext afforded by the flow and spread of communication in the net space tends to diffuse the concept of centre. In the offline space, communication is usually centred by the structuring and forming a "source or authority" that tends to choose the messages or information to be disbursed to the audience. In contrast to the offline space, not everyone is technically reached by the messages disbursed which brings about problems and questions on equity in access to information, type of messages received, selectivity of audience and the source who tends to centralize information.

The shift of the public sphere from the offline space to that of the online space, in a way, remedied this problem by:

1. dissolving the usual concept of the "source," through immediacy in spreading and disbursing information through re-posts, shares and likes

2. equally viewed and shared hypertext by most Facebook users because they technically see the same posts
3. freedom to comment regardless of class, sex, educational status and the like which cannot be controlled.

Given the number of Likes earned by the Presidential candidates in their Facebook Pages, all of them reached more than 1 million likes. Because this is automated by the Facebook function, this then becomes the number of posts, vis a vis, the number of new sources. Looking at it deductively then, this is the number of re-shares and the chances of spreading information about these candidates.

The net space in itself is “value-free or neutral” (Castells, 2000, p. 16) and is dependent on the communication goals and agenda of its users. In the case of Facebook page used for campaigns, because it is dependent on individual connections and “friendships,” re-posts of hypertext in an individual’s Facebook page only appears as a post for viewing, unless attached with overt statements of support for the candidate. Thus, the re-posted hypertext of the candidate is viewed by other “friends.” This viewing is a covert form of showing support as naturalized by the cultural meaning in the net space.

Communication Goal

Given the presence of hypertext and the freedom to communicate, the communication goals then become too fluid and flexible for every user making the net space a potent avenue for competition and assertion of socio-political logic. Grossman says that the net space if “designed with care, can offer society the opportunity both to engage more people in the democratic practices and to engage people more directly in new ways... that can offer the chance to empower people” (in Holeyton 1998, p. 204). Therefore, if the SNS is controlled properly and with precision, an individual whose socio-political goals are equitable possess that opportunity and chance to engage and influence other users in order to shape certain political policies.



Figure 5. Post of Miriam Defensor Santiago that elicited good arguments

In Santiago’s post about the foreign military bases in the Philippines (See Figure 5 above), comments elicited from this post enabled the Facebook users to conduct a good discussion on this issue. Observable is that Santiago’s communication goal to conduct exchanges on the issue was achieved. Unfortunately, not all Facebook Pages of Presidential candidates elicited the same results. Katz said that the problem

arises because “ideas almost never remain static on the Web...[Information, comments, etc.]. instead, messages are launched like children into the world, where they are altered by the many environments, they pass through, almost never coming back in the same form which they left” (in Holeyton, 1998, p. 216). Please See Figure 6 below.



Figure 6. Binay's Post with insertion of a new Communication Goal

In Figure 6 above, Binay is laying down his platform for teachers. Comments ranged from showing support and dislike to the post which presented a non-linear, non-logical flow of communication. Magnified as well is the insertion of a Facebook user to present another communication agenda by posting a link about a child in need of a bone marrow transplant. Therefore, in launching socio-political campaigns in the net space, communication goals may revert or take into another form, continuously re-directing communication goals that are spreading like wildfire without reaching a lucid consensus, or worse, may contribute to confusion towards reaching a

strong and logical political opinion. Katz further elaborates that due to the freedom to communicate as provided in the net space, a new mode of rationalization may occur—that which is composed of “disorganized public discussions” which may result to “confrontation, misinformation, and insults” (in Holeyton, 1998, p. 222). This may be consequential to further apathy of other individual users who may become confused and disappointed by the varying information posted online, or worse, a counter social action that may be too difficult to control in the offline space.

Personalization Politics

Given the nature of the space for the new public sphere, the shaping of political opinion present in the Facebook pages of the Philippine presidential candidates takes on the form of what Van Aelst, Sheafer and Stanyer (2011, p. 204) refers to as “personalization of politics.” This is indicative of “focus on individual politicians as central actors in the political arena, including their ideas, capacities and policies” with two main features: individualization and privatization (Van Aelst, et. al, 2011, p. 204). Individualization is referred to as a “shift in media visibility from political parties to individual politicians or candidates” (2011). Both individualization and personalization focus on the “politician as occupier of a public role to the politician as a private person, distinct from their public role” (Van Aelst, et. al., 2011, p. 204). Currently evidenced in the Facebook pages of the Philippine presidential candidates are the shifting of the normative political structures that separates the candidates from the political parties.

Given the history of political system in the Philippines wherein the political parties shape the structures for running the government, the candidacy and campaign platforms already shows the separation between the candidate and the political party. Upon filing for official candidacy, these candidates posted in their respective Facebook pages announcing their political plans. Though they are connected to certain political parties, the candidates only mentioned them but did not exactly focus on the more cohesive and compounded political stances of their respective parties. This reflects a shift in political system wherein the Filipinos are made to focus on the individual candidate.

The continuing separation of the candidate from the political party or the process of individualization is consequential to the style of political marketing strategy to emphasize the candidate as a person that is devoid of hidden political agenda. Van Aelst, Sheafer and Stanyer point out that the growing trend in the use of media has made the users and potential voters focus “ ‘attention on ‘personal life’ on one hand and the attention on more ‘personal characteristics’ on the other as two distinct sub-dimensions” (Van Aelst, et. al., 2011, p. 207).

Looking into the Facebook pages of the Philippine Presidential candidates, posts range from taking on the image as a grandfather, a husband, a loving wife, a daughter, etc. that highlight their varied social roles. Upon posting such highlights, the candidates wishes the Facebook engagers to see them as a person who prioritize their private social roles.

Perceived as a sub-dimension of privatization, in the case of the Presidential candidates’ Facebook pages, their personal life and personal characteristics are closely linked. Prominent in the candidates’ Facebook pages are also characteristics as a public figure who came from a poor family, an entertainer, and the like. Characteristics of the candidates are posted to create an image, not only as a politician, but more so as an individual with so called good qualities.

A spin-off as well in the Facebook pages as used for campaign is the establishment of direct relationship of the Presidential candidates with the Facebook users. Miriam Santiago utilizes this style very well. Her posts tend to be serious but usually injected with humour. Jojo Binay establishes intimacy with users by presenting his background as poor and how he is usually picked on because of his appearance. Roxas tends to project himself as a person who is rich but likes a simple life. Duterte’s courage becomes a focal concern in his pages while Grace Poe establishes intimacy with the users by forwarding her relationship with her father and how being an American citizen is a non-issue because she wants to serve the country. Extrapolating from these posts, one can see, based on the number of likes and shares, these posts appeal greatly to most Filipino voters.

Given the nature of the new public sphere, the “mediated political communication is more personalized” and the argument on this now is “based on degree and not the kind” ((Van Aelst, et. al. , 2011, p. 205). The net space then becomes an available venue for political marketing, in which socio-political issues are not the main message being debated upon, but it becomes the person carrying the socio-political issue. Therefore, the struggle for political advantage in the net space is the struggle for a personality that will be palatable for potential voters.

In the case of these candidates, an individual who likes their page provides the semblance to the

individual user's account that he/she is connected and associated to the candidate. Acknowledging the fact that individuals by nature wish for a semblance of connection with others to enrich one's social life, the Facebook then becomes a powerful tool for establishing this kind of connection with potential voters.

To map the concept of political opinion shaping as reflected in the use of Facebook by Philippine Presidential candidates, the most salient factor is the use of the medium which is the online space that

re-shaped the public sphere and re-constructed communication through the use of hypertext, relegated the communication flow and spread resulting to a very fluid communication goal. Given the alterations in communication process present in the net space, what is emphasized is the personalization of politics that continuously shape the political opinions of net users. Please see Figure 7 below.

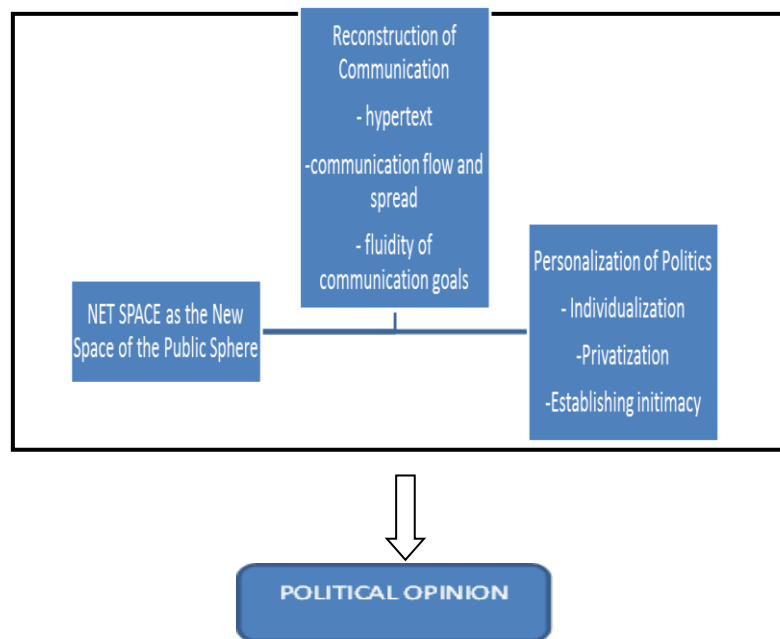


Figure 7. Concept Map of Political Opinion in the Facebook

Shape of Political Opinion: Culture, Identity and Questions on Political Legitimacy

The shape of political opinion evident in the Facebook pages of Philippine presidential candidates reflects a new public sphere that is medium and visually oriented. Emanating from the use of the net space is the culture of “mediated visibility that is not just a vehicle through which aspects of social and political life are brought to the attention of others but also has become a principal means by which social and political struggles are carried out” (Thompson, 2007, p. 49). The new public sphere is constructed massively by technology that is bombarded by information and messages that compete for visibility and validation. Information in the online space struggles for visibility in the attempt to dominate the net space through appearance and capacity for spreading.

Thompson explains the bombardment of information as: (2007, p. 48)

“more intensive in the sense that the sheer quantity of information flow is much greater than before... and more extensive in the sense that the range of individuals who are drawn into these networks of communication are capable of receiving and responding immediately” (2007).

Consequential to the information struggle, the following may happen:

- tendency for information to be shared and re-posted even if these messages are vague and lacks elaboration which may be accepted as true, and/or,
- chances wherein even if the messages are important, they may be neglected.

These kinds of interruption in information and discussion tend to convolute the issues that need attention and elaboration vital in making a political opinion. Moreover, too many information, compounded by numerous comments from other users, the net space becomes a battleground for the most attractive information with the strongest comments.

What is currently proliferating is the “*culture of mediated visibility*”, (Thompson, 2005, p. 49) due to the presence of all kinds of information in the online space. This can be contributory to the political packaging of the candidate but may also serve as counter-productive. Too much exposure to messages and information that adhere to personalization politics emanate a concept of “politics of trust” (2005, p. 49). The candidates may appear to be more human and connected to the user but the eroding of public and private boundaries may become the sole basis for choosing and voting. This kind of erosion of the public and private boundaries bank on personality, credibility and integrity of the candidate as an individual divorced from his/her political work. The cornerstone of politics then take focal concerns on the candidate’s personality and personal characteristics (i.e., kind, humorous, smart, sympathetic, a good family man or woman, etc.) which is outweighed by his/her political platform. Perceived danger is when the net users learn something about the candidate that questions the projected personality, he/she becomes rendered as unworthy and of low credibility that will spread immediately in the net space.

The permeating culture in the net space that highlights hypertext and information, with parlance to individual characteristics, construct a confusing identity, both for the candidate and the net space users as well. As one is continuously exposed to information the borders between online and offline reality may become blurry. Reliance to information present in the net space is still perceived by potential voters as a struggle for political advantage that may result to ambivalent voters.

The interplay between character of the candidate and his/her own political platforms is not exactly an assurance in gaining political advantage. Because of the saturation of information on the character of the candidate outweighed by the number of information on political platform lead to confusion, which may in

turn, increase the population of non-commitment from these potential voters.

This kind of culture and identity, rooted in the medium and information, produces a type of political legitimacy that is totally reliant on information. Thus, information present online becomes a legitimized political opinion but does not exactly translate into social action in the offline space.

CONCLUSION

Given that public sphere is now located in the net space, communication now has the following features:

- Use of hypertext bringing along with it a communication social morphology that normalizes a certain gaze on political issues
- Rapid information flow and spread that gives a notion of equity in information accessed by users; and the continuous role of net users as authority/source
- Fluid communication goals

The reconstructed communication process has resulted to personalization of politics in the net space that influence greatly the political opinions of its net users. What results from this is the permeation of culture of media visibility in the new public sphere where there is the struggle for information based on presence and validation. Consequential to this is an ambivalent set of Presidential candidate and net users because political legitimacy is now reliant to the medium and information. Therefore, political communication is neither a struggle for political agenda nor political authority but is now the struggle for information saturating the net space.

The new public sphere has now emerged in the Philippines wherein the online space shapes the political opinion based on information present and is being made legitimized by liking and re-sharing. Seeing the trend in the number of likes, the number of comments and re-shares of posts, can we predict who will win in the 2016 Philippine Presidential election? No. As what Castells (2008) says, “the movement of public opinion is made up of turbulences of information.” And these turbulences of information have strong chances of confusing potential voters.

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JOURNALISM IN THE INFORMATION AGE: A GIFT OR A CURSE: A CASE STUDY OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

There is no doubt that Mass Media (journalism) have great impact on social life. The impact could be negative or positive. In the hand of good people mass media can be used to mobilize people toward constructive activities. In the contrary, in the hand of bad people, it can encourage destructive social movement.

The application of information technology and communication can amplify both negative and positive social impact of mass media (journalism). This reality challenges the author to do analysis to weight the positive impact of mass media (journalism) against its negative impact in relation to freedom of the press implementation in Indonesia.

A content analysis of private television news program was conducted to collect empirical evidences. Two issues were chosen as the sample of the study i.e the case of Freeport gratification and the dispute between Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (Governor of Jakarta) and Haji Lulung (the chair of Jakarta Municipality Parliament). These disputes were considerably big issues nationally and got greater attention among Indonesia television stations. The dispute was also broadcasted in several days, colorizing most of news program in any kinds of broadcasting forms.

Two private television stations (TVOne and Metro TV) are chosen as the sample of media. They are really blowing up the issues. The dispute colorizes Television news program in almost 7 days a week, either in the form of hard news and/or any other form of news programs i.e. dialog, debate etc. About 135 news items related to the dispute are identified.

The research reveals that the media successfully provoked public to get involved in the dispute. Through framing strategy the media are able to influence public opinion. Moreover, the media are able to stream the public's judgment toward who is right or wrong, who is guilty or innocence. The impact is amplified by the use of social media leading to the emergence of public protest.

The author comes to a big conclusion that through its broadcasting, Indonesia televisions contribute the raise of political chaos lately. In the process of democratization, especially in developing countries, media (freedom of the press) could be a gift if the media are managed wisely. But, in the same time, media might take a destructive role.

Keyword: Media studies, media impact, Indonesia private television program, journalism ethics, freedom of the press, framing, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

Background

Each country has different history concerning with its

mass media (journalism) according to political system applied in the respective country. Studying the role of media/journalism within a country/society, therefore, should take account the social and political system

implemented in the country.

Indonesia has a unique story about journalism history. "Hate journalism" might be the main character of Indonesian journalism from time to time. This character is indicated in the history of Indonesian press from colonialism to reformation era, though the character is expressed in the different form.

It is believed this character will affect the way journalist frames and reports news. "Hate manner" will create prejudice leading to questioning the journalist's objectivity, balancing and accuracy in writing report. This is the reason why the author uses the word "curse" against "gift" in the title. The author believes that the word "curse" has very strong negative meaning. Since, the author has difficulty to find the proper word to express what is going on. It is just to attract an attention that the application of freedom of the press in Indonesia at present has developed toward beyond expected (colorized by hate journalism).

Having actual freedom of the press since reformation movement (1978), Indonesia faces a serious problem concerning with developing an improving the quality of democracy. The government has difficulty to rule more than 200 million people and more than 30 new political parties. Whilst they are expected to play a political enlighten role for the development of democracy, the media tend to use the situation as news commodity. This atmosphere is becoming worse because some of the media tend to frame news containing "hate manner", encouraging political chaos.

Historically, the development of freedom of the press can be divided into four eras i.e. colonialism era, Soekarno era, Soeharto era, and reformation era. Each era shows different characteristic according to the social and political situation in the respected time.

Colonialism Era (before 1945)

Through his critic to "*politik etis*" (ethics policy) introduced by colonial government, Eduard Douwes Dekker (1879 - 1950) has inspired local political elites to use mass media (newspaper) to improve Indonesian education in order to get independency from colonial government. He has successfully provoke --through his critical writing-- Indonesian political elite nationalism and change the way of struggling for independency (Wikipedia).

Mr Dekker is the person who help to support the bear of Boedi Oetomo, the first society (mass) organization which struggle for independence through modern organization. Since that more new society organization emerge causing problem for the colonial government. He is also the person who inspires to Indonesian political elites to use mass media to build nationalism among Indonesian people.

In the perspective colonial government, Dekker is claimed as a person who develops "hate journalism". Through his critical writing, he has successfully encourages the indigenous people to do protest openly causing him got exile. His writing attracts also more journalists and local political actors to learn how to write propaganda to build stronger nationalism (See Arifin, 1990; Suwirta, 1999).

In short, Dr. Eduard Douwes Dekker is one of the great journalist born and lived in Indonesia who is successful in inspiring Indonesian journalists to provoke people movement in getting independency.

On the basis of the above description, it can be stated that "hate journalism" (propaganda) is the main characteristic of the Indonesian media. Another interesting character is that the media is belong to political leader (See Arifin, 1990; Suwirta, 1999). This is not surprising since most of the political leaders are businessman or local bureaucracy officer (*kaum priyayi*).

After defeated by Japanese in the Second World War, Dutchman are leaving Indonesia, and Japanese governs Indonesia for 3 and a half years. In this period, the existing newspapers and other media are taken over by the Japanese.

For some reason, Indonesian journalists get advantage from Japanese occupation. Newspapers are not allowed to use of Dutch language. This policy provides the opportunity of promoting Indonesian as a national language. Japanese is also teaching Indonesian journalists about how to write effective propaganda systematically, how to manipulate data for propaganda purposes etc. (Suwirta, 1993). The idea is using Indonesian journalists to weaken enemy courage through propaganda.

Soekarno era (1945 – 1965)

This era is characterized by multi party political system. Each party publishes its own newspaper as a vehicle to advertise its political program, to mobilize

its members/ participants, and to get support from public. Independent newspapers should have affiliation to particular political party (see Arifin, 1990). The main role of mass media (newspapers) is as a political instrument. Journalists are free to criticized government policy and or other political party policy/program. Since the journalist are more experienced in writing propaganda –as described before—they tend to produce “hate journalism”, and sometimes encourage horizontal conflict among political member coming from different party. The conflict quite often provoke political chaos causing social, economy, and political instability.

By years, the situation is getting worst and uncontrollable. Therefore, Soekarno announces government regulation (1960) to rule the implementation of freedom of the press in Indonesia. Since that, the government take control to the press. Newspapers should support government programs, create social harmony across political party members/constituent, and establish social, economy and political stability. This situation does not take long time since Soekarno has to step down as the President of Indonesia in 1966.

Soeharto era

At the beginning of Soeharto era, Indonesia applies multiparty political system and each political party publishes its own newspapers or bulletin as its political campaign tool. Propaganda dominates the manner of journalism at the time. The propaganda encourage political chaos and horizontal conflict leading to political instability.

In order to build political stability, Soeharto merges more than 10 political parties into 3 big parties according to party's ideology similarity ie. *Golkar*, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*. Moreover, Soeharto does not allowed political parties to publish their own media /newspapers. Mass media should be published and managed independently.

Having experience from Soekarno era, Mr. Soeharto takes fully control mass media operation. Journalists are not allowed to do critic against government policy. Even though freedom of the press is guaranteed by law, in fact, criticizing government policy can bring journalist in prison.

Mr Soeharto does really understand the role and the function of mass media to mobilize public to get involved in the national development process. What Mr. Soeharto concern is how to push economic growth as soon as possible to release Indonesia from economic crisis. Mass media should develop social responsibility instead of pursuing freedom of speech. Media have an honor duty to improve quality of Indonesian live.

Through Department of Information (*Departemen Penerangan*) Mr. Soeharto develops his own concept and strategy about journalism that is called development journalism. The media and journalist should converge their strength and effort to accelerate economic development.

This is Soeharto's strategy to control freedom of the press in Indonesia. Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the law. Media or journalists are free to express their ideas and write a critic. But the idea should complement or support the government policy, and the critic is not allowed against the government decision. It likes releasing a snake but the nail is hold tightly.

For thirty years Mr Soeharto does successfully control the media and create a conducive political stability that is suitable for economic development.

Reformation era

National political protest wave in 1978 has forced Mr. Soeharto to step down from his position as the second President of Indonesia. The step down of Mr. Soeharto gives second win to Indonesian journalists to gauge freedom of the press, which was bounded strictly by government regulation during Soeharto's era. In response to this situation BJ Habibie, acted as the third President of Indonesia, announce new regulation to facilitate the implementation of freedom of the press in Indonesia. Government permission is no longer needed to publish newspapers, to build television or radio broadcasting

Since that the number of mass media (printed and electronic) grows significantly. Each media compete to each other in order to keep operate. The competition challenges media management and journalists to find a way of winning public attention and support. Taking benefit from the situation, media/journalists use freedom of the press as their justification to frame issue in such a way just to

increase news value. They use freedom of the press as a vehicle just to meet their demands. Honesty, fairness and social responsibility are no longer being guidance for conducting freedom of the press.

This situation is getting worse by times. Anom (2011) describes 4 (four) biases dealing with journalism practices in Indonesia in the reformation era, as follows:

1. Bombastic title/headline.
Media/journalist tends to use bombastic words that quite often do not represent its content. The title/headline sometime does not match with the content. This is one of media/journalists strategy to raise news value in order to attract public attention.
2. The use of "as said" as news source.
Media/journalist are accustomed with the use of "as said", as publicly knows", and "according to source who are not willing to be mentioned". This is not commensurate with the principle of objectivity in which journalist should mention the clarity of news/information source.
3. Elite's opinion is claimed as public opinion. Media/journalists facilitate some controversial political elite to speak on behalf of public interest. Even though the speech do not represent the public interest. It is just the politician's claimed.
4. Information/news is presented partially.
Instead of comprehensive presentation, media/journalist tends to frame issue or event in such a way to attract public curiosity. This is not wrong. However, considering the level of Indonesian educational which is considered relative low, this strategy is not so wise. Most of Indonesian people have still difficulties to select and understand information critically and objectively. They are easily influenced by rumors and gossips.

As the media/journalist get used to the four biases, and on the basis of freedom of expression, they go further in wrong direction. The past Indonesian journalist manner is, as a propagandist and tends to

develop "hate journalism", pulled out and colorize journalism practices in this era.

This situation is getting worse and challenge the author to conduct a study to weight the advantages against the disadvantages of freedom of the press practices in Indonesia.

Focus of the study

It is believed that mass media/journalism has great impact on social and political changes. Its impact could be positive or negative. Media is a neutral vehicle. Its value depends very much on who use it, to what purpose, and how it is used. In the hand of good journalist, mass media can be used to improve quality of life, in the contrary, mass media can encourage social distrust, provoking political chaos.

Thomas Jefferson, the famous American President, for example, is one of person who admires to mass media by saying "if it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter" (Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, 1787. ME 6:57). This quotation is showing Jefferson's respect to journalism.

Napoleon Bonaparte, France influential leader, has different opinion about journalism. He said

"a journalist is a grumbler, a censurer, a giver of advice, a regent of sovereigns, a tutor of nations. Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets".
(<http://www.azquotes.com/quote/1143536>).

The two citation shows two different sides of media. And, the media can play both sides interchangeably. Freedom of the press is needed to facilitate mass media in order to be able to play its role and function properly. However, it will be very dangerous if the execution of the freedom of the press is out of control. As stated by Theodore Roosevelt (The man in the arena):

"The power of journalist is great, but he entitled neither to respect nor admiration because of that power unless it used aright. He can do, and often does, great good. He can do, and often does, great mischief... Offenses against taste and morals, which are bad enough in private

citizen are infinitely worse if made into instrument for debauching the community through a newspaper (Connect!ons: med!aLit oment: 2016)

As implied in the above title, the emphasis of this study is on freedom of the press practices, especially the comparison between advantages and disadvantages of freedom of the press practices in Indonesia. This research is not to judge the value or the role of freedom of the press in a democratic country. But, it is more likely to weight the benefit against the detriment of journalism practices in Indonesia.

The focus of the study, then, is operationalized in the following research question:

- How do journalists treat freedom of the press?
- How far journalist implement the principles of freedom of the press?
- Is the benefit out of the detriment or in the contrary?

METHODOLOGY

To answer those questions, two issues, broadcasted by TvOne and Metro TV (the media sample), are selected as the unit analysis. Those issues are the dispute about Mr. Setyo Novanto (the Head of Indonesian Parliament) and Mr. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (the Governor of Jakarta). These issues are considered as the most popular national issues at the time.

News broadcasted by the media sample are recorded, and then analyzed by means of content analysis and framing techniques. Content analysis is used to identify and determine its objectivity, balance, neutrality and so on. This kind of data will be used to answer the first and the second research question.

Framing technique is used to collect data or information about “intended purposes” embedded in the news. This data is very useful to answer the third research questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically evidenced that the study of (mass) communication cannot be separated from political practices within a country or community in the respected time. The study of propaganda, political

campaign, and advertising are some examples of how close the relationship between media studies and political practices is. According to Soroka (2003) “policy makers follow media reports on public opinion, and the media are the public’s chief source of information on what policy makers are doing”. He then explains that media is the main tool by which the majority of individuals receive information about the policy, an issue for which personal experience is unlikely to provide much useful information.

This is also implied in the Lasswell’s definition about political practices (In Nimmo, 1978). He defines political practices as who gets what, when and how. “Who” is the politician or the policy maker. He/she can use media to do political campaign or to introduce such program / political decision to public. Through framing and or priming strategy media can create the salience of the program/the decision (the when and the how) in order to get political vote (the what).

The role of media/journalists in the political communication process could be as transmitter, constructor, and influencer as well (McNair, 1995: 2-15). From the perspective political actor, mass media is, since its coverage is almost unlimited, a good tool to introduce a political program, then disseminate it to gain political support from public (transmitter function). On the other hand, from the perspective journalism, media has the opportunity and power to create political context, images about the respective actor in such a way (framing technique) to affect and direct public opinion as they wish (constructor function). Once again, through framing strategy media/journalists can promote a candidate (political actor) to raise his/her popularity, to improve his/her social status, and to create better image so that he/she can win the vote (influencer function).

However, the role and the function of media might only operate healthy within a democratic country or society which applies freedom of the press. Freedom of the press is “the right of newspapers, magazines, etc., to report news without being controlled by the government” (Mirriam-Webster Dictionary).

The study of media effect can follow two different approaches (micro and macro levels). Though they have overlap to each other in practice (Leiserowitz, 2004), the approach have different concern and unit analysis. So differentiate them is a good practice to

analyze in more precise the impact of media on public, how it happens, in what way, and under what circumstances.

In the micro level the unit analysis of media study is typically the individual media user, and the focus is on the relatively narrow question of whether exposure to a particular media message impacted that user's attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, or behaviors. When we talk about media impact, on the other hand, the orientation can be characterized as a bit more macro, in that the concerns extend beyond whether individual media users had their attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, or behaviors affected, to also include broader systemic changes at the levels of organizations and institutions (Inagaki, 2007)

Measuring Media Effect

Chaffee (In Day, 2000) suggests a strategy to identify the possible effect of media, and media indicators effectiveness as follows:

- Different media has different effect. So. It is better to separate the effect that embeds in the media characteristic.
- Grouping the effect according to its categories: cognitive (: understanding, acceptance etc.); behavioral (: changing in feeling, attitude, opinion, etc.); and affective (: willingness to act).
- Determine the focus of observation unit: think the possibility of effect occurrence. Remember that the effect does not happen to everyone; the effect might be occurred when someone has discussed with other people (indirect effect or mediated effect); or the effect is as a result of his/her position/status in a larger certain social system.

Freedom of the press

In order to be able to play their role, as above described, journalists (media) should hold "freedom of the press". This is a prescription. Journalists should feel free without feeling under pressured. The importance of freedom of the press, according to Zelezny (In Samuels, 2001) is based on two reasons i.e: *social reason and individualistic reason*:

Social reason: this reason includes:

- Seeking for truth: Freedom of the press is not a destination. Freedom of the press is a tool or vehicle to seek or reach the truth.
- Participation in the process of democracy: as suggested by Alexander Meiklejohn that (In Samuels, 2001) in the United States of America, freedom of speech is protected not only as a vehicle to reach/seek the truth, but also as a medium for sharing the truth. The main objective is to ensure that every voter has the same opportunity to get involved in understanding and seeking for solution to any governmental and societal problems.
- The need to control government policies: through freedom of the press people or media can control to the government from abusing power.
- Social and political stability: It is assumed freedom of the press is able to guard social and political stabilities. Freedom of the press can create information flows making people possible to realize and understand about societal and political problems in better way and perspective so that they will be more rational in dealing the problems.

Individualistic Reason: Freedom of the press is an individual right. It is not questionable right. Freedom of the press is one of human right. Therefore, government has no right to forbidden it.

On the basis of above explanation, it can be concluded that: freedom of speech, expressing ideas either in the form of written or oral, which are the spirit of freedom of the press, are valuable to be reached. Freedom of the press contains universal values. However, each country tends to apply different criteria and spirit. This issue should be understood carefully and proportionally.

There are general principles about freedom of the press, but there is no concept of freedom of the press that can be applied generally. Each community or country tends to develop its own freedom of the press according to its own concept on the basis of its own social and cultural background.

Moral or ethical code of conduct is factors that differentiate the color of freedom of the press from

country to country. Morale or ethic is cultural product of respective society. So, moral and ethics will explain why content and coverage of freedom of the press differs from country to country. This implies the idea and function of freedom of the press to create better social life could be universal, but every society has the authority to define its content, direction and coverage of freedom of the press according to social and political norms applying in the respective state or society.

Freedom is an important tool to seek truth and justice. Through freedom of speech, we can compromise any differences. Morale or ethic, in this case, plays an important role to reach a compromise among difference ideas, opinion etc. This means there is no absolute freedom of the press. The execution of freedom the press should consider other human right.

Truth, honesty, and justice are some valuable parameters to develop freedom of the press. Truth is identical to fact. News or journalism should be constructed on the basis of fact. News should be factual and supported by accurate data. Therefore, truth is a fundamental value for freedom of the press practices.

The value of truth in journalism practices is at least based on three reasons (Day, 2000: 79-80): **First:** decreasing journalists' integrity. It seems journalists are getting more interested in increasing his/her popularity instantly. In this situation, they are more interested in increasing news value by sacrificing their social responsibility.

The second reason is that journalists' commitment to the truth is a form of honor to the existence of other people. It is not good idea to treat other people or news resources as a news object. And **the third:** "truth" is an essential factor for democracy processes.

Honesty is the next parameter for journalistic practices. "Honesty" has more complicated meaning is factual, but factual does not always mean honest. Framing strategy applied by journalist is a good example of the difference between truth and honest.

The third parameter is **justice**. According to Christians (In Day, 2000) justice is a relationship between communication, democracy and human right. Justice is an effort to serve what should be provided to other people. Justice emphasizes on providing human basic needs, either as an individual or as part of a group. Journalism or media holds

social responsibility i.e developing political commitment to change the public to be more structured society and to be more participative in democratic processes, according to human basic needs individually, socially, and culturally.

This parameter also underline that freedom of the press is not just informing the fact and displaying data. Moreover, freedom of the press should maintain good relationship so that the press is able to enlighten to the public.

Content Analysis

"Content analysis is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text" (Stone, Dunphy, Smith & Ogilvie, 1996: in Herrera, 2004). Similar definition is also stated by Weber (1990). He states "content is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (In Hardy, 2004).

More practically Neuman (1997) defines content analysis as a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text. The 'content' refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The 'text' is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication" (In Krippendorff, 2013). Content analysis "... is a research technique that is based on measuring the amount of something (violence, negative portrayals of women, or whatever) in a representative sampling of some mass-mediated popular form of art" (Berger, 1991: in Krippendorff, 2013).

Content analysis will be used to count the occurrence of particular words, news sources, broadcasting frequency, key person invited in the news. This is to evaluate how objective the media/journalist is. To do this, the author will use formula developed by Marras (2013) which consists of values, process, and language. This three key aspects will be taken together to address the essential idea of journalistic objectivity. This formula is operationalized by Dennis (In Sonnemaker, 2015), as follows:

- Separating facts from opinion.
- Presenting an emotionally detached view of the news.
- Striving for fairness and balance

- This formula will be combined with Chaffee's strategy to identify the possible effect of media, and media indicators effectiveness, as described above.

Agenda-Setting Theories

Agenda setting describes a very powerful influence of the media – the ability to tell us what issues are important. As far back as 1922, the newspaper columnist Walter Lippman was concerned that the media had the power to present images to the public. McCombs and Shaw investigated presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972 and 1976. In the research done in 1968 they focused on two elements: awareness and information. Investigating the agenda-setting function of the mass media, they attempted to assess the relationship between what voters in one community said were important issues and the actual content of the media messages used during the campaign. McCombs and Shaw concluded that the mass media exerted a significant influence on what voters considered to be the major issues of the campaign.

Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media (for example on political communication systems).

Bernard Cohen (1963) stated: "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."

Following in large part from Cohen's thesis, empirical agenda-setting research has demonstrated powerful links between media content and public concern across a wide variety of issues. 2 Agenda-setting analysis and foreign policy research have only intermittently crossed paths, however. Public agenda-setting scholars have given limited attention to

foreign policy (e.g., Gonzenbach 1992; Huegel et al. 1989; Iyengar and Simon 1993; Wanta and Hu 1993). The foreign policy literature, however, has steered clear of the open-ended public opinion measure central to agenda-setting analysis: "What do you think is the most important problem facing our country today?"

Framing theory

Framing is a mean to achieve it and can be described as "the selection of elements within a particular issue." (McCombs et al., 2013: 8). "Framing is a critical activity in the construction of social reality because it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world" (Hallahan, 1999: 207).

The Dutch communication scholar de Vreese's view on frames includes sociological work by Goffman and his description of a frame as being "an arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity" (Goffman, in de Vreese, 2005: 22). It suggests that a frame does not tell the whole story but chooses to show only some of it. Frames are "'interpretive packages' that give meaning to an issue" (Gamson and Modigliani, in de Vreese, 2005: 26). Framing can then be built on this to put "an emphasis in salience of some aspects of a topic." (de Vreese, 2005: 27).

It is important to notice that framing is not about arguing and "strong frames should not be confused with intellectually or morally superior arguments." (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 111). Arguments strive to convince another partaker in a discussion by using for example facts. Use of framing in a discussion may already have achieved its objective by causing the discussion in the first place which looks at one perspective of an issue which can avoid or prevent discussing another perspective of it.

According to Entman who is a widely cited communication scholar in framing literature, framing is about making certain aspects of an issue more salient in communication than others (Entman, 1993: 52). Chong and Druckman define it as a process of shaping connotations. It can involve both how people start to think about an issue and how they change their thinking about an issue (Chong and Druckman, 2007: 104).

In essence, the use of framing and its results can be summed up using a simple example. A study of a television show clearly showed different effects on

how it was perceived corresponding to different ways of framing it (McCombs et al., 2013: 17). The same show was broadcasted on several channels each having their own commentators to commentate it. Apart from the commentators, the show was identical on each channel. As the commentators emphasized different elements of the show, the viewers had different thoughts about it afterwards depending on which channel they had been watching. Their perceptions of the event were thereby based on what the commentators highlighted regardless of whether this was intentionally or not. Different ways of framing the same issue resulted in different ways of perceiving it even while having the same information available.

Frames are most often used to promote a certain viewpoint on a topic such as a way of evaluating, defining or understanding it (Entman, 1993: 52). Goffman defined frames from another perspective as a frame explains how we understand the world and are able to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" events when we interpret them (Goffmann, in de Vreese, 2005).

Framing deliberately focus on the communicative elements that evoke responses and rational deductions leaving the receivers to believe that the most logical interpretation was made (Bennett, in Darmon et al., 2008: 374). According to the definitions however, these decisions may only seem logic as long as not all parts of the relevant issue are emphasized.

Simple changes in the wording of a text can change people's attitudes towards the issue at hand. Words can serve as indirect hints about the preferable perspective to take and can have an impact on how much receivers consider the situation and whether they are for or against it (Wang, in de Vreese, 2005: 23; Chong and Druckman, 2007: 104).

Frames draw attention to elements and thereby activate some of the knowledge that individuals already have. This knowledge may be cultural norms, values etc. and by drawing attention to some elements and perhaps away from other elements, it stimulates specific parts of this knowledge and creates a context (de Vreese, 2005: 26).

Besides this, they define problems (In terms of common cultural values), diagnose causes, make moral judgments (Evaluate these causes) and recommend remedies (Offer to solve problems,

justifying it and foretell how this will probably work) (Darmon et al., 2008: 374; Entman, 1993: 52). "Framing increase the productivity of interpersonal negotiations, and serve as a foundation for public discourse, such as negotiation, on a mass-communication level." (Knight, 1999: 383).

The Case of Indonesia

According to American historian, Paul Johnson (In Anom, 2011), Indonesian journalists conduct "seven deadly sins", as follows:

First: Information distortion; Indonesian journalist tends to add or reduce information to create intended context to increase news value.

Second: Fake fact dramatization; Media/journalists are over action in including verbal and visual illustrations to create dramatic news.

Third: Privacy offensive: Just wants to be the first, media/journalist tends to ignore other person privacy. For example, asking very personal question to politician who is getting involved in a scandal.

Fourth: Character killing: Media/journalists tend to describe, exploit and give more emphasis on bad side of news object, leading to public trial.

Fifth: Sex exploitation; this sin is dealing with the use of woman in advertisement.

Sixth: Poisoning child mind; this sin is mainly related to the use of children in advertisement.

Seventh: Abuse of the power; Some media editors use their authority to ask journalists to use hidden-camera or recorder to get very sensitive information.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Content analysis

It is believed that media want to blow up the issues of Setyo Novanto and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. Within two months period (November-December 2015), the issue was broadcasted 79 times. This is not included news broadcasted by other television stations. The following is the complete content analysis result for those issues.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution Of Setyo Novanto Dispute

Time Period	T One		Metro TV		Total
	News	Others	News	Others	
November	14	6	20	5	45
December	13	5	12	4	34
Total	27	11	32	9	79

Content analysis result, January, 2016

The above table tells us how often the media broadcast the issue of Freeport gratification in which Mr. Setyo Novanto is getting involved in it. The data shows that the two media have almost the same attention about the importunateness of the issue.

The author believe that the media have intended purpose for taking such redundancy in broadcasting the issue. Since there are some other national issues that are considered more relevant in terms of overcoming problems faced by Indonesian government. It is reasonable if the media/journalists were blowing up the issue.

The same policy seems also to be applied in the second issue. Table 2 presents the detail of the data.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution Of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Btp) Disputes

Time Period	T One		Metro TV		Total
	News	Others	News	Others	
November	21	7	4	2	34
December	13	5	2	2	22
Total	34	12	6	4	56

Content analysis result, January, 2016

As can be seen from the table 2, TvOne is more interested in reporting the issue of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama(BTP) compared to MetroTV. This is not surprising since the television stations have different political affiliation, and one of them has the same political affiliation as BTP does. TvOne belongs to Bakrie group (has political affiliationto *Golkar*) whereas MetroTv belongs to Media group (has political affiliation to *Nasional Demokrat*).

This is confirmed to the statement of Owen and Wildman (1992) that “media firms have a room to

produce more specialized program for capturing niche market by making use of their financial resources, based on profit maximization strategy”. According to McChesney (2000, as cited in Barnet, 2010) “the wealthier and more powerful the corporate media giants have become, the poorer the prospect for participatory democracy”. Moreover, “a healthy democracy depends on a culture of dissent and argument, which would inevitably be diminished if there were only a limited number of providers of news” (Barnett, 2010, as cited from DCMS, 2001: 7).

The above argument is also confirmed by editorial policy, as resulted from content analysis. Figure-1 presents data/information about “framing process of news production”, summarized from in depth interview with some experts and journalist representing the two media. The media seems to apply almost the same strategy and process. The different is laying in the degree of capital owner influences the editorial policy and morale understanding among journalist.

The figure shows, as starting point, media/journalist can pick issue discussed in social media and/or public events, as news object. It is journalist or editor responsibility to frame the object to become a news ready to be broadcasted. It really depends on journalists’ morale, which issue the journalist want to broadcast and in what way. The journalists then consult to political interest to whom the capital owner affiliated to.

In the case of Setyo Novanto, it seems there is a special arrangement. Journalist starts from rumor discussed in social media. The “as said” journalism is applied to attract comment from politicians who do not agree with or have ambition to replace Mr. Setyo Novanto as the leader of Indonesian Parliament. Through redundancy and live discussion inviting selected politicians, media/journalist is successfully raising Mr. Setyo Novanto dispute to be the most urgent national issue at the respective time. The end of the attraction is Mr. Setyo Novanto resigns from his position as the Indonesian Parliament Leader and he is accused guilty in the case of “Freeport gratification” without hearing in the court.

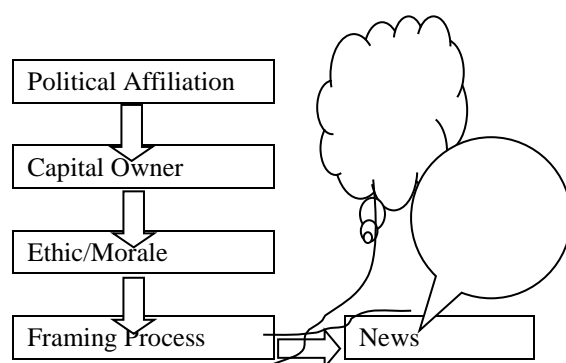


Fig. 1: framing process of news production

In the contrary, BTP gets benefit from the news broadcasting. He is getting more popular leading to the raise of his electability in the next governor election.

In this issue, media/journalist begins with issue spreading in public. BTP is known as controversial governor. His action and statement are always attracting public debate. The content analysis result shows that media/journalist tries to blow up the issue by inviting politicians, government officials, academicians, and religion leaders, in live talk show. Most of the invited persons are politically against BTP.

This study does not have enough data/information about the exact purpose of why the media/journalist does such thing. However, it can be seen from content analysis result that media/journalist want to saturate BTP's character as the Governor of Jakarta. This is based on the news content which is mostly about negative manner of BTP. Even though based on limited data, this finding confirms to Johnson's conclusion ie. "*character killing*".

Journalist also invites political opponent as the news sources. This is another evidence that media/journalist develops a specific arrangement about BTP. What happens in the field is in the contrary. This is an interesting finding, and a good example as well, that what happens to BTP is beyond media/journalist expectation. BTP is getting more popular as a result of the broadcasting. His electability as the next Jakarta governor candidate raises significantly.

This study also reveals the general pattern of communication flows in Indonesia. Fig.2 shows the communication pattern.

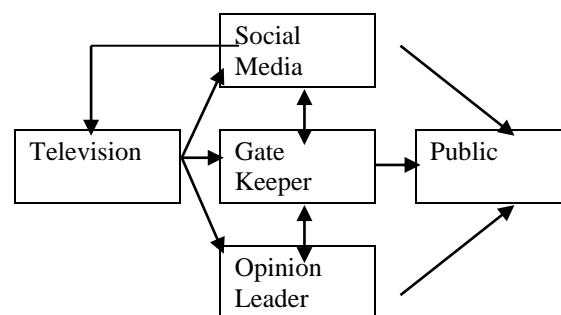


Fig.2: Flows of Communication

It seems Indonesian public follows mediated communication flow in which message is transmitted by mass media, through gate keepers' selection and/or opinion leaders' interpretation, the message then goes to public. So, it is possible that there is a distortion meaning of the actual message. What is understood by public, could not be as an intended purpose of the media/journalist. This might be the answer of BTP issue why the impact of the media is out of its expectation. This reality should be understood carefully.

The communication flow should be considered in explaining the impact media on public. This is confirmed by McCombs's study (2013) about agenda-setting effect. In some cases, agenda-setting effect occurs indirectly. Message comes from media, then, interpreted by gate-keeper or opinion leaders, and finally reaches the public.

In the case of Setyo Novanto, there is a possibility of amplification of the news by gate-keepers or opinion leaders so that magnify the agenda-setting effect. It is reasonable, therefore, if Mr. Novanto is successfully forced to step down from his position as the Indonesian Parliament Chief, and accused guilty without getting proper trial in the court.

Framing analysis

The following figure is (Fig.2) showing the construction of media-agenda through framing process.

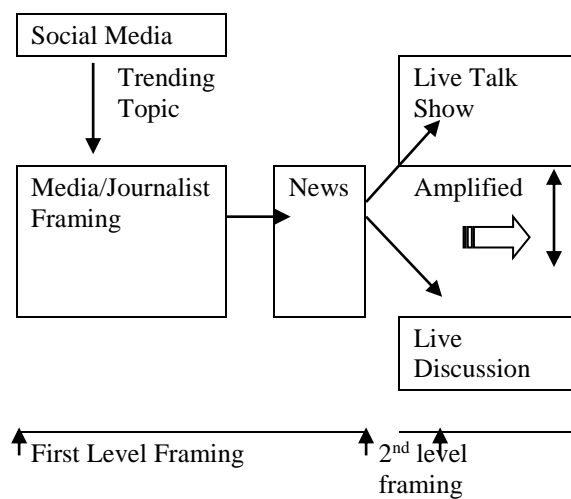


Fig. 3: Media Agenda Process

The figure shows that there are two level of framing processes. In the first level, media/journalist takes the most discussed topic in social media, as “trending topic”. The topic is broadcasted repeatedly to attract public attention. The topic is then brought to live talk show inviting selected key persons or to live discussion among selected keynote speakers.

The framing analysis reveals the two media try to compete to each other to be the one or to be the first. When the media comes to decision to create public opinion (agenda-setting effect), an issue is broadcasted by inviting some selected source to get involved in live discussion in the studio or remotely. The resources are often opposing to each other. The journalist quite often takes benefit from the situation to provoke emotion of the sources to get controversial argument/statement leading to the emergence of national discourse. The author believe this is the media strategy to challenge other people involvement in the discourse.

This is the first level of framing as presented the Figure 3. In this level accuracy, balance, and objectivity seem to be ignored. Journalist look more focus on the creation of discourse instead of placing an issue in the right place. This is the way the media frame an issue, at least, according to this study.

The issue is then brought in a talk show or a more systematic discussion program lively, inviting key persons having competence in respect to the issue, to strengthen its impact on public opinion. The framing analysis detects that the journalist applies certain criteria to select the key persons invited in the live talk show or discussion program. This can be seen

from the invited persons who have controversial manner.

Since the talk show or discussion program involves key persons coming from different interest and political affiliation, the discussion develops to become cross argument that triggers uncontrolled personal debate. Instead of having clear statement about an issue, the show is used as a media to express his/her political interest. The journalist, on the other hand, takes benefit from the discussion situation to raise the value of the issue to be national discourse.

The live talk show or discussion is some time used to create special meaning about an issue. To do this, journalist frequently interrupts the discussion in improper point.

The journalist has the power to control the discussion by asking a series of well-prepared questions in which the invited person is emotionally engaged to provide information as the journalist’s wish. This is the second level of framing which is identified in this study. In his/her effort to create special meaning.

There is also tendency to separate context from the fact. This is very dangerous decision. Since every event, issue, and fact has its own context, so separating it from its context will change its meaning and value.

The last, but not least, this study is also identified some phrases/words which are frequently used by the journalist just to cover his/her particular intention. Journalist/media is quite often covering his/her intention by saying “on behalf of justice”, “on behalf of public need/want” and many others.

Taking consideration of Indonesian journalism history which is colorized by propaganda (: “*hate journalism*”), the findings are not surprising. The finding provides evidence that “*hate journalism*” is still exist in Indonesia, but it appears in more sophisticated form.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above finding and discussion, this study concludes some points as follows:

Indonesian media/journalist tends to treat freedom of the press as an objective instead of a vehicle. This is not just a simple choice. But, it has a great impact on morale and morality of journalist. Freedom of the press is actually a good vehicle to seek justice, to

develop trust and honesty. Journalist can facilitate public through media to get involved in open debate or discussion, for example, to seek justice, to develop trust, or to be honest to each other. This cannot be reached if the journalist treat freedom of the press as an objective. In this choice journalist tend to use freedom of the press to justify his/her action.

Indonesian journalists tends to ignore social responsibility which is one of the important condition in implementing freedom of the press. This is as a result of treating freedom of the press as an objective. Indonesian journalist is more interesting in pursuing news value and ignoring its impact. It seems, his/her main purposes is how to raise the rating of the news program. Journalist does not care to the impacted public.

Since “hate journalism (propaganda)” is always coloring Indonesian media from time to time, social responsibility should be re-actualized in order to raise the benefit of freedom of the press in the economic, social, and political development in Indonesia.

It is very difficult to weigh the implementation of freedom of the press in Indonesia. Since this study is based only on two issues. However, there is a tendency that freedom of the press practices in Indonesia is beyond expectation. Media which is expected to create social, economy, and political stability tends to grow as a news industry and ignore its main function as public and government enlightenment. If the tendency is not managed properly, it is more likely the freedom of the press practices will produce boomerang effect. It is not impossible the government will take control to the implementation of freedom of the press in Indonesia, meaning goes back to Soeharto era. This will be nightmare for Indonesian journalist.

The finding implies that journalists’ morale could be the main problem. Therefore, education intervention is needed to prepare new journalists having highly morale and integrity.

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THE ROLE OF MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE INVENTION OF THE GEO – BODY OF SUNDANESE

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Abstract

This paper discusses how modern communication technology, introduced by colonial powers to Sundanese, transformed Sundanese spatiality mode from Mandala to a modern colonial spatiality. Sundanese is the second largest ethnic in Indonesia after Javanese. According to the modern account, Sundanese is the native of the western part of Java Island whereas Javanese is the native of the middle and eastern parts of the island. Many scholars in the field of Sundanese study argued that Sundanese identity, as opposed to Javanese identity, had been already formed in the pre-colonial Java. I challenge this notion by arguing that Sundanese identity was formed after Sundanese encountered modern knowledge of spatiality. Using Foucauldian genealogical analysis, I examine Sundanese newspapers in 1910s as well as colonial writings such as Raffles' History of Java. I argue that the transformation of spatiality from Mandala to colonial modern spatiality formed a new identity of Sundanese, a geo-body of Sundanese, which can also be seen as the birth of Sundanese as a distinguished ethnic category different from Javanese in the early 20th century. This modern spatiality introduced by the colonial powers and mediated by the modern form of communication technology

Keywords: colonialism, ethnicity, technology, geo-body of Sundanese

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a home for many of ethnic groups. According to the latest survey on Indonesia's ethnic group, there are almost 350 ethnic groups with different languages (Ananta, et all. 2013). In Indonesia, ethnicity is generally considered as an heritage from the ancestors. Therefore ethnicity is not to be related to Indonesian colonialized experience. The colonial effect to ethnicity is rarely discoursed, though colonialism and its communication technology had epistemological effect to the colonialized.

The island of Java is the heart of the Dutch colonial government. There are two large group of ethnic in this island; the Javanese, who native to the middle and the eastern part of Java and the Sundanese who native to the western part of the island. Based on the latest survey on ethnic group, the Javanese is the largest ethnic in Indonesia and the Sundanese is the second (ibid). Many scholars of Sundanese studies believe

that Sundanese ethnicity was existed in the pre-colonial era and derived from Sundanese kingdom in the past. (Zimmer. 2002; Moriyama.2003; Ekadjati 2004). This paper rejects the identity of Sundanese ethnicity as a legacy of the past as argued. I argue that Sundanese identity as an ethnic group is the product of colonialism.

In this paper, I will explain that Sundanese identity, a feeling to have different identity from other ethnic – especially Javanese in other part of Java Island, was product of European colonial's geographical imagination that always divides Java into two territories (Java and Sunda). This colonial's geographic imagination was negotiated among Sundanese, and became embodied when nationalism was introduced in the early 20th century.

In this embodiment process, there is role of modern communication technology as stated in Benedict

Anderson's imagined community concept. Anderson (1983) put the imprint capitalism as central element in the formation of nation. In the field of communication/media theory, Innis (2008) stated that the paper and printing industries supported the development of monopolies of space in nationalism and the state.

I use the term of 'modern communication technology' to emphasize the 'modern' that simply means "after the pre-modern". Hence, what I refer as the "modern communication technology" is not only printed media but also a new mode of language. Language constructs the subject, therefore the transformation of mode of language means the transformation of subject. By this approach, I emphasize that the effect of communication technology is not only a transformation of communication medium, but also an epistemological transformation of subject.

I will rely on genealogy, a method popularized by Michel Foucault. Foucault (1980) wrote that "Genealogy returns to the three modalities of history that Nietzsche recognized in 1874... (but) they are metamorphosed; the veneration of monuments becomes parody, the respect of ancient continuities becomes systematic dissociation, the critique of the injustice of the past by a truth held by men in the present becomes the destruction of the man who maintains knowledge by the injustice proper to the will to knowledge". I will put simply genealogy, in my research problem, as the systematic dissociation of ancient continuity of Sundanese. By this perspective, I argue that Sundanese modern identity is based on mode of spatiality that introduced by colonial order, rather than the continuity of Sundanese ancestors.

Ethnicity in Indonesia as product of colonialism

Ethnicity usually translated as the classification of person or group relationships (Eriksen. 2010). In Indonesia, ethnic groups usually refer to the specific cultural group known as 'suku bangsa'. Since Indonesia only has a single nationality, the 'Suku bangsa' means groups/communities have become a part of the Indonesian nationality. Sometimes the use of the ethnicity's term refers to 'race', for example the Chinese ethnic in Indonesia.

The best summary of ethnicity in Indonesia was written by Gerry Van Klinken (2003). Drawing on Weberian definition on ethnicity, Klinken argued that ethnicity in Indonesia is merely about politic. Though he defines ethnicity as "...a belief in common ancestry and memories of a shared historical past, and stressed the notion of kinship. People feel comfortable in ethnic group because it seems family to them. It listed a range of other characteristics, including language and religion" (Klinken. 2003; p.73), Klinken insist that, "...ethnicity was derived from politics, and not politics from ethnicity".

According to Klinken, the ethnicity is always a political matter. I agree with it, even though Klinken did not discuss further about how the colonialism constituted ethnicity as the identity in Indonesia. This paper argues the colonialism, a very important factor in Indonesian's ethnic groups formation as happen in South East Asia.

I owed much to Andaya (2008) who stated that British colonialism started to construct the Malay identity through territorialization under the political leadership in ethnicity formation in Malaka Strait. This political leadership was formed with the language, customs and even the 'characters' that are considered as a single identity in Malay (Andaya. 2008: 237). On Javanese subject, Pemberton (1999) argued that Javanese identity was constructed during colonial order in Java Island. The Dutch was invented Solo or Surakarta, the oldest Javanese court, as a 'truly Javanese', wherefrom the Javanese identity was identified till now.

There are many ethnicity studies in Indonesia. Klinken sees ethnicity as a specific and isolated cultural product. In the same way, with addition in emphasizing linguistic factor, Zane Goebel (2013) stated that ethnicity in Indonesia is discussed in terms of language. Goebel criticized this simplification and argued that ethnic groups in Indonesia were emerged because of many causes in their history and not only the different of language.

As an addition to Goebel critic, I argue that relying Indonesian ethnicity on language will hide the colonial role as an ethnic inventor. In Sundanese ethnic identity case, many scholar relies on Sundanese language as the primary identity of

Sundanese. The best figure I will explain here is Mikihiro Moriyama, the most prominent scholar in Sundanese studies,

Struggling in the field of literary history, Moriyama (2003) stated that Sundanese language, was found and created by colonial. Building a comfort base on the Sundanese language analyzing, Moriyama simply concluded that the consciousness of being Sunda existed before the colonial era. He wrote former Sundanese language natives seems has awareness that they differ from the Javanese native. The existence of two old kingdom, Majapahit and Sunda was the source for the two ethnic identity in Java.

According to Moriyama, the role of colonialism was only to affirmed Sundanese ethnic identity by the invention of Sundanese modern language. The Sundanese ethnicity, therefore, was not the product of colonial era, it was a continuity from the kingdom of Sundanese where the Sundanese language was existed and used.

I have two point to critized Moriyama's argument. First, the Sundanese identity was not privilege for they who speak with Sundanese language in the early 20th century. Who speak the other language as long as they are native to region that called by 'Sunda region' was also defined as Sundanese. For example, the peoples in the region in Cirebon and Banten who speak Javanese were categorized as Sundanese people. In the modern era, the Sundanese encyclopedia (Rosidi, Ajip et all.2000), the formal text about Sundanese culture, was named the other culture with other language as part of Sundanese culture in its entitle. Second, we can not simplify Majapahit Kingdom as Javanese and so Padjadjaran Kingdom as Sundanese.

Sundanese ethnicity as a geo-body of nation

Indonesian nationality, as described by Olsen (2008), is a new discourse that compete and dominate then to the discourse of other nationality forms in early 20th century. This era called the 'proto-nationalism' era by some scholars. In the early 20th century, when Indonesia has not existed yet, there are many nationality in the Dutch Indie; Javanese, Ambonese, Minangese, Sundanese and others. In the early 1920th, these nationalities probably changed

gradually to be an ethnic groups,'suku-suku bangsa'. In the other word, these nationalites were excluded when "...the youngsters of those days signaled their regional origins not in the name of separatist local nationalisms, but in their committing of these regional origins to a colony-wide joint and common project of liberation. They paid no mind to the fact that Acehnese kings had once "colonized" the coastal regions of Minangkabau, that Buginese kings had enslaved Torajanese hillpeople, that Javanese aristocrats had tried to subjugate the Sunda highlands, or that Balinese overlords had successfully conquered the island of the Sasak" (Anderson. B.R.O. 1999)

So there is ever Sundanese nationality in early 20th century. Sundanese is not an ethnic group, but born as a nation. When Indonesia accepted as a nation to the whole of Dutch Indies people, the nationality of Sundanese was excluded, but the Sundanese awareness that differs from the others is still accommodated.

Hence, I will read Sundanese ethnic as Sundanese nation. I may put the concept of 'the geo-body of nation', a concept coined by Thongchai Winichakul (1994) to read the Sundanese ethnic identity. Thongchai saw the problem of nationalism is not only based on how one nation creates its region, but also how the 'nationhood' was formed by demarcated bodies in a particular region. In other word, the limit of nation is its spatiality.

In Southeast Asia, the concept of geo-body of nation that concern to the development of modern geographical knowledge among natives is usefull to look for the formation of nation. As Wolters (1999) stated, Mandala polity used in Southeast Asia, in which territory is not merely important to define self's boundary or self identity.

Furthermore, Thongchai found that Thailand nationalism grown with the transformation of Thai's spatiality. The old spatiality, in which the territory is not important than the traditional ruler, was replaced by the rigorous territorial boundaries as a sign to the emergence of a modern geographic region knowledge. The modern geographical spatiality becomes embodied in Thai Society through a geo-body of the nation (Thongchai, W. 1994, p. 17) that is "a man-made definite territory which has effect to

people and thing and also their relationship to classification, communication and continuous reinforcement”.

According to Thongchai, relying the formation of nationality on its constituent elements (eg, language) will ignore the limits of that identity. Thongchai claimed that the spatial perspective which he offered is seeking to explain how the construction of a significant element, in which all of the nation's identity begins and ends. This significant element, as stated by Thongchai, is a territory.

The Emergence of Sundanese Territory

Sundanese scholar, Atja & Danasasmita (1981, p. 62) argued that the concept of power among Sundanese in precolonial era was not based on territory. They argued that the polity in Sundanese was based on amount of ‘manarekha’, the term derived from Sanskrit (mana: to think; to predict; to count, and rekha; to note). This concept of manareka is identically with the concept of ‘cacah’ in Java. Cacah or manarekha is the unit to call 'house', the subject of land tax. The one 'house' in cacah is not a 'nuclear family', but can reach 40 to 50 peoples (Niel. et all. 2003, p. 209-211; see also Boomgaard. 2004, p. 354 ; Raffles. 1830, p. 69). For simply saying, the territory was not recognized by Sundanese as unit of power in the pre-colonial era. The concept of power in Sundanese was defined based on a body or a person.

Wolters (1982) suggested that the territory, as a unit of political power, in mandala polity is not something fixed. Hence, it is problematic to presuppose Sundanese and Javanese kingdom to have a fixed geographical boundary as Moriyama thought.

After the publishing of The History of Java, a monumental book written by Thomas Stanford Raffles, the traditional polity in Java island was changed gradually. Raffles, EIC governor for East Indies, was inspired by Decada, the book authored by Portuguese writer Joao de Barros. Barros state “The land of Java we consider as two islands, whose position is from east to west,... The javans themselves do not divide the land into two islands, but consider the whole length as constituting only one...” (Quoted in Raffles, 1830, p. xv)

Inspired by Barros, Raffles convinced that the past of Java administration consists of two parts, east and west, where ‘Javanese’ is resident in the eastern part of Java Island and Sundanese is resident in the western part. Raffles was defined this two native based on the 'nationality' in different language and culture (Raffles, 1830, p. 9)

Raffles’ invention became the basis idea of many European in the afterwards period. The western part of Java no longer recognizable as Westernlanden, a category that relate to the unity of Java, but Sundalanden. For instance, In 1841 Sundanese dictionary published the first in Amsterdam, where Roorda, the most authoritative of Dutch East scholar writes Sundanese as Sundalanden (Moriyama, 2003, p. 24). In 1842, Wolter Robert Van Hoevel published the research on the difference between Javanese and Sundanese people or Sundanezen (ibid : 25).

Eventhough many Europeans treat Sundanese as particular groups that have fixed territory as boundary, the territory was not still considered as boundary for Sundanese subject untill the early 20th century. For example, Soeradiwidjaja, one of Sundanese writer in Papaes Nonoman (1914), wrote that a lot of Sundanese in the villages area still felt that they were ruled by Susuhunan Solo, a king in the Middle of Java, Solo (Soeradiwidjaja. 1914). Sundanese identity therefore was not based on their territory or language, as European imagined, but it still lied on ancient patrimonial identity by the relationship with the king.

The Birth of The Geo-Body of The Sundanese

The awareness of Sundanese about their identity appears when nationalism began echoed in the early 20th century. For this era, I analyzed the texts of *Papaes Nonoman* (1914-1920), a newspaper produced by Paguyuban Pasundan, Sundanese organization founded in 1913 (Ekadjati, Edi S. 2004). Like another newspapers in the Dutch East Indies, Sundanese writers in Papaes Nonoman seems more interested in the issue of the progress (‘kemadjoean’). The calling to 'be progressed' was featured in every number of *Papaes Nonoman*.

‘Being progress’ here generally means 'being Dutch/Europe'. 'Government School' considered more important and useful than 'Islamic boarding school

(*pesantren*). Doctor considered smarter than the quack (Koesoma Soedjana. 1915). European languages, especially the Dutch, was considered as the language of progress and hence *Papaes Nonoman* provide a rubric entitled "*Diadjar basa Walanda teu make goeroe*". This admiration to Dutch/Europe eliminated the Javanese then as 'the centre of progress' in the heart of Sundanese; Javanese is only 'Sundanese second teacher' after the Dutch.

Two points should be noted from this moment. *First*, in the vortex of the discourse of 'the progress', Sundanese found their 'nationalism' ('*Nationaliteitsgevoel*'). This form of nationalism effectively obscured the process imitation of they did. 'Being progress' which means 'being Dutch' are not considered imitate other culture, but it is obligation for the sake of 'nationalism' (*Nationaliteitsgevoel*) and 'patriotism' (*Vaderlandsliefde*) (Anon. 1914). So, 'being Dutch' is an attempt to be 'the true Sundanese'. *Secondly*, through the *Nationaliteitsgevoel*, Sundanese see themselves as 'nation', in a more specific way, a group that different from the other nation; Javanese nation.

Language has significant role in the formation of Sundanese nation. In these years, Javanese language was considered to dominate Sundanese language. On July 1st, 1914, Daeng Kanduruan Ardiwinata, the president of *Paguyuban Pasundan* wrote that Sundanese needs to purify their language by discarding the Javanese uptaking language from Sundanese language (Ardiwinata, D.K 1914a). He also suggested to all Sundanese writer to developed the prose, a modern form of literary that they studied from Dutch, as opposed to *tembang*, the old form of Sundanese literary that they learned from Javanese (Ardiwinata, D.K 1914c). Sundanese also tries to develop a Sundanese dictionary that represent Sundanese as a modern language. For this dictionary, they held a contest that published in *Papaes Nonoman* frequently.

The most interesting fact about the development of Sundanese language, for me, is its function as the 'instrument of geo-body of nation'. This means that the discourse of the language is not only point to specify Sundanese culture that differ from Javanese culture with language, but also an instrument to build

a territorial border that separated from Javanese territorial.

By using the metaphor of the sea, in August 1914 Ardiwinata wrote the differences among Sundanese, Javanese and Malay languages. Sunda seems a strait that have an 'in between' position where Java and Malay has connected. (Ardiwinta, DK. 1914b). For me, this metaphor is not refer to the differences among these three cultures only, but it is a discourse about Sundanese border. Meanwhile, there is the Dutch colonial government regulation namely *Reglement Sakola art. 6 stbl. 1893 No. 125* that instructs every schools to use a purest native language as the language of instruction. These courses of language eventually led Sundanese to determine their own territory, a 'Sundanese homeland'. The question is where is Sundanese border? Which school should use the purest native language of Sunda?

On March 7, 1915, a meeting set up by school teachers of Banten District held at Serang, Banten. This meeting makes a decision that Sunda region should be used the the main dialect/language (*hooftdialect*) that is Priangan/Eastern Priangan dialect which called 'Basa Priangan' (Ardiwinata, D.K. 1915). Meanwhile, the most important decision in this meeting, for me, is the decision about Sundanese region, where the purest language would be used. 'Sunda region' in that decision is Banten, Cirebon, Betawi and Priangan.

However, Djajadisastra, a Sundanese writer, did not agree with this Sunda-region. Djajadisastra considered Serang, a location where the *hooftdialect* decided, was not a part of the Sunda- in land. Therefore, according to Djajadisastra, the consensus on the main dialect of Sundanese is illegitimate (Djajadisastra. 1915). Though Djajadisastra criticism never get any response, his idea reflects how the important of Sundanese territoriality invention to the discourse on Sundanese language.

Furthermore, mentioning Sundanese regions as manifested to the whole part of "Western Java" have been imagined by Raffles and other European in previous century. Ardiwinata wrote that people of Banten and Cirebon must learn 'Eastern Priangan Dialect' in the name of Sundanese nationalism (Ardiwinata, D.K. 1915). Eventhough the decision of

meeting is limited to the school teacher, Ardiwinata suggest that the hoftdialect should be used everyday in Sundanese event, not limited at school. From this consensus, now, Java Island consisted of two cultures with two fixed territorial; Javanese and Sundanese. Nowadays, there is single Javanese that differs from Sundanese.

This idea of region in this era is very different from *Sanghyang Siksakanda Ng Karesian*, the old Sundanese text that written in 1512. *Sanghyang Siksakanda Ng Karesian*, considered Java and Surabaya as two different region whose different languages (Atja & Danasasmita 1981, p. 62). Surabaya now is the city which belong to East Java and considered as part of 'Java'. Therefore, *Sanghyang Siksakanda* did not treat 'Java' as a unity of the eastern and the middle part of Java Island as like as Sundanese modern treated Javanese.

CONCLUSION

Sundanese identity as an ethnic group is a product of colonialism. This identity is based on the colonial's geography imagination which divides Java Island into two parts of territories since 16th century. This modern geography then was negotiated among Sundanese and embodied when nationalism was discussed in the early 20th century. This form of modern spatiality suspends the old mode of spatiality when there are a lot of Sundanese who believe that their identity is rely on the king or patrimonial ruler.

I argue that the language discussed by Sundanese to distinguish their identity from Javanese in early 20th century was a field of the modern geographical knowledge. The language is a form of mutation from European ideas to divide the Java island's territory into two parts. For this purpose, the language formed as a modern communication technology, as it discussed in the relation for national identity. All this discourse distributed by Sundanese printed media, the Sundanese modern communication technology that rapidly grow up in early 20th century.

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GAY ISSUES AND THEMES IN PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT AND MAINSTREAM FILMS

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Abstract

While a lot of film studies look at how gay characters are portrayed or depicted in films, this study aims to identify various gay issues presented in select Philippine gay-themed films. Using critical discourse analysis, the two-fold objective in this paper is addressed by surfacing various gay issues presented in a mix of independent (indie) and mainstream films produced in the Philippines from 1998 to 2013. Gay issues in these films include themes on representation, acceptance, and rights and protection. After uncovering the issues and themes in these gay-themed films, the paper explicates the nuances of indie and mainstream films which could affect the selection of gay issues to be presented, how the issues are presented, and which audience or sectors are catered to. These nuances include differences in modes of production, use of technology, and production techniques. Overall, the political economy of media informs the study on the missing discourses about gay representation, identity and agency.

Keywords: gay issues, indie, mainstream

INTRODUCTION

In spite of their greater visibility and positive contributions, gays have not always been cast in a positive light in Philippine cinema. Their portrayal and representation breed and support gay stereotypes. In the past, there were very few Filipino movies which dealt with the subject of homosexuality. Gay characters are caught up in formulaic narratives in mainstream films which are produced by the major studio system for the mass market. Today, the rise of independent films exploring the topic of homosexuality has opened discussions on whether indie films provide an alternative perspective to mainstream films about the topics of gay identity, issues, and experience.

This study aims to critically analyse how gay issues are presented in Philippine cinema or to be more specific, in select indie and mainstream films. The two-fold objective of this paper are a) to uncover gay issues and themes in the films and b) to explicate the nuances of indie and mainstream films which affect the presentation of gay issues and themes. A simple distinction between indie and mainstream films that

could be made at this point relates to the economic mode of production—indie films are produced outside the major studio system which sustain mainstream films. Another important phrase that needs definition is “gay issue”. What exactly constitutes a “gay issue”?

Gay issues in films refer to “struggles (of homosexuals) that address their otherness or their being different” (p. 157). According to Jamon (2006):

“Gay films place the homosexual character at the center of the narrative. Often these films present homosexual issues and struggles that address their “otherness” or their being different. Common conflicts in gay films involve the lack of recognition and acceptance from the society they are in, or the dilemma of whether or not to come out and accept one’s homosexuality.” (p. 157)

As such, the gay issues uncovered in this study can be understood in the context of similar themes of otherness, acceptance, and struggle.

About the movies

The films in this study are a mix of independent and mainstream films and were chosen on account of the gay characters, narratives, and issues they tackle, directly or indirectly. The films reviewed in this paper are *Pusong Mamon* (Soft Hearts), *Sa Paraiso ni Efren* (Efren's Paradise), *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros), *Ang Lihim ni Antonio* (Antonio's Secret), *Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy* (Girl Boy Gay Lesbian), and *Bekikang*.

Pusong Mamon (Soft Hearts, 1998) is a comedy set in Manila about a woman's entanglement in a gay couple's relationship. Directed by Joel Lamangan, Annie (Lorna Tolentino), Ron (Albert Martinez), and Nick (Eric Quizon) star in this film (Caw, n.d.).

Sa Paraiso ni Efren (Efren's Paradise, 1999) is about Melvin, a social worker who frequents a night club where he met Efren, one of the dancers. Melvin is attracted to Efren and moves in with him, only to find out that Efren already has sexual relationships with three other women (Deming, n.d.).

Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros (The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros, 2005) has an effeminate boy named Maxi (Nathan Lopez) for its lead character. Maxi enacts the roles of a mother, sister, and friend to his family of petty crooks and "promptly tumbles head over heels in puppy love" upon meeting a handsome police officer, Victor played by JR Valentin (Lee, n.d.).

Ang Lihim ni Antonio (Antonio's Secret, 2008) stars Antonio (Kenji Garcia) who is "a curious fifteen-year-old boy.... beginning to come to terms with his own sexuality" (Caw, 2008). Antonio's exploration of his sexuality and identity picks up steam with the involvement of his uncle (Jonbert played by Josh Ivan Morales) into Antonio and his mother's lives (Caw, 2008).

Joey Paras is a gay breadwinner in the movie *Bekikang* (2013) (Marasigan, 2013). The movie is about the lead character's old flame (Tom Rodriguez) who leaves his son Potpot to *Bekikang* (Joey Paras). *Bekikang* later realized that "real family needn't be bound by blood" (Marasigan, 2013).

Finally, *Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy* (Girl Boy Gay Lesbian, 2013) stars Vice Ganda playing the characters of Mark, Girlie, Peter and Panying. The

siblings have differing sexual orientations and were reunited to save Peter's life (Marasigan, 2014).

Framework and method

This study is informed by the political economy of the media which analyses the social (and power) relations which affect the production, distribution, and consumption of media products, communication texts, and other resources. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model (1995) was used as a method to analyze the text according to three levels of process or layers of meaning:

- The micro level which guides the description of the visual, verbal, and audio cues or elements in the movies
- The meso level which relate to the interpretation of the text to arrive at discourses (values, connotations, interests, etc...) in the movies and
- The macro level which aim to explain socio-historical factors and practices which affect the overall production and distribution of the text such as the regime, context, ideology, power relationships, etc...

Categories of gay issues and themes were arrived at inductively. In looking for gay issues and themes, the researchers coded specific scenes, dialogues, and patterns in the films in search for common symbols or visual elements, use of language, and audio or verbal cues.

The first objective of the paper which is to surface gay issues in select mainstream and indie films shall be answered after the analysis of the micro and meso levels in Fairclough's CDA model. The second objective which is to explicate the nuances between indie and mainstream films will be based on the analysis in the macro level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gay issues presented in the films largely involve or relate to the following:

- Representation: sexual orientation, gender identity and expression of the gay character

(loud vs. discreet, tastes/ preferences in sex/ sexual partners, etc....)

- Acceptance: both personal and social (coming out, acknowledgement vs. denial; gay character's relationship with his family, peers, friends, and the community)
- Rights and protection: access to rights to marriage, adoption, healthcare, employment, and education; protection from discrimination, hate crimes/ bullying; issues of social stratification, class or status

Representation

We found out that there are two dominant representations of gays in Philippine cinema—the loud and the macho. The loud or the screaming faggot stereotype is characterized by the use of gay language, perpetually screaming characters who laugh and shriek loudly at the slightest provocation. On the other hand, the second gay stereotype is that of the masculine, straight-acting men equivalent to the Western homosexual (homosexual being a signifier for orientation).

A similar finding is found in the literature about gay representation in Philippine cinema. Payuyo (2012) in her study of select Filipino gay-themed films found that there are two dominant gay characters in Philippine cinema—the parlorista/ palengkerang bakla (screaming faggot/ flaming gay/ cross-dressing) and the Brokeback-mountain type (named after the movie starring two macho, discreet, “straight-acting” gay characters).

In the movies we reviewed, *Bekikang* (2013) and *Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy* (*Girl Boy Gay Lesbian*, 2013) capitalized on the flaming gay stereotype while *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (*The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros*, 2005) reinforced the sissy gay stock character. Gay characters in *Ang Lihim ni Antonio* (*Antonio's Secret*, 2008), on the other hand, are of the straight-acting/ macho/ discreet type. *Sa Pusong Mamon* (*Soft Hearts*, 1998) and *Sa Paraiso ni Efren* (*Efren's Paradise*, 1999) have gay characters who, while of Brokeback-mountain physical attributes, are undoubtedly effeminate, with their voice, gestures, and movement serving as gender cues. Allan Paule and Eric Quizon are “macho” insofar as their physical appearance is concerned.

However, they can cross-over to the flaming gay stereotype through cross-dressing and their flamboyance.

Using Neil Garcia's notes (2008), the flaming gay is the familiar image of gays in Philippine mainstream cinema and culture (drag queens, the cross-dressing type, etc...). The flaming gay has the straight/ heterosexual male for their object of desire and they compete with females for the heterosexual man's love. Most of the gay characters in these films are also cast in “traditionally feminine” or domestic roles. Eric Quizon in *Pusong Mamon* (*Soft Hearts*, 1998) has meticulous and expensive taste for food, groceries, and household amenities.

Maxi in *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo ni Oliveros* (*The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros*, 2005) cooks for his family and takes care of his family's needs like a “mother”. Joey Paras in *Bekikang* (2013) and Vice Ganda in *Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy* (*Girl Boy Gay Lesbian*, 2013) have important roles as helpers at home and that their characters are also depicted as self-sacrificing. Allan Paule in *Sa Paraiso ni Efren* (*Efren's Paradise*, 1999) is a social worker, a “nurturing” role which is a “feminine” attribute (having “motherly” qualities).

The heterosexual order posits a linear alignment among sex, gender, and sexuality (Butler, 1993). Given the examples in the movies, there is no linear alignment among sex, gender, and sexuality. Eric Quizon in *Pusong Mamon* (*Soft Hearts*, 1998) is male yet takes on “feminine” gender roles and, in spite of his “feminine role” in relationships, prefers another masculine homosexual for a partner. Antonio, who is implicitly cast into “feminine roles”, develops a desire for his macho uncle. However, it must be noted that in *Bekikang* (2013) and *Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy* (*Girl Boy Gay Lesbian*, 2013), the gay characters have straight, heterosexual men as their objects of desire/ love interests. These suggest that gay characters are more of females trapped in a man's body and that they would feel/ be more like a “natural” woman through a heterosexual man's love. In other words, the flaming gay characters are heterosexual in orientation because as “women”, they desire the straight man.

Gay characters who are portrayed as “women” trapped in a man's body and desiring a heterosexual man still reinforce the heterosexual matrix or the

alignment between gender and sexuality. In other words, the representation of the heterosexual flaming gay characters as heterosexual (because they are “women” desiring heterosexual men/ the opposite sex or males) is still heteronormative—that heterosexuality is the dominant form of desire and that anything which deviates from it is suppressed and disallowed as I shall discuss in succeeding paragraphs.

As such, the common image of gays in general, as reinforced in the films, is one that does not reinforce diversity but one that is bound by expectations of the heterosexual majority—that gays are still “women” trapped in a man’s body. However, though they are “women” through their choices, attributes, and desires, the gay characters are not quite considered “real women” because they are an abomination of the female species. Such ordering further creates a minority (gays who are copy-cat females) within the minority (women) and imposes the primacy of males/men in the hierarchy.

Acceptance

Homophobia underscores issues of acceptance. According to Neil Garcia, homophobia is the “socially endorsed, prejudiced hatred and persecution of gays and lesbians because of their same-sexual orientation” (2008, p. 6). Homophobia can be institutional and personal. The former is a product of a system privileging heterosexual goals and values of procreation or reproduction. Hence, institutional homophobia can result in lack of access to marriage, healthcare, and benefits accorded to homosexuals. Personal homophobia, on the other hand, stems from lack of exposure to homosexuals that lead to ignorance, prejudice, and possibly, bigotry (Garcia, 2008).

In Pusong Mamon (*Soft Hearts*, 1998), Albert Martinez’ father still thought that he could “un-gay” his son even as the latter already came to terms with his sexuality. In *Ang Lihim ni Antonio* (Antonio’s Secret, 2008), the lead character experienced a strained relationship with his best friend when the latter discovered that Antonio was gay. Allan Paule (characterized as generous and supportive) and Albert Martinez (shown to be “decent” and professional) did not find unconditional acceptance in the heterosexual world.

While the gay characters are shown to possess redeeming values such as their unconditional love for their families, their generous spirit, the same gay characters are still arguably “othered”. Baytan (2008) said that the “limited notion of gayness is symptomatic of the dominant hegemonic culture’s continuous attempts to fossilize the bakla or gay identity—to subject him to its unchanging master narrative of the suffering abject” (p. 191). In the movies reviewed, the gays did not end up with their objects of desire. The gays are policed and repressed by the heterosexual order as the “tunay na lalaki” (real man/ object of desire) ended up with women whom they later married and had families with.

In *Sa Paraiso ni Efren* (Efren’s Paradise, 1999), in spite of the lead character’s generosity and support, his love and desire are unrequited. In *Bekikang* (2013), Joey Paras did not end up with Tom Rodriguez even as the former adopted the latter’s son. One might also wonder if Maxi’s family in *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros, 2005) would treat him differently had he behaved irresponsibly or acted against his family’s wishes. In the movies mentioned, the acceptance of gays is hinged on their contributions or socio-economic status, and their commitment to helping their families and society in general.

Seen through the lens of critical political economy which examines how access to capital affects social and political relations (Wasko et al., 2014), gay issues in mainstream films still cater to the heterosexual market’s demands and expectations of the bakla. In the indie films reviewed, there are missing discourses about the gay identity and experience. Discourses arising from these movies are often limited to notions such as gay as the milking cow, rendering affective labour, and in some cases, promiscuous. What these imply is that the value of acceptance for gays in these films is contingent on having positive qualities or based on affective labour. There are problems with acceptance based on affective labour.

First, what would happen if gays are no longer cast in a favourable light? Would they still be accepted? Second, personal and institutional homophobia would still persist regardless of whether gays are presented positively. Prejudice and bigotry do not magically dissipate even as gays are cast in a favourable light. The seeming precondition for acceptance—for gays to have positive qualities and contributions—is a

double-standard. After all, no such expectation exists for heterosexuals

Rights and protection

We found that the gay character's rights and protection intersect with issues of class and status. Rights refer to the homosexual's access to marriage, adoption, healthcare, employment, and education. Protection, on the other hand, refers to the guarantees of the law or state against discrimination, hate crimes/ bullying, etc... Issues of social stratification, class or status intersect with marginalization, acceptance, and political currency of the gay characters and community.

Gay marriage is a theme in *Pusong Mamon* (Soft Hearts, 1998) with Eric Quizon and Albert Martinez seen as attending weddings of their gay couple friends. Later, Lorna Tolentino joins them in church for the baptism of their gay friends' son. Towards the end of the movie, Albert Martinez is shown to be proposing to Eric Quizon. Marriage is seen as the long-awaited pinnacle of the relationship as it signifies perpetual commitment. Meanwhile, adoption is another issue shown in both *Pusong Mamon* (Soft Hearts, 1998) and *Bekikang* (2013). It must be noted, however, that the lead character in *Bekikang* was only able to adopt Tom Rodriguez' son after becoming wealthy and successful. In *Pusong Mamon*, adoption and marriage are options only available to well-to-do, upper-class gay couples.

It is not surprising then to see that marriage and adoption are not among the issues presented in *Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy* (Girl Boy Gay Lesbian, 2013) and *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros, 2005). Themes on poverty/ hardships in life arise in these two films—Maxi living is in a crime-stricken area and Vice Ganda experiences a life far from the comfort and luxury that his siblings enjoy in the US. For Maxi, bullying/ harassment are the issues, he is a gay character against the backdrop of crime and poverty.

In *Ang Lihim ni Antonio* (Antonio's Secret, 2008), the lead character is a victim of crime. Antonio was raped by his uncle and he took the fall for the crime committed by his mother. Sexual abuse in a consensual, homosexual relationship is what Antonio experienced in the hands of his uncle. Meanwhile, Antonio's uncle and Efren solicit money in exchange

for sex. Crime and poverty are part of Antonio's, his uncle's, Efren's, and Melvin's narratives.

The issues of rights and protection for the gay characters must be filtered through matters of social stratification, class or status as these intersect with marginalization, acceptance, and political currency. To quote Neil Garcia (2008), "gay theory should include a local and materialist critique of the class system as issues of homosexual prostitution, discrimination, and oppression in general are intimately linked to class-supremacist ideologies" (p. 14).

The consequences of personal and institutional homophobia compelled movies in this paper (intentionally or not) to rearticulate the right for gays to marry (*Pusong Mamon/ Soft Hearts*, 1998), adopt (*Bekikang*, 2013), be protected from crimes (*Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros/ The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros*, 2005; *Sa Paraiso ni Efren/ Efren's Paradise*, 1999), and *Ang Lihim ni Antonio/ Antonio's Secret*, 2008) and have access to a good life (*Girl Boy Bakla Tomboy/ Girl Boy Gay Lesbian*, 2013). Institutional or personal homophobia succeeds in creating a minority and stigmatizing the gays. Needless to say, such "minoritizing" and "stigmatizing" (Garcia, 2008) have had an impact on the gay's access to rights, towards furthering the structural limitations and institutional hurdles to their access and call for protection.

Indie vs. Mainstream: Production, Technology, and Themes

The succeeding discussion addresses the second objective—to explicate the nuances of indie and mainstream films. The major differences of indie films to its chief counterpart, mainstream motion pictures, include its economic mode of production (budget and its implication on aesthetics, casting, etc...), technologies used (camera, editing, storage device), and techniques of production and themes (formula, genre, narrative structure).

The first difference of indie films to that of mainstream films is related to budget. A review of Jose Gutierrez III (2012) on Baumgartel's book on Southeast Asian independent cinema (2012) classified indie films as those which were not produced by major film outfits or were produced "independent" of the major film studio system such as Star Cinema, Regal Films, Viva Films or GMA Films

in the case of the Philippines. The major production companies create big-budget films which are shown in cinemas nation-wide.

Financial constraints are evident in indie films based on their shoot locations, visual effects, and aesthetic components like make-up, wardrobe, and props (Bleasdale, 2008). Locations in *Ang Lihim ni Antonio* (Antonio's Secret, 2008) and *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros, 2005) were shanties in Manila. In the mainstream film *Pusong Mamon* (Soft Hearts, 1998), the gay couple lives in an upper-class subdivision. Of course, all these differences still depend on the central plot and the narrative of the characters.

Mainstream films hire popular artists as their talents like Vice Ganda, Eric Quizon and Albert Martinez. These actors are highly recognized in Philippine television and cinema. Moreover, most of these actors are openly gay (Vice Ganda, Joey Paras) and often seen in Philippine television as cross dressers and loud gay characters. On the other hand, Kenji Garcia (Antonio) and Nathan Lopez (Maximo) are actors whose names rarely appear on TV and film. The use of popular stars together with their gender roles create the screaming faggot stereotype in mainstream films, compared to the portrayal of gay characters in indie films who are more discreet, straight-acting closeted homosexuals.

It is of no surprise then that with the profit-orientation of mainstream films, the aesthetic elements and sophisticated production tools and equipment are used to sell the movie to as wide an audience base as possible. Needless to say, peddling and pandering to the demands and expectations of the mass market in order to sell and profit have had negative consequences to representation and portrayal of gays in Philippine cinema.

Mainstream films are ridden with loud gay characters or the screaming/ flaming gay stereotype. Gays are treated as the suffering object, the laughing stock of the mass market. This pervasive portrayal and representation is argued to have stifled the goals of acceptance and integration for members of the gay community. The visibility of gays in Philippine cinema is indeed a double-edged sword—they are either liberated from the previous labels or boxed further in new categories.

Meanwhile, as opposed to mainstream films which rely on product placements, advertising and sponsorships for profit, indie films rely on critical recognition (often in local and international film festivals) for viewership and circulation of films. With their limited aesthetic elements, the less sophisticated technology in indie films can be perceived as its strength more than its weakness. As technology developed, indie filmmakers adopted to the portability, flexibility, and devaluing price of digital cameras. The technologies used in creating independent films also include affordable materials like digital video cameras and cheap computer editing and enhancing tools (Bleasdale, 2008; Gutierrez, 2012; Science and Technology Council, 2012).

The portability and flexibility of technology, along with the “independence” of indie films from mass market demands and expectations, have allowed indie filmmakers to shoot whenever, wherever, and whatever—opening the possibility for expanding, exploring, and diversifying gay experiences and narratives which have never been caught on camera before. While some elements clearly work to the advantage of indie films, there is a question on the extent to which indie films were able to subvert prevailing gay stereotypes in mainstream films. If anything, the experimentation for which indie films is known for is yet to provide an alternative perspective and discourse to gay identity and experience.

In relation to techniques and narratives, mainstream films use continuity editing, predictable story lines, a formula for characters, and establishing shots which usually familiarize the viewers with the setting (King, 2005; as cited in Szabo, 2010). On the other hand, indie films use off-centre or inexact framing, the practice of taking shots with unusual angles and restricted views, and the habit of interchanging close shots and long shots as the story develops (King, 2005; as cited in Szabo, 2010). Indie films also have open-ended conclusions, rely heavily on dialogues to establish characters, and often have anti-Hollywood or non-formulaic story lines.

In a study by Fuentes, et al. (2015), indie films usually tackle and show stories outside the common narratives and techniques of mainstream films. With limited amount of budget, indie films represent what is close to reality using available funds for its operation as they go against the standard formula of mainstream films. Does “indie” then mean or connote

“progressive”? While mainstream films are still remiss in their presentation of gay issues. Indie films, for their part, have left much opportunity to explore the topic of gay identity and experience with much depth.

In sum, Herman and Chomsky (2002) argued that there are structural factors and institutional forces which determine the content (and the limitation of content) in media texts. Films are no stranger to ownership, control, financing, elite’s interests, and business considerations in the political economy of mass media. The way these films present, represent, explore, and discuss gay issues has a lot to do with who decides what to show in these films, what constitutes “acceptable” messages, and which market is catered to. In other words, assessing how “progressive” films are in presenting gay issues is secondary to understanding the structural factors and institutional forces which sustain the films.

CONCLUSION

The presentation of gay issues and themes in mainstream films is still very much bound to conform to the expectation of the heterosexual majority. The acceptance of gays is based on their positive qualities and contributions. In spite of their self-sacrifice and positive qualities, gay characters are still disrespected and are often unrequited in love and desire. Most of the mainstream movies expectedly fall short in presenting gay issues with depth and breadth. The appeal to the mass market and the use of tried and tested formula disallow or make it difficult for mainstream films to explore gay issues and themes more substantially and meaningfully.

In a similar vein, the expectation for indie films to provide an alternative or different perspective to mainstream films’ treatment of gay issues is yet to be fulfilled. In spite of the many attempts to diversify gay representation, gay stereotypes are still pervasive. There are departures from the portrayal of gays as the screaming faggot. However, these departures in portrayal also support existing and breed new stereotypes (gays as promiscuous/ milking cow, the paying customers, and pretentious/ two-faced/ manipulative, despicable for being pretentiousness about their sexuality).

Finally, it is worth noting that there is no singular, objective definition and standard for what constitutes

a progressive presentation of gay issues. In this regard, the reach and wide audience base of mainstream films and potential of indie films for experimentation can be harnessed. What exactly constitutes a progressive representation of gay issues and themes? This is a question that only authors and filmmakers can answer.

The mode of production and the use of technology can only do so much in the way gay issues are presented in films. In the end, it is still the author’s intention, approach, and execution which can affect the audience’s perceptions of and the public discussion about gay issues and themes. It is expected that authors will submit carefully written and proofread material. Careful checking for spelling and grammatical errors should be performed. Papers should clearly describe the background of the subject, the authors’ contribution, including the methods used, results and concluding discussion on the importance of the work from both scholarly and managerial perspectives.

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THE DEMOGRAPHY AND CURRENT WORK CONDITIONS OF CAMEROONIAN PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

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Abstract

Drawing on a national survey, this study examines the demography and current working conditions of Cameroonian professional journalists. Journalism appears to be a young person's profession in Cameroon. Also, journalism education is increasingly being seen as professionally relevant to entry-level and mid-career journalists looking to improve and upgrade their qualifications. Drawing from the results of the survey, journalism is a very demanding profession in Cameroon. It requires working at night and for long hours out of home. Also, like in many parts of the world, journalism is not lucrative in Cameroon. Interviews with journalists revealed that a variety of constraints are adversely affecting the context under which journalists operate. Most journalists, particularly in the private media, operate in dire economic conditions, resulting from low salaries, absence of health insurance and social security benefits. For this reason, requesting or being offered money and other material benefits to cover specific news is a widespread malpractice. Corruption thrives in this environment. For many media organizations and journalists, corruption is a means to survive. The difficult working conditions for journalists also mean that a commitment to professionalism and ethical journalism is not a priority for most journalists. This study argues that within this context, not only is the credibility of the profession damaged, there is the collapse of independent, accurate and objective journalism. The role of the media as a public watchdog and investigative journalism are seriously undermined.

Keywords: Demographic profile, work conditions, Journalist Survey, Cameroon

INTRODUCTION

The constitution of Cameroon guarantees free speech, though genuine freedom of expression remains elusive in daily life. As part of its democratization process which started in 1990, new laws relating to freedom of the press and association were enacted. In December 1990, government passed the Freedom of Mass Communication Law liberalizing the media sector. The outcome of the law was a newspaper publishing boom in the country. A 2003 report for the Commonwealth Press Union revealed that 654 newspapers were registered in the country in 1997 (Ndangam, 2006). Ndangam (2006) argues that while the flourishing private press reflected the hankering of a budding politically conscious readership and duly served as a tool for mobilizing public opinion and support, the majority of these publications

appeared sporadically and very few survived longer than a couple of months or a particular event.

On January 4, 1996, Law No. 96/04 was promulgated, modifying certain provisions of Law No. 90/052 of December 19, 1990. How appropriate has the new law been in fostering press freedom and improving the working conditions of Cameroonian journalist? The modification of the law has not stopped the authorities from exercising legal methods to harass journalists nor has it provided media proprietors with a viable economic environment for financial autonomy and professional independence. The craving for control, the selective application of the law has made newsgathering and reporting very difficult for journalists. Thus if one were to take into account the degree of persistent censorship, seizures, bans, confiscations, searches and raids on media houses, harassments, arrest and detention of

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journalists, the 2008 government crackdown on the broadcast media, as well as the precarious working conditions of journalists, then it would be lopsided to reason that the December 1990 media law and its slight modification in 1996 changed much in practice.

According to an incisive report by the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ), journalists do not benefit from any health or safety protection and rarely have health insurance. They do not even receive the necessary basic equipment to help them protect themselves in situations of conflict or during unrest (FAJ, 2010). How many Cameroonian journalists for example had basic safety equipment when covering the 2008 nationwide protests and demonstrations? How many have combat helmets which provide effective protection against flying objects and protection against riots and rock throwing. How many journalists have adequate safety equipment (bulletproof vest, telecommunication tools, first aid kits, and if possible armored vehicles at their disposal) when travelling or operating in hostile, high-risks environments? How many have received training and counseling in minimum security measures before covering a demonstration or riot as the one mentioned above.

How many Cameroonian journalists have an insurance policy to cover illness, disability, loss of life, injuries derived from an assignment or will provide support to their family in case they disappear? As we shall read later this paper, a surprisingly high number of journalists from Africa (Cameroon), do operate without any health insurance policy. In such cases, journalists who are injured, even on the job, may not be able to rely on their news organizations to cover their medical expenses. Journalists, especially those of the private media are not only poorly remunerated, they don't benefit from any effective labor legislation, employers rarely offer contracts, collective bargaining agreements (CBA), free transport, effective office telephone, fax and computer services. Though a CBA was signed in 2008, its positive effects are still to be felt. In fact, it is more appropriate to speak of individual bargaining since almost all private media journalists negotiate their employment and pay alone.

The public or state owned media in Cameroon has been and still is an integral part of the civil service. The government ensures that this media think of

themselves more as a part of the central administration than as a separate institution and profession. The integration of the state owned media into the civil service was part of the process of political socialization devised by government to ensure loyalty and subservience from all state employed journalists. By assuming the role of gatekeeper and paymaster of all state employees, the government succeeded to procure itself an effective weapon for exacting unflinching loyalty and subservience from all state employed journalists (Nyamnjoh, 2005).

If the government was able to undermine pluralism in the public media by making state employed journalists civil servants, it stifled the private press with draconian press laws. According to Frère (2014), vague formulations of the law often lead to abusive interpretations, allowing courts to inflict disproportionate sentences on media organizations and journalists that the authorities wish to silence. Journalists who disclose cases of corruption, professional misconduct, scandals involving civil servants, police, army and members of parliament; journalists who criticize government policy and public spending can be accused of libel or posing as a threat to national unity and security, or attempting to destabilize the institutions. Even the health of the president can invoke the fury and repressive hammer of the state. For example, in 1997 the editor of '*Le Messenger*', Pius Njawa was imprisoned for having invoked the health of President Paul Biya.

According to Kouyo (2010), there is a general lack of concern and interest of employers and governments regarding the safety of journalists. Overall, the working conditions of journalists, especially journalists of the private media are precarious, with low salaries, no protection against unfair dismissal and frequently with no contracts (Fanucci et al, 2008). Many journalists are paid below the minimum wage (which is 28.000FCFA, the equivalence of less than 50 Euros), while some of them are not paid for more than a year (Ndangam, 2006).

While the issue of the deplorable working conditions of Cameroonian journalists has captured the popular imagination and triggered comments from various analysts, there is not much academic literature that focuses precisely on the subject as it relates to the nation's media professionals. The paucity of literature

on this very important subject informing the media landscape in Cameroon needs to be addressed because how other economic and political institutions and the body politic in general perceive, interpret and respond to the issue is consequential for improving, building a media system that is able to assume its role in Cameroon's turbulent, shaky and evolving democracy.

Frère (2014) contends that though there is a wide range of research based on content produced by African journalists and disseminated by their media, the parameter of the context in which journalists do operate or practice their professional activity and the possible impact on the risks they face on the content they produce are often not taken into account. Better identification of those risks can therefore help not only to better understand what it means to be a journalist in Africa (Cameroon) but also to shed another light on media content. Thus the aim of this article is therefore not only to provide a demographic profile of Cameroonian professional journalists but also to examine the working conditions of the journalists, the difficulties that they face in their daily operation in order to check whether and how these difficulties can be prevented, mitigated or even compensated.

Exactly who Cameroonian journalist are and precisely under which kind of working conditions they operate in the building of a modern Cameroonian society is largely speculative. This current study aims to mitigate the situation. This study contends that the evolving practices of journalism in Cameroon demand more scholarly attention than they have received in recent years. This will not only help us to understand journalists' frailties but it will give us a deeper sociological account of how Cameroonian journalists do journalistic work as well as the conditions under which they operate. Studies of this kind would be relevant in providing factual information based on evidence. Thus a study of the demographic profile and working conditions of Cameroonian journalists is useful in moving beyond generic generalizations about the media and the people who work for the media.

According to Mwesige (2004), national portraits of journalists are important because journalism is deemed a central influence on society. As Hyden & Leslie (2002) has maintained, although several

aspects of democratization in Africa have received increasing scholarly attention in recent years, not enough systematic inquiry has been directed at the role of the media in this process or the people who man this industry. An appreciation of the role of journalism in Cameroon cannot be complete without a valuable understanding of the people who work in this institution. As Weaver (1998) succinctly puts it:

'The major assumption is that journalists' backgrounds and ideas have some relationship to what is reported (and how it is covered) in the various news media around the world, in spite of various societal and organizational constraints, and that this news coverage matters in terms of world public opinion and policies'.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Within the context of Cameroon's brief press history, this article provides answers to the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the demographic profile of Cameroonian journalists?

RQ2. What is the current work situation of Cameroonian journalist?

By addressing these questions, this study produces some benchmark information about journalism in Cameroon. This is a significant and critical period for Cameroon's transition from a one party state to a multiparty democracy and from state monopoly, heavy control over the media to media liberalization.

METHOD

The researcher visited major newspapers, broadcasting stations in the country's major cities of Yaoundé, Douala, Buea, Kumba, Limbe and personally distributed paper questionnaire to 705 journalists between July 2010-April 2011. At each location, the researcher dropped enough questionnaires so that each journalist could complete one in time to be picked up later. Questionnaire was delivered via electronic mail to some few journalists who opted for this channel.

The questionnaire was pretested on a sample of journalists, 18 Anglophone and 15 Francophone journalists in July-August 2010. Following Weaver & Wilhoit (1986:168) this study defined journalists as 'those who have the responsibility for the preparation

and transmission of news stories and other information'. In other words, the population of the survey is all full-time reporters, writers, editors, columnists, correspondents, photojournalists etc.

In total, 400 Cameroonian journalists out of the 705 had completed the questionnaire from July-August 2010 when the questionnaires were pretested, September-December 2010 when the questionnaires were administered to journalists and April ending 2011 when the data collection phase of the research became closed. This gives a response rate of 57%. 365 journalists completed paper questionnaires while 35 completed the questionnaire by electronic mail (internet).

This study argues that though the latter was meant to supplement the former, the differences in response rate between the two mediums are significant. With low internet connectivity in Cameroon, unstable power supply, raising internet costs, the internet (web) is not a suitable or effective tool for survey research. The disparity in response rate is therefore a glaring testament that Cameroonian journalists prefer office-office personal contact and the delivery of questionnaires for self completion than completion via the web or internet.

KEY FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings of the survey. It begins by delineating the demographic profile of Cameroonian journalists before moving on to discuss their current working conditions.

Demographic Profile

Most Cameroonian professional journalists were born in Cameroon of Cameroonian parents. A majority of respondents were male (60%), with 40% being female. 59% of the respondents indicated they were Francophone, 40.5% are Anglophones. The issue of language is significant. Cameroon's two main official languages are the English and French languages. The policy of official language bilingualism constitutes the main core of Cameroon's language policy. Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of 18 January 1996 clearly states that:

'The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the

promotion of bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavor to protect and promote national languages'.

Successive Constitutions since independence have reiterated the relevance of pursuing a policy of official bilingualism. However, there exists no well-defined language policy till date as to its implementation and monitoring. Even more, though English and French are considered to be equal in status according to constitutional arrangements, French has a de facto dominance over English in the areas of administration, education and the media. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that French influence as expressed in language, culture and political policy prevails in all domains (Wolf 1997: 421).

Gender

It is not uncommon to see that in most media organizations in Cameroon, men out-number women at the reporting and editorial levels. This trend has been revealed by similar studies in Nepal, Ethiopian, Uganda mentioned elsewhere in this study. At the management level, women are almost invisible. 60% of the respondents for this study were reported to be 'male', while 40% were 'female'. At the management and decision making levels, women are almost invisible. For example, when we look at all the main private newspapers in Cameroon, no woman is a publisher, a proprietor or station manager of any of the private broadcasting stations across the country. With regards to the public media, we don't find any major difference. Though women constitute a majority of students in most of Cameroon's journalism training institutions, this is not reflected in the media's labor market (Tanjong, 2012). In editorial departments, the issue of gender is also discernible as men and women tend to be associated with different kinds of stories. In Cameroon for example, the Unity Palace (presidential residence), Glass House (National Assemble), International Relations and Politics are national beats solely for men, while women are more into health, cultural and economic beats. Even when women are assigned to the Unity Palace, it is mainly for soft news such as covering socio-cultural activities of the President's wife.

Age and Job Experience

44.0 % of the respondents were born between 1970-79, 36.3% between 1980-89 and 19.8% between 1960-69. As concerns journalism job experience, 30% of the respondents indicated that they had a work experience from 6-10 years, 26.5% 11-15 years and 20.8% 1-5 years. In terms of age composition and job experience, study results revealed that journalism appears to be a young person's profession in Cameroon since a majority of the journalists had an age range of 22-41 years. This results is consistent with those of similar studies conducted in Nepal (Ramaprasad and Kelly, 2003); Birhanu (2014) study of Ethiopian journalists.

A significant number (80%) of respondents in this study were born between 1989-1970 while 50% of the respondents had a job experience ranging from 1-10 years. These findings reveal significant personnel dynamics informing the profession. First, it can be explained at least partly to the sudden and dramatic increase in media outlets following the 1990 media reforms and the passage of the broadcasting decree in the year 2000. This media liberalization that swept across the country culminated in an increased demand for journalists. This study argues that majority of the respondents had worked for 10 years or less and therefore only knew the working conditions of a free media environment.

Furthermore, 26% of the respondents had a journalism job experience of 11-15 years, and only 17% had a job experience of 16-25 years. The implication of these results is that journalism in Cameroon was still slow to attract, retain the best and learned minds, that journalism was losing most of its veterans, experienced experts and educators to more lucrative sectors. I submit that this tendency appear to militate against the institution. However, this problem is not solely a Cameroonian syndrome. Birhanu (2014) has indicated in the study of Ethiopian journalists a significant turn-over of experienced personnel, possibly due to meager wages and other external influences over the profession.

Education and Training

Several journalists received education and training before and during their jobs at various domestic and foreign institutions. The survey results indicated remarkable progress in the educational qualifications

of journalists. Most journalists in Cameroon hold a bachelor's degree in journalism or mass communication. 64.3% of the respondents had graduated from the university, 25.3% from a higher institution of professional learning and 10.5% from some other tertiary institution, 12.0% had on the job training, while 1.8% reported having 'no education' in journalism. In addition, 85.8% of respondents thought a university degree in journalism and communication was significant to today's journalists; 89.8% indicated that it was of 'significance' as well to future journalists.

The above results are consistent with those of similar studies carried out across the continent and elsewhere in the globe. For example Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) survey of Nepalese journalists revealed that several journalists had received training before and during their jobs at various national and foreign institutions. Birhanu (2014) found dramatic progress concerning the workforce qualification of Ethiopian journalists. Same is true with Mwesige (2004) study of Ugandan journalists.

The results from Cameroonian journalists appears to suggest that, compared to their peers in the western world especially Britain 'where a journalist is born, not made', Cameroon places importance on journalism education in formal schools of training. According to a survey of British journalists, while 49% had a degree, 20% pursuing 'tertiary education', 30% had no exposure to tertiary education and only a meager 2% of all those who had a degree took undergraduate courses in journalism (Henningham & Delano, 1998). But as we are going to discern below, I argue that this trend is shifting to recognition of the nature and benefits of university education for journalists.

As regards Cameroon, formal education, training programmes in journalism started in 1970. In that year, Cameroon together with Gabon, Central Africa Republic, Rwanda, Chad and Togo collectively set up 'L'ecole Superieure Internationale de Journalisme de Yaoundé (ESIJY) Cameroon. In 1982, the institution was nationalized and became L'ecole Superieure des Sciences et Techniques de L'information (ESSTI). In 1991, the institution became L'ecole Superieure des Sciences et Techniques de L'information et dela Communication (ESSTIC)-Advanced School of Mass Communication. Also, there are three University departments offering journalism study programmes,

two of these institutions are private, that is 'Siantou Supérieure' as well as 'Institute Ndi Samba', then the department of Journalism & Mass Communications, University of Buea which is a public institution since 1993.

Thus, over the years, many journalists without formal education in journalism have sought to acquire university degrees. The proliferation of public and private journalism education and training schools in Cameroon as well as in other countries across the region epitomizes a dramatic shift in reasoning as to the nature, relevance and benefits of journalism education and training.

Political & Religious Affiliations

Most of the respondents said they had a political affiliation, were religious and had been brought up under a particular faith. 51.3% reported being Catholics, 20% were either raised as Protestants, Baptists, Presbyterians and 5% as Muslims. 57.0% found religious beliefs to be 'very important'. Asked what they thought of some daily news organizations manifesting a marked ideological, regional or ethnic point of view, 37.8% of respondents reported 'a good idea', 43.5% indicated 'bad idea', while 18.8% was 'neutral' as the table 10 demonstrates.

Concerning where Cameroonian journalists situate themselves politically, 26.5% of the respondents reported 'progressive', 21.8% said they were 'moderate progressive', 26.5% indicated being at the 'centre'.

Whether the political, ideological and religious views of journalists have an impact on the way they do their job remains an interesting subject for future research. However, many journalists indicated that religious orientation seems to have a strong influence on them when it comes to shaping ideas in matters of journalism ethics. Thus, 40.0% of respondents were of the opinion that religious background has been 'extremely influential' in shaping their ideas in matters of journalism ethics, while 33.5% reported 'quite influential'.

Current Work Situation

Most respondents (91.3%) indicated working 'full-time' either for newspapers, news magazines, radio and television. A majority of them that is 35.5% work for 'radio stations', 30.5% for 'television' and 21.0% 'newspapers'. Following the 1990 media reforms and the passage of the broadcasting decree of the year 2000, a proliferation of private radio and television stations sprouted, generating an influx of new graduates into the labor market.

Workload and Flexibility

Journalism is a very demanding and exhaustive profession. As regards working hours and work pressure, 40% of respondents reported working more than 55 hours a week; 37.8% working 45-55 hours a week. The table below gives us a general overview of the number of hours that journalists work per-week.

Table 1: Number of Hours Work Per Week

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 25 Hours	33	8,3	8,3	8,3
25-35 hours	16	4,0	4,0	12,3
35-45 Hours	40	10,0	10,0	22,3
45-55 Hours	151	37,8	37,8	60,0
More than 55 Hours	160	40,0	40,0	100,0
Total	400	100,0	100,0	

Also, most often, journalists have to work extra hours; work in the evenings, at nights and even during the weekends. Despite the increased working hours, intensive nature of journalistic work and the

fact that most journalists in Cameroon operate under very difficult working conditions, 'loan' has been and still is a major issue.

Loan

The increased working hours have not been met with a corresponding increase in wages as well as

improved working conditions for journalists. The table below highlights the salary scale of Cameroonian professional journalists.

Table 2: Salary Scale of Cameroonian Journalists (1 Euro is approximately 655 Cameroon Franc CFA)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
50.000F CFA	8	2,0	2,0	2,0
50.000-65.500FCFA	53	13,3	13,3	15,3
65.500-131.000FCFA	108	27,0	27,0	42,3
131.000-262.000FCFA	121	30,3	30,3	72,5
262.000-393.000FCFA	77	19,3	19,3	91,8
393.000-524.000FCFA	28	7,0	7,0	98,8
524.000-655.000FCFA	2	,5	,5	99,3
655.000-786.000FCFA	3	,8	,8	100,0
Total	400	100,0	100,0	

Drawing from the above table, this study argues that as in many parts of the world, journalism is not lucrative in Cameroon. The issue of loan is not peculiar only to Cameroonian journalists. According to Weaver & Willnat (2012), in Chile the strongest predictors of job satisfaction or the lack of it were pay and the chance of journalists to use all their abilities and knowledge. In Malaysia, pay is crucial, while in Brazil, low pay is a predictor of job dissatisfaction.

Journalists, especially those working for the private media are poorly remunerated by their employers. Thus there is a tendency for these journalists to request payments in cash, other material benefits from individuals and organizations that they cover (see Alobwede, 2006, pp. 27, Ndangam, 2006, Nyamnjoh, 2005). Thus, debates informing the need of improved working conditions for journalists have increased in recent years culminating in the 2008 signing of the National Collective Convention of journalists.

National Collective Convention (NCC)

On November 12th, 2008, a National Collective Convention of journalists and related professionals in the Social Communication sector of Cameroon was signed by press entrepreneurs and journalists in the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Communication and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. Article 29 of the Convention defines 12 categories of press employees, from workers performing elementary tasks demanding no professional knowledge or adaptation to the senior manager in charge of supervising and controlling the copy editors and managing editors; experimented production manager in charge of supervising and controlling programmes; advisory engineer supervising all technical equipment and advising management; experimental senior manager capable of leading a team and replete with public relations skills.

The salaries fixed by the 2008 Collective Convention for the aforementioned 12 categories of workers range from FCFA 32.865 (50Euros) to FCFA 430.395 (657 Euros). Journalists defined in categories

8-9 are defined as ‘agents responsible for a precise task in the quest for, analysis of and treatment of information, the drafting of articles, the organization and conception of production and dissemination equipment as well as production and realization and continuation’. They should at least have a ‘Baccalaureat or School-Leaving Certificate’. With two years of higher education, the Convention perceives them as ‘confirmed journalists’ with the status of a ‘middle manager’. Their salaries range from FCFA 161.645 (246Euros) to FCFA 293.460 (448Euros).

The Convention is in following with Article 52 of the Cameroon Labor Code, which aims to ensure permanent social dialogue between employers and workers in this domain, with the overriding aim of guaranteeing the protection of their interests like their professional rights, contracts, working conditions, salaries or mode of payment, health and social security entitlements ,which employers have up to now flouted due not only to the ignorance of journalists but particularly because there has been no trade union to ensure these rights are respected.

According to Fanucci et al (2008), by setting common standards for journalists of both the public and private media, the NCC will contribute to the erosion of the existing cleavage. The Convention also determines journalists’ rights (regardless of whether they are part of a trade union) in relation to minimum salary, holidays and sick leave. An arbitration court would consider disputes and have the authority to impose sanctions. Fanucci et al (2008) argues that although the state has the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the Convention, it remains to be seen whether it will be properly implemented and enforced. Indeed, there are hardly any media organizations in Cameroon who can afford to uphold or comply with all the requirements of the Convention. This point has been highlighted in the study of Atenga (2012). According to Atenga (2012) the average salary for journalists working in the following newspapers is as follows:

Table 3: Average salary for journalists

Newspaper Title	Average salary
L’ Achu New Page Group	100.000 FCFA (153 Euros)
Le Jour	120.000 FCFA (185 Euros)
La Nouvelle Expression	120.000 FCFA (185 Euros)
Le Messenger	100.000 FCFA (153 Euros)
Mutations	130.000 FCFA (200Euros)
Le Popoli	90.000 FCFA (140 Euros)

Table. 3 indicate the average salary for journalists and by extension suggest that the newspapers meet the minimum norms set by the NCC. However, Atenga (2012) maintains that the reality in the field is quite different. Indeed, between the salaries declared by media owners and those actually received by the journalists and other members of staff, the gap is sometimes quite substantial. Even more, these modest salaries are not always paid on time, if at all. With the exception of ‘La Nouvelle Expression’, all dailies have delays in payment from 2-9 months. None is up to date concerning social security contributions for its employees. Very few journalists benefit from private health insurance. Amidst the grim working conditions, many journalists are afraid to claim that they are being exploited. According to Charles Nforgang (2009) as cited in Atenga (2012, pp.21), since the inception of the National Collective Convention, ‘the text has been evoked neither by journalists, who fear being fired wrongly, nor the media proprietors, who expect aid from the state which is not provided by the Convention’

Impact of Poor Working Conditions

Though efforts have been made to enhance self-regulation, journalists’ pay and working conditions continue to lag behind. The creeping decline in journalists’ pay and working conditions may undermine the reputation of the media industry. For instance, in Cameroon, this has generated two types of corruption within the media: There is hardcore corruption, that is when journalists use their power to blackmail people about whom they have sensitive

information; or journalists receive payments from influential sources in order to either kill or put a positive spin on stories. According to Lush et al (2012) an increasing number of journalists and publishers in Cameroon practice investigative blackmail. Furthermore, some media organizations simply don't pay at all, and encourage their reporters to live on transport money from news sources and event organizers.

The second type of corruption is variously referred to as 'Participation Fee, Motivation Fee, Gombo, and Final Communiqué in Cameroon. This ranges from bribes or gifts in return for positive coverage of specific issues and events, to journalists receiving transport, food and accommodation allowances from the organizers of events they cover. Some journalists are so poorly paid or not paid at all that they rely fully on these allowances to survive (Lush et al, 2012). Ndangam (2006, 2009) observes that a significant number of journalists in Cameroon live entirely on 'gombo' payments and have perfected their strategies to approach the sponsors.

According to Voltmer (2013), corruption in journalism is rife in societies built on a strong patron-client relationships and where huge income inequalities abound. The exchange between a patron and a client journalist is therefore seen as part of a system of mutual responsibilities that is believed to benefit both parties. As one Cameroonian journalist puts it, 'gombo means helping me to help you' (Ndangam, 2009: 826). The practice appears to be widespread in Cameroon. Thus, when asked whether Cameroonian journalists accept money, gifts and other forms of material benefits as a requirement for event coverage, 55.8% of the respondents indicated that they 'agree', while 22.5% said they 'disagree'. Furthermore, when asked whether in the last 3-6 months they had received money or material benefit as a requirement for event coverage, 43.3% of the respondents indicated 'Yes' and 56.8% said 'No'. 43.3% of the respondents indicated that bribery and corruption of journalism ethics was 'very common', 41.8% said 'fairly common'.

Though it is easy to condemn the practices of paid journalism, it is relevant to understand what circumstances journalists are prepared to accept favors as a requirement for commissioned content. Though the transaction takes place between individuals, paid journalism remains a structural

problem that has to be understood within the politico, cultural and economic contexts in which it occurs (Voltmer, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

Journalism appears to be a young person's profession in Cameroon. This result is consistent with those of Weaver & Willnat (2012) which concluded that journalism tends to be a young person's occupation, with most journalists between 25 and 45 years old. The average age of journalists ranges from 32-53 in the 29 surveys reporting it. In most places, journalists are younger on average (39 years old) than is the work force in general. A significant number (80%) of respondents in this study were born between 1989-1970 (22-41 years) while 50% of the respondents had job experience ranging from 1-10 years.

Furthermore, 26% of the respondents had a journalism job experience of 11-15 years, and only 17% had a job experience of 16-25 years. The implication of these results is that journalism in Cameroon was still slow to 'attract, retain the best and learned minds', that journalism was losing most of its veterans, experienced experts and educators to more lucrative sectors. This tendency appears to militate against the institution. According to Weaver & Willnat (2012), in many countries, young people become journalists in order to gain experience before leaving for more lucrative and stable jobs in other fields, especially Public Relations. This seems to be a fairly common pattern around the globe. This theme has been illuminated by Okigbo (2002).

The progress recorded by Cameroonian journalists regarding their professional qualification presupposes that journalism education is increasingly being seen as professionally relevant to entry-level and mid-career journalists looking to improve and upgrade their qualifications. Thus, over the years, many journalists without formal education in journalism have sought to acquire university degrees. However, although most Cameroonian journalists hold a college degree, this is not the case in several countries across the globe as demonstrated by Weaver & Willnat (2012) *'The Global Journalist in the 21st Century'*. Even more, it is less typical for journalists to be graduates of journalism programmes in college. Thus of the 25 countries reporting on this figure, the average is 42.5%. Only 8 countries reported more

than half of their journalists had majored in journalism. In the 17 countries reporting this proportion, most did not exceed one third. Most journalists are not graduates of college level journalism programmes in this sample of nations.

This study argues that as in many parts of the world, journalism is not lucrative in Cameroon. The results of the study is consistent with Birhanu (2014) and Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) Mwesige (2004) studies of Ethiopian, Nepalese, and Ugandan journalists respectively. 93% of Ethiopian journalists receive approximately 72-287 USD while the mean monthly income of journalists in Nepal is estimated to 113.58 USD. In Cameroon, the basic salary of a junior reporter at the state broadcaster (Cameroon Radio & Television-CRTV) ranges between 160.000FCFA and 175.000FCFA including benefits. The salary of degree holders recruited by the state media range between 300.000FCFA and 350.000FCFA, while senior journalists and those with postgraduate qualifications earn up to 400.000FCFA. Thus, state media employees enjoy a pay package and privileges which falls within margins of appreciation as compared to their peers in the private media. Journalists, especially those working for the private media are poorly remunerated by their employers. Thus there is a tendency for these journalists to request payments in cash and other material benefits from individuals and organizations that they cover-a travesty of journalistic codes of ethics (see Ngangum, 2015; Alobwede, 2006, pp. 27, Ndangam, 2006; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

Drawing from the results of the survey, journalism is a very demanding profession in Cameroon. According to Tanjong (2012), it requires working at night and for long hours out of home. It also entails long distance travelling. By the same token, Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) study of Nepalese journalists indicated similar concerns. Their study revealed that there is fear among parents that because of late and uncertain hours and travel, journalism may not be a safe profession for women.

This study argues that press freedom and professional journalism thrives where the state takes suitable measures through effective laws and practice not only to protect journalists but also to improve their working conditions. In this way, the state becomes a reliable guarantor of media pluralism and freedom of

expression. In order to comply with this obligation, it is important for the state to put in place a sufficient legal framework to ensure improved working conditions for journalists but the 2008 NCC failed to provide the relevant structure and framework. More so, this paper contends that since 1982 till present, when one political party, Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM) dominated politics, exercising firm control over parliament, presidency, government and media, it cannot be gainsaid that existing domestic law have not succeeded in providing a guarantee of improved working conditions for journalists. Thus, while the December 1990 media law, the 2000 audiovisual decree and the NCC are seen as important milestones, they did not mitigate the problem.

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CULTURAL VALUE, BELIEF, BEHAVIOUR AND MYTH IN THAI COUNTRY MUSIC

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Abstract

One of the most popular music genres in Thailand is the Thai country music as known as 'Pleng Lukthung'. This paper will examine the place of Pleng Lukthung in modern Thai society and its transformation from a local, regional cultural form to a national platform that is creating new lines of influence and solidarity which are not bounded by geographically defined spaces.

Keywords: Thailand, country music, values, belief, behaviour, myth

INTRODUCTION

Music is not only an object of entertainment, but it is also a tool used to express and recreate values and belief of communities and subcultures. If we want to study the cultural value, belief, behaviour, and myth of a society, we can study popular music (Guevara, 2005). One of the most popular music genres in Thailand is the Thai country music known as 'Pleng Lukthung'.

This paper will examine the place of Pleng Lukthung in modern Thai society and its transformation from a local, regional cultural form to a national platform that is creating new lines of influence and solidarity that are not bounded by geographically defined spaces.

Music comes from particular places, and is distributed elsewhere, so a whole range of issues emerge from how and where music is produced in particular contexts, and the means through which music is disseminated and reconstructed in different circumstances by other people removed from the original productive context. Music in part reflects aspects of socio-political experiences of and in places – in lyrics, in sounds, in performing contexts, and in the ways in which music has been produced and is consumed.

Furthermore, many of our everyday understandings about places - be they particular sites such as concert or festival venues; regions with distinct music traditions, or national media institutions - are

mediated through and by engagements with popular music. Concurrently, many everyday associations with places come to be defined by musical expressions, on a number of levels. These myths of place are often reinforced in song texts, or the often highly particular spatial discourse of scenes, take for example the urban territoriality of hip hop or pan-African rhetoric of reggae.

The role of music in today's world is important as a key tool in the process of globalization. People are arguing over the loss of a nation's cultural identity (uniqueness), the influences of Westernization, and the dominance of cultural imperialism. In opposition, there are now no longer geographical boundaries and there is unlimited access to both local and global music. In the case of Thai country music this bringing together of global and local across boundaries could be seen as beneficial.

The Background of Thai Country Music

Thai country music or Pleng Lukthung is a hybrid genre that integrates Thai and Western music, which has been popular in Thailand since the late 1960's. It derived from Thai folk music that was produced by the local people in different regions such as Li-kay, Mo-lam, Lae, Ram-tad. It borrows from Western popular music styles such as Cha-cha-cha, Rumba, Jazz, Rock and Roll, and Disco. Moreover, Thai country music had been influenced by some Asian music, for example, Indian and Chinese songs (Eamsa-ard, 2006).

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The styles of Thai country music can be both slow-sad songs and upbeat-fun songs, sung in Thai with local language, tones, accents, and expressions depending on each region. The content is usually focused on storytelling, folktales, religious stories, traditions, agriculture, social-class, and love in the countryside. Simple musical instruments are used such as 'Kan' which is a local woodwind instrument made of bamboo, and 'Pong-Lang' which is a local percussions instrument made of wood. The characteristics of Thai country music are sincerity, humour, and frankness, some would say the same characteristics as rural people.

According to Damrongloet (1990), Thai country music has been divided into five periods that consist of 1) the beginning period when this musical style was known as 'pleng chao ban' or 'pleng talat' which mean a music for ordinary people during 1938-1964; 2) the golden era when it was named on TV in 1964; 3) the period of movie soundtracks when numerous Thai country music artists became movie actors and actresses during 1970-1973; 4) when Thai country music came to be the style of 'song for life' during 1973-1976, the celebration of democracy and; 5) the period of dance and concerts when the bands of Thai country music performed in concerts with elaborate dance troupes during 1980s-2000s (Eamsa-ard, 2006).

Although Thai country music appeals to both urban and rural populations, it is popular among rural people in the provinces and working class, blue-collar workers who have migrated to the city rather than urban people or white-collar professionals.

Four contexts in Thai Country Music

1. Cultural attitudes

If we see in-depth into the root of the Thai word 'Lukthung' translated as Thai country music, there is a point of interest involving Thai culture. Eamsa-ard (2006) explained that it "means 'a child of the (rice) field' or anyone or anything that is 'born in the countryside, not in towns or cities'." Thus, 'Pleng Lukthung' means the song or music of countryside people.

In addition, Mitchell (2011) stated that Thai country music has a leading role in representing the identity and culture of Isan or the northeastern region of

Thailand such as inferred equality, ethnic solidarity and determined resistance to Bangkok chauvinism.

One can argue that Thai country music represents the various Thai identities from different indigenous ethnic groups of Thai people from four regions of Thailand because Thai country music was influenced by Thai folk music from each of these regions (Eamsa-ard, 2006). However, when talking about Thai country music, Thai people will refer to Isan songs at first because Isan people have moved into mainstream Thai society via participation in the industry as performers and song-writers since the 1960's (Mitchell, 2011).

Thai country songs of each region are rather different from local language, tones, accents, and expression including local musical instruments. There are four main Thai country music's divided by four cultural regions of Thailand including North country music, Northeast (Isan) country music, Central country music, and South country music.

2. Values

Amporn (2006) argues that Thai country music is now portrayed and perceived as an authentic and traditional Thai art form and tradition. Additionally, Thai music country was preserved as Thai heritage and was supported by the Ministry of Culture, and the Office of the National Culture Commission of Thailand, by annually giving The National Artist of Thailand awards to notable Thai artists in many areas including Thai country music.

Furthermore, Thai country music is seen as a significant socializing mechanism that both transmits and reflects norms regarding all social behavior because the lyrical contents of Thai country songs are a manifestation of every dimension of rural society in Thailand including the ways of life, customs and traditions such as the belief in animism and astrology, the values of the main institutions of the nation, religion and monarchy, the values of materialistic behaviour, the values of social class and power, and the different value systems of life in Bangkok and the rural countryside (Damrongloet, 1990).

3. Behaviour

Thai country music does not only reflect cultural attitudes and values, but it reflects national behaviours and characters such as a sense of humour, loving fun and happiness, playfulness, enjoyment and

relaxation, forgiveness, a love of convenience and informality, lack of discipline, nepotism, a keen interest in local gossip, social competition, a tendency to forgive social and political dishonesty or unethical behaviour, making decisions by emotion rather than by scientific reasoning, liking to negotiate, and a love of eating (Set-tho, 1989).

Sense of humour and playfulness are obviously seen in Thai country music and concerts because almost all Thai country songs and shows perform in a fun style including the elaborate costumes of singers, dancers, emcees and comedians in Lukthung bands that look like a carnival or musical showcase mixed from a myriad of sources. Some male singers wear suits while female singers wear more varied, sexy, and colourful outfits. Their costumes are expensive, contrasting with the rural life-style, but the costumes appeal to Thai country music's audiences and fans.

4. Myths

Although Thai country music is only one of numerous popular music genres in Thailand, it is actually popular among the largest section of the population that are rural people and the urban working classes who have the least power in Thai society. That's why some Thai people, especially Bangkokians, often look down at Thai country music's audiences as country bumpkins (Broughton & Ellingham, 2000, p.247).

On the other hand, DJ Jenphop Jopkrabuanwan argued that the socio-economic status of the Thai country music audiences has expanded positively, relative to the increase of the Thai middle and urban working class. The audiences do not only come from lower class as almost people think, but they also now come from every class of people (Eamsa-ard, 2006).

CONCLUSION

In summary, Thai country music has an influential role in Thai society by passing on the way of life and tradition of rural people in its lyrics and rhythms. The word 'Country' doesn't limit the audience to be only from the countryside any more, the group of fans is now spreading to all classes of Thai Society. Nowadays, Thai country music is more advanced by mixing elements from Thai pop music, Rock, R&B, Hip Hop, and EDM. This modern adaption process of Thai country music seems to appeal to a new younger

generation audience and will possibly help to maintain its popularity in modern Thai Society.

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ONLINE NEWS AND PUBLIC SPHERE FOR COLLECTIVE SENSE-MAKING DURING BANGKOK RATCHAPRASONG BOMBING

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Abstract

Immediately following the Bangkok Ratchaprasong Bombing incident in 2015, Twitter and web forum 'Pantip' became key avenues for the public to communicate and seek information to help make sense of a senseless situation. During critical periods of the crisis, media organizations' Twitter account and online news were the main sources of information. The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between online news coverage and the public sphere in social media contributing to the collective "sense-making" during a violent crisis. This case study is based on content analysis of Twitter, web forum "Pantip" and five news websites nine days after the bomb blast at Ratchaprasong intersection. The results will demonstrate that online news and social media public sphere can play a vital role in collective "sense-making" during crises and the emotional pattern change is influenced by news coverage. Journalists play an important role as information seekers and fact distributor, while the online public sphere is used to gather information, discuss possible reasons behind the bomb attack, and crowdsource efforts to find the suspect. If news coverage can provide the necessary information, confusion and panic is likely to decrease. Thus, the study expands on the suggestion of the model of participatory process between collective online communities and journalists in times of crises to foster a more effective "sense-making" process.

Keywords: journalism; public sphere; social media; sense-making; crisis

INTRODUCTION

On the evening of August 17, 2015, a huge explosion went off around 7pm local time at the Erawan Hindu Shrine Ratchaprasong intersection – a popular shopping area in Thailand's capital Bangkok. The explosion caused many deaths and many more injuries. The incident happened during rush hour as many were getting home. It sent shockwaves through the community. This event saw a high level of social media activity – including online users breaking the story on Twitter, followed by journalists reporting on the scene and verifying information to confirm the incident. Then on August 18 came the second bomb. This time at Sathorn Pier, and again it caused panic and fear among people. During critical periods of violent crises, uncertainty and doubt can spread easily. Widespread adoption of social media has enable the public to react to violent crises as never before. During the 9-day-period studying the media response to the crisis, there were high levels of social

media activity – including information seeking, information exchange, information verification, spread of rumors and misinformation, emotional response and crowd participation in identifying bombers. People reacted to the situation with panic, fear and sought information via social media while mainstream media tried to respond to the situation quickly to inform people what happened via online and social media to easily connect with the online community. Several studies have examined the dynamics of communication and public sphere during crises. Less understood is how social media mediate and amplify the 'sense-making' process, and media's role in guiding the society through the crises. This study relies on the qualitative method of content analysis to explore the relationship between social media tools, extraordinary events, the role of media and the 'sense-making' process. It analyses the content which online users communicated on Twitter

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and the popular web forum Pantip, as well as the media coverage through online news content and Twitter.

The following research question guided the study:

RQ1: What is the pattern of communication of media professionals and online users during violent crises?

RQ2: How do online news coverage and the public sphere in social media are contributing to the collective sense-making during a violent crisis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

‘Sense-making’ during Crises

‘Sense-making’ is a theory developed by Dervin (1983) that focuses on information seeking and sharing used in constructing one’s world. Sense-making has been studied in the context of communication, particularly during crises. Darvin and Frenette (2003) suggested that people use their emotions, past experiences, attitudes, feelings, and intuition to make sense of senseless situations. Sense-making during crises, emergencies, and uncertain situations places greater strain on the process and people will need to interact and communicate more to gain enough information to understand what’s happened and make it rational. The period when people feel the situation around them is uncertain and not rational is called ‘critical period’ (Weick, 1993). Similarly to what Shrivastava (1987) explained, the critical period of the crisis is when the crisis is unfolding and can last for minutes, hours or days. This period ends when the danger has been removed, people ease from uncertainty over the situation and the recovery period sets in. During this time, individuals try to bridge their cognitive gaps by looking for answers through all available channels. Thus, talking, interacting and holding a conversation with others are key elements of people’s sense-making process during crises (Muhren et al., 2008). Some research shows the pattern of behavior of people who try to make sense of crisis situations; some explain how media cover the story and give information to the public during times of crises. However, previous studies haven’t shown the relationship between the public sphere and media’s role during crises.

Social media and communication during crises

Communication and gaining the right information during crises can help individuals know how to react to the incident. Communication on social media among individuals played an important role in the responses, decision-making, and actions of those impacted by crises (Garnett and Kouzmin, 2007). Individuals communicate with each other to participate in crisis response and to meet the immediate needs of their communities, such as understanding the incident, alerting family and friends, and helping support rescue agencies to respond to the emergency (Wachtendorf and Kendra, 2005). Although news-media organizations have played a vital role in disseminating official messages to the public since they are able to quickly reach a wide audience via social media and news website, individuals value also want additional information that is more specific to their needs and circumstances (Freimuth, 2006). Sometimes information from people on the scene, neighbors, family and other members of the community can satisfy information needs more than information given by officials. (Fessenden-Raden, Fitchen, and Heath, 1987). The use of social media makes communication easier, more immediate, as well as broader, connecting multiple networks of people at the same time. Individuals used microblogging websites such as Twitter for their own personal as well as collective sense-making called the process of ‘talking cure’ or voicing their feeling or inner thoughts until they find a sense of relief (Heverin, T., and Zach, L., 2011). Some studies suggested that during crises, information flow all over Twitter. Twitter provided its users with a shared platform to talk about the disaster. (Shaw F, Burgess J, Crawford K and Bruns A, 2013). Palen and Vieweg’s (2008) research on university shootings uses textual analysis of online conversations after the 2007 Virginia Tech and the 2008 Northern Illinois University shootings. They found that people were engaging in practices of collective social creativity to deal with the crisis (Palen and Vieweg 2008). The use of Twitter during disaster events supports backchannel communication to find the information to deal with disaster situation, although spread of misinformation is also a concern (J. N. Sutton, 2010). In violent situation study, collective communication via social media can unite community spirit and guide people through upsetting

events, such as the 2005 London bombings. (Drury, Cocking, and Reicher, 2009). Users turn to these platforms to participate in a wide range of information activities, e.g. to share information (Starbird et al., 2010). Other research has investigated collaboration among individuals to negotiate and solve an information problem, as was the case in identifying the names of the victims of the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting (Vieweg, Palen, Liu, Hughes, and Sutton, 2008). Public and official bodies participated in creating a mechanism for crowd-sourced intelligence, which took the form of an automated tip-gathering service to identify violent suspect during the Boston marathon bombing. However, there is increasing concern over the spread of false information, - this is where traditional media could play an enormously valuable role by separating fact from fiction and providing verified, trustworthy information. (Tapia, A. H., LaLone, N., and Kim, H. W. 2014). The question for this study is how the use of social media can contribute to a collective understanding of violent incidents and roles of public sphere and media coverage during extraordinary events has yet to be addressed.

RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of this study was to investigate the pattern of communications during crisis and relationship between online news coverage and public sphere in social media contributing to collective sense-making during the critical period of violent crises. This study identified nine days of critical period of violent crisis in which members of the public turned to social media as a means of sharing information and reactions to the incident. Meanwhile, media covered the violent event and provided information during the crisis, which the public cited when they exchanged and sought information.

This study has two categories of samples – online user public sphere and media coverage. In order to analyze the relationship of communication of online users and the media during this crisis, this study collected data from three online platforms – Twitter, the web forum ‘Pantip’, and online news websites.

To study the online public sphere, this study collected data from two platforms – Twitter and web forum called Pantip, while collecting data of media coverage on Twitter and five news websites. Period of study is

nine days from the evening of August 17, 2015 when bomb blast at Ratchaprasong intersection to August 25, 2015 when the numbers of messages and news coverage found at lowest level.

Twitter allows users to send messages of 140 characters via web-based applications, cell phones, and various social media sites. Citizens turned to Twitter as an information sharing resource in searching for the suspect (Cook, 2009). In several crises, members of the public were using hashtags to exchange information about the crisis as collective communication (Heverin and Zach, 2012). Hashtags are a user-driven method for categorizing tweets about specific topic, where collective communication occurs. Using the Twitter search API, I collected all publically available tweets based on the keywords related to ‘Ratchaprasong Bomb’ and also with the hashtags related to incident. This study was able to observe a continuous stream of related messages. All tweets were collected and then categorized into public tweets and media tweets.

Web forum is a platform for group discussion. Pantip is the most popular web forum in Thailand where active citizens gather to exchange, verify information and discuss public issues. I collected data from the web forum by searching topics related to the keywords of “Ratchaprasong bomb”.

Online news coverage data was collected from top five most popular news websites as listed by Thailand Web Directory and Advance Web Statistics, truehit.net, in August 2015. (Data provided the most-visited news sites ranked by specific web addresses available at the time of sampling.) Top 5 news websites in this study are

- www.thairath.co.th/,
- www.dailynews.co.th/
- www.khaosod.co.th/
- www.matichon.co.th/
- www.manager.co.th/Home/

Data collected for this study were analyzed using content analysis and discourse analysis techniques to understand the pattern of communication being studied. The manual coding was developed to classify type of communication including storytelling, attribution, type of message, use of user-generated content, issues and topics and level of participation.

Messages containing various types of content and issues were coded in multiple categories. Coding also identified three main categories of messages: information-related, opinion-related, and emotional-related. Topics, issues, and message categories are shown in time-series plots to analyze development of collective pattern of communication and inter-media agenda setting of online users and media news coverage during the crisis. This study also conducted discourse analysis of tweet, message on web forum, and online news coverage to identify pattern of sense-making. I analyzed both the language used and how the message responded to sense-making process of information and emotion exchanging.

RESULT

How do people communicate during crisis?

Data collected from online user: 1105 original tweet (exclude retweet). Twitter is used for 'breaking news', 'information gathering and sharing'. Collective conversation occurs when using #hashtag. Number of tweets and frequency of post was tense during August, 17-18 because people wanted information about the blast and crowdsourced to identify bomber. Number of tweets drop as time pass because people get enough information and information satisfied their need of 'sense-making' and made them feel secure, stable and more certain about the incident.

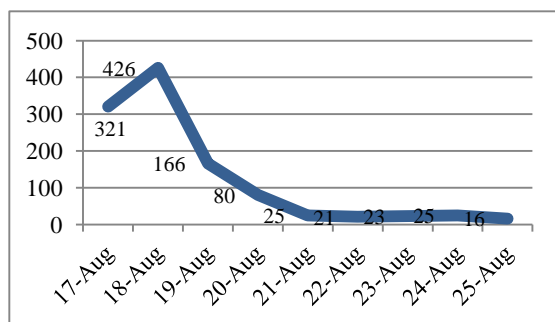


Figure 1 Time-series of number of online user tweets

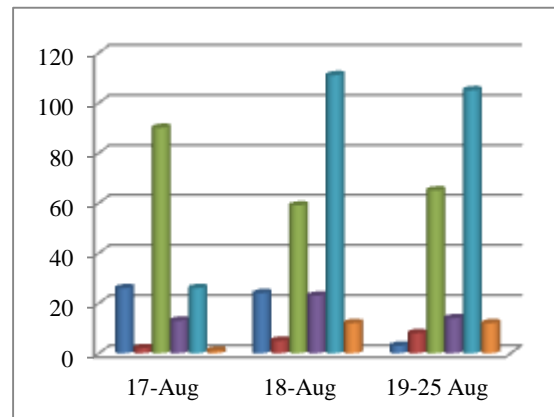
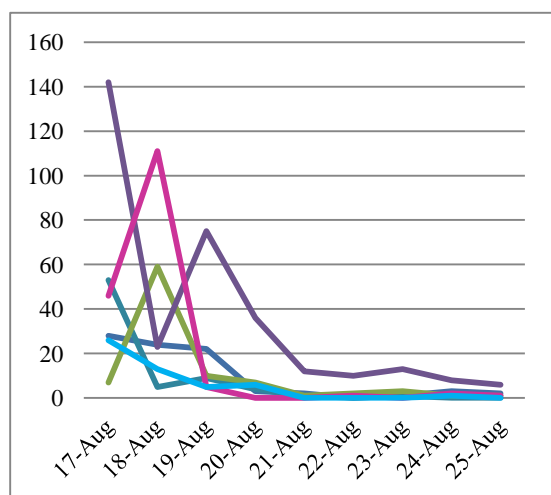


Figure 2 Attribution of information on Twitter

People communicated on twitter by using text the most, along with other content format such as pictures from the scene and links to information. On August 17, people communicate via text to seek, exchange information, and express feeling. During August 18-25, people communicate via many forms of content because there are more information, especially CCTV picture and VDO Clips. However, people still relied on sharing information from 'media organization'. Result also shows that during August, 17-18, number of user-generated content using was higher because people participated in indentifying bomber.

Half of tweets used 'attribution' from media coverage and online user-generated content (UGC). Witness on scene was cited the most on the first 2 days because people seek information to understand what had happened and how the situation in the area was. Data also shows that more than half of tweets were 'emotional expression' and 'information without source', which effect reliability of information. People tended to attribute media coverage when they want to share reliable and verified information. Meanwhile, citing online sources occurred when online content containing emotional or expression that full fill sense-making needs. This can imply that media role is trusted and verified source, while online discussion plays parts of crowdsourcing, mobilizing, exchanging belief and attitude toward incident.



■ sadness ■ anger ■ conflict ■ information-based
■ fear and nervous ■ confusion

Figure 3 tone of tweets people communicate

Issue raised among online users depends on updated information and important evident. For example, CCTV released, officials discourse and unethical acts of media. Need of information was various from times, conversation focused on issues of ‘incident’ and ‘identifying suspect’. There was confusion of information during crisis, rumors, and spread of fault data. Fact-based communication stayed throughout the period of study, people used it to gather and share information.

Meanwhile, people also expressed feeling toward incident. Fear and nervous expression was highest on the first day right after the incident, and at the same time of spreading confusing information. After gaining more information, fear and nerve of people gradually decreased. People also communicated with conflict and anger when trying to identify who was behind the incident and when tried to explain reason of the incident. Emotional-based communication also found when people feel unsure about situation.

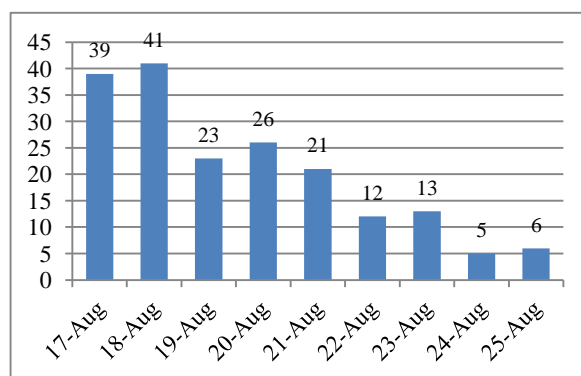
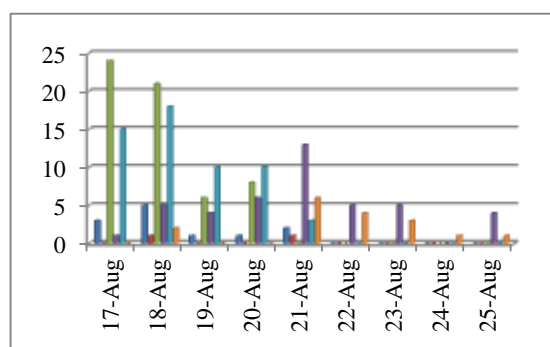


Figure 4 Number of topics on web forum Pantip

Pantip is web board platform that allow anyone to start a topic and anyone to respond to one so form of communication is more ‘conversational’ than Twitter. Online users discussed, debated, shared information and crowdsourced useful data under topics.



■ Witness on scene ■ Friends & acquaintance
■ Media ■ Officials ■ Influencer

Figure 5 Attribution of information on Pantip

Topics are posted frequent on August 17-18, mainly focus on incident and crowdsource to identify bomber. During August 24-25, people get load of information about the suspects, the feeling was frustrated over officials’ slow progress of investigation.

People cited from online sources and media because they need evident to support discussion about the incident. During August 17-20, attribution from media and online sources were used to follow updates. Officials were sourced about investigation process. On August 21-25, public stopped quoting media coverage because media had already given basic data. During this time active users on Pantip were debating and crowdsourcing online sources to explain situation. Online Influencers played important role, especially on critical conversation toward event.

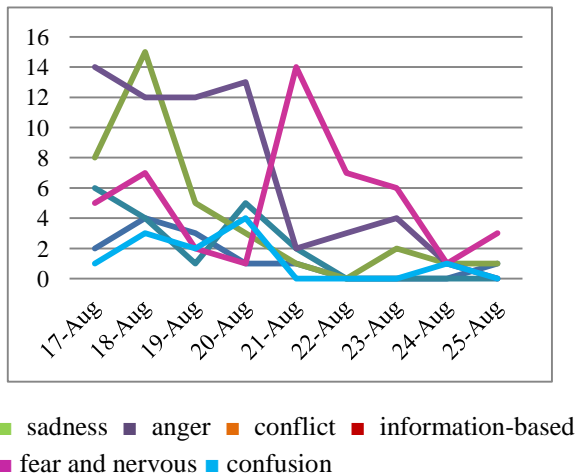


Figure 6 tone of tweets people communicate

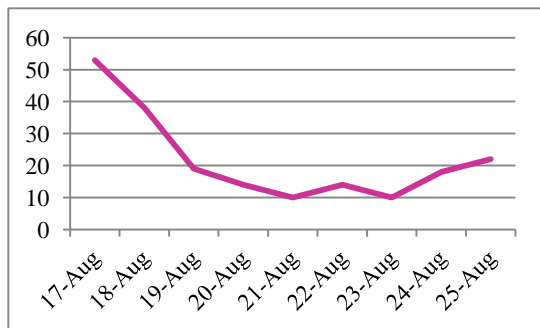


Figure 7 time-series of interaction on topics on Pantip

People also use web forum as an online public sphere to question about the incident; they tried to find cause and reason behind the incident by linking it to 'conflict issues', including national issue, political issue and international issue. Information is value during crisis and people need enough information to 'make-sense' of what happening. If information and expression from other individuals, media coverage and officials cannot bridge the gap to make situation rational, emotion expression such as fear and nervous rose. Discussion about cause of incident fuel 'anger and conflict' among online users. Level of participation and talks was higher when exchanging information. Pantip is all about discussion so there were both agree and disagree comments on each topics. Emotional interaction depended on information exchanging.

News Coverage: how media report news during crisis?

News coverage on Twitter focused on breaking stories, updating latest information and cross-

promotion with hyperlinks to content on main platform of news-media organization.

Journalists use Twitter most during the night of breaking story. New-media Twitter accounts were for breaking news as it happened, verified information and cleared off rumors. Journalists and crowds on social media interacted on twitter to share user-generated content related to incident, check information, and crowdsource evident to find suspects. However, use of 'Twitter mention' between journalists, media account and people on Twitter were only occurs when people ask for information.

Twitter is also used as 'cross-promotion platform'-tweeting links to other information or in-depth news coverage from other platforms.

Thus, Twitter of media accounts responded to real-time sense-making, where speed and accuracy is essential. Media should establish role of curator to gather, verify, and report all information at the same place. Also, media and public should introduce common hashtags and join together to contribute useful information as collective communication during crisis.

Online news coverage was more about giving information and explain situation. Online news coverage provided short news, breaking news, single-angles story with one source. News Website role was 'information provider'. For In-depth and giving context in coverage, there are three categories of news.

First, opinion-based report to analysis data of event and explain situation, critical opinion towards officials action and media responsibility on reporting the news correctly and ethically.

Second, fact-based coverage to explain and give context. People use this information to explain why incident happened.

Third, emotional-based coverage is storytelling from 'people' point of view such as victim story, the way people continue their lives during crisis, and impact on people in general.

These three types of coverage can respond to sense-making process by giving information and ease unwanted emotional expression toward incident.

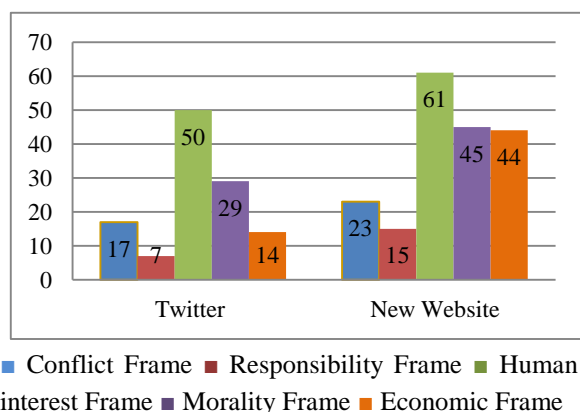


Figure 8

News-media organization also frames issues when covering crisis. Human interest was main communication frame, and main issues is about restore, reconstruct and rescue. Stories under this frame represented human touch and feeling from the people affected by the incident. Complain and critical opinion raised during August 23-25 because of slow process of investigation. News frame then shift to emphasis on 'Responsibility Frame', to push officials toward investigation and giving information to meet public needs. Meanwhile, economic frame concentrated on 'impact on tourism' and try to ensure investors about the situation.

Sense-making during crisis

I used discourse analysis to address research question of relationship between public sphere and media coverage contributing to collective sense-making during a crisis.

The study found that there were two communication types in the process of sense-making during violent crisis at Ratchaprasong intersection; information-based collective communication and emotional-based expression.

Information-based content is highest on the first day after bomb had exploded. During the onset of the critical period, individuals tweeted to contribute information to collective conversation about the violent crisis. The sharing and verifying information was at high volume before officials and media stepped in to lead information sharing. During this time rumors and information, which could lead to misunderstanding of the incident also spread quickly all over Twitter, as well as, media cover it without verifying. Individuals sometimes contributed

conflicting information to conversation by questioning the information, asking for clarification, or stating the correct information.

Then information-related content significantly dropped on the following day. Individuals posted information mainly from news-media reports. On this day people didn't exchange much information because there weren't any update information from officials. On August 19, CCTV of suspect picture was released and people started sharing and discussed to identify the suspect. On web forum Pantip, number of topics significantly increased and people crowdsourced information about bombers.

Then, information-related stay at steady level throughout period of study. In some cases, individuals posted questions to the collective conversation about the violent crises, trying to make sense of what happening. Individuals tried to examine reason of the incident and questioning outcome of the crisis affecting their lives and nations.

In contrast, emotional expression was low when people sharing information but when individual asking question, discussing and giving opinion about the crisis, emotional-based content rose. On August 18, emotion expression was at peak because the second bomb had exploded at Sathorn Pier, among uncertainty of situation; people expressed fears, anger, and worry on continuing their routine lives. Media also covered the incident with lots of unsure information, nervous and anger feeling towards the crisis also increased. During this timed people gathered information and rational explanation, but there was not yet enough information to satisfy the needs.

Emotional expression dropped and stayed steady when media stepped in to explain situation more clearly. However, from discourse analysis of news coverage, it's shown that 'quotes of high ranking officials' that media used in coverage tended to be conflict discourse and some linked to political conflict in Thailand. When that kind of discourse appeared on media, anger and conflict conversation rose among online discussion too.

Thus, emotional-based content contributing to collective conversation were messages containing fears, anger, hope, unity and frustration. And it depends on what kind of information received.

Throughout the critical period of the crisis, individual posted new information and, in some cases, provided sources of information to help each other in collective communication to understand what happened. Media played role of information provider and sometimes explainer to help making sense of the situation.

DISCUSSION

During nine days of crisis, media and journalist well respond to people's sense-making process in term of information sharing, information negotiating and information seeking. News website emphasized on identifying bomber, investigation process, incident information, rescue, restores and casualty. Online news has opinion pieces written by columnists and journalists to critic and analyze data of the incident, especially 'cause of incident'. Information-based coverage contributed to sense-making process by giving explanation to the incident. Emotional-based coverage reflects emotion, attitude of people toward incident. Sadness and feeling of lost encourage unity and patriotism action during crisis.

People using online public sphere –Twitter and web forum – to share information, seek information, give opinion, crowdsource evident, and express feeling.

Hashtag is needed for 'collective conversation' on Twitter. Forum like Pantip is about 'discussion, debate and crowdsource'.

Officials and media have to respond effectively to 'information need' of people during crisis. Verification is important to prevent unstable emotional in society. Twitter #hashtag is necessary during crisis to monitoring data and emotion, crowdsourcing and verifying data. Meanwhile web forum is space for crowdsourcing activity.

The results of the analysis show that the nature of online public sphere communication changes over time during crisis. The time-series and discourse analysis of Twitter stream and Pantip topics shows that information sharing dominates collective communication while emotional expression substantially changes depending on information gained. This aligns with previous research of Garnett & Kouzmin (2007) stating that during crisis, sharing and seeking information is essential activity.

Emotion expression of anger and conflict when trying to identify cause of incident, fueled by analysis and

opinion type of news coverage can sometimes leads to hate speech discourse against different side of political supporters since political conflict is still linger among Thais. However, positive effect of individual emotional expression of people and emotional-based coverage is drive of national unity and mobilization of rescue and supports. This result agreed with previous study that the offering of opinions or personal views during crises play a role in sense-making, as more details emerged, uncertainty decreased and people can make sense of situation as well as participating in restoration and relief process. (Muhren et al., 2008, Dervin and Frenette, 2003)

People need information to make sense of the incident. Information influences tone of communication and society emotional action. As the result states that public usually cite information from media and online users when sharing information and discuss about incident, curator role is necessary role to gather information, verify, and confirm reliable data during crisis. Both media and online users can do this job, or do it together. However, media should learn about 'timing and silence' by monitoring public discussion and emotion to effectively respond to sense-making that can prevent unwanted action such as hate speech and anger.

Crowdsourcing is another activity found in this violent crisis study, online users actively participating in finding evident to identify bomb suspect. New-Media should build 'community' and encourage participatory journalism.

However, there is concerned issue that crowdsourcing should not push official to release too much investigative details before the right timing. Crowdsourcing is necessary during crisis but news-media organization should verify, interact with sources, act as information gatekeeper and report to confirm fact and clear of rumors.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study contribute to our understanding of relationship between individuals' collective communication in social media and news coverage contributing to sense-making process in the context of violent crisis. Information behavior including sharing, seeking, negotiating and questioning of information between individuals and media shows that information is essential to ease

uncertain, fears and anger emotional expression. Sadness and lost plays role in unite people in society and mobilize help and supports. However, amidst of early stage of violent crisis, news-media and officials should step in quickly to provide verify information to prevent chaos among public. On social media, there are rumors and misleading conversation that could raise conflict, thus, news coverage should explain the situation clearly and be aware of extreme opinion piece and conflict discourse from influencers.

Research also shows that networked of people on social media can work together to come to an understanding of situation as align with other previous research (Vieweg et al.,2008), in which stated that the connectivity of information flow in social media may be able to facilitate collective sense-making process. Thus, social media is becoming primary public sphere for information-sharing and crowdsourcing evident and could be vital for crisis response to engage people in shaping online conversation to make sense of senseless situation.

Meanwhile, news-media still has important role contributing to sense-making process during crisis by providing information and framing public emotional response toward crisis events. Media frame information in ways that help people positively confronted violent situation with explanation of the incident appears to help people understand the event and unit to recover spirit within society. During crisis, news-media should establish networked and has special team to monitor online discussion and emotion flow on social media to effectively cover stories with information people need to know. Role of new-media is information provider, explainer, curator and community conductor to participate and contribute to sense-making process. For further research is to understand more about the impact of real-time communication tools such as social media on collective sense-making. It could help news-media, public and official design pattern of communication during crisis more effectively.

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