

**JOURNALISM CULTURE SHIFT IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF CURATION JOURNALISM:  
A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIA**

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**PhD**

**2021**

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DEVELOPMENT OF CURATION JOURNALISM:  
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A thesis submitted to The University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Media, Faculty of Arts and Technology

April 2021

Word Count: 85,638

# Abstract

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This thesis analyses the practice of curation journalism in developing countries, focusing in particular on Indonesia. Curation journalism is a contemporary practice with the potential to generate broader public participation in news production activities. The thesis argues that this practice has already changed traditional journalistic principles and ethics throughout the world, especially in terms of journalist–audience relationships.

The main characteristic of curation journalism is the involvement of scattered online material, including social media content, in the process of news production. This thesis began with a preliminary observation of representative Western and Eastern news outlets, which indicated that curation journalism is widespread. Furthermore, Indonesian media companies seemed to curate material from citizens using specific methods distinct from the methods of international networks. These findings prompted questions surrounding the presentation and meaning of, as well as the cultural shift behind, the unique curation journalism in Indonesia.

This thesis takes as a case study the ‘Jakarta Bombings’ coverage on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Specifically, it compares the news coverage of this event on three international news networks with the coverage from three Indonesian news publishers. The results of the comparative study are deepened by observations and interviews of Indonesian journalists from the three Indonesian media outlets.

Based on this comparative and field research, this thesis identifies three particularities in Indonesian journalists’ attitudes regarding curation journalism. The first concerns how Indonesian journalists present the curated material in their published news stories. The second concerns how Indonesian journalists perceive curation in their specific cultural environment. The third concerns how Indonesian journalists adjust the traditional practice of journalism in response to the more active audience emerging with the development of communication technology. These findings are significant in terms of differentiating Indonesia from the West in the context of global journalistic practice.

**Keywords:** curation journalism, Indonesia, online journalism, social media

# Author's Declaration

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I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed

A black rectangular box redacting the author's signature.

Date 30/04/2021



# Acknowledgment

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This thesis is a result of my PhD study at the School of Media, Faculty of Arts and Technology, University of Gloucestershire that was supported by the International Postgraduate Scholarships from Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE/DIKTI) – The Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to everyone who supported me throughout this PhD journey.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Abigail Gardner, Dr Jonathan Cable and Dr Gary Merrill as my supervisors who accompanied me patiently in my last stage of this thesis. I am thankful for their wishful guidance, constructive criticism as well as friendly advice during the work. My gratefulness is also addressed to Dr Paul Shaw and Dr Tico Romao, my initial supervisors who firstly accepted me at this reputable University to start this unforgettable experience.

My sincere thanks also go to my respected informants who provided insight and experience within their expertise. To my colleagues from *Kompas.com* (Tri Wahono, Amir Sodikin, Laksono Hari Wiwoho, Erlangga Djumena and Teguh Widianoro), *Tempo.co* (Wahyu Dhyatmika, Setri Yasra, Gendur Sudarsono, Kurniawan, Tjahjono Heru Laskar and Ferdinand Akbar Harahap) and *Viva.co.id* (Renne A. Kawilarang, Siti Sarifah Aliah and Misa), thank you for your valuable information and pearls of wisdom.

Thanks to Dadang Rahmat Hidayat, Herlina Agustin, Nuryah Asri Sjafirah, Pandan Yudhapramesti, and all my colleagues at Journalism Studies Program, the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia for your valuable support from the distance. The friendship made me feel like home. Also, to my ‘office mates’ at QU009, Louis Ndekha, Alison Wilmott, Rowan Middleton, Vu Hung Le, and the lady from the next door, An Le Dao Thanh Binh. The openness brought our office into an intellectual, friendly, and international atmosphere. Special thanks to Adi Wibowo, Gungum Gumilar, and M. Fitrawan Nur, whose work inspired this study very much.

This thesis would not have been possible without the continuing support of my wife Dedeh Rodiah, who accompanied me during my stressful moments, and my lovely child Zaki Athallah Supriadi, who cheered me up with his own way when I was down. To my siblings, Dudi, Devy, Diny, Djati, Irma, Ervan, Asep and Susi, also my nieces and nephews, your love is something that helped me survive this journey.

I specially dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother, Suhartini, and my mother-in-law, Ai Halimah. They are always there for me along with their prayers. Also, to the loving memory of my father, Rochman Natawidjaja (1938-2015), who cannot be here to see my accomplishment. I believe this would make him very proud.

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# Introduction

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Social networking and online communication have significantly changed how journalists work. In 2008, a new trend emerged in news storytelling, when the news media started to use statements, videos, and images generated by the public. These materials extended journalists' reach to include events the journalists could not cover in person.

The handling of a severe weather event in New York City in December 2010 provides an example of how the media can reveal accurate facts by drawing on the voices of the public. A heavy storm almost paralysed the city, leaving emergency vehicles unable to travel due to the snow. On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Mayor placated citizens by declaring that all roads in the city had been cleared. However, the WNYC, a local radio station, did not believe this news to be true. The radio opened its phone line to members of the public who had information on the reality of road conditions, particularly in rural zones. As calls came in, the radio marked every report on a map generated by *Google Maps*; the results showed, through citizens' reports, that many rural zones of the city were still buried in snow. These reports helped confirm that the Mayor's claims were false (Supriadi, Srimulyani and Wibowo, 2013).

*The Huffington Post's* success story also highlights the significant influence of the trend, particularly after the growth of social media use in journalism. Before 2010, *HuffPost* was struggling to attract readers. The situation forced it to start using online social communication to increase its influence on the public. Namely, the newspaper initiated an aggregation effort, collecting headlines from other media outlets and displaying those headlines on its website, as well as a section on content curation. *HuffPost* also collected social media content, selected the most exciting content, and included that content as part of a published story. This method proved effective because the social media accounts' owners then shared the news to their own platforms, allowing *HuffPost* to reach a wider public in a relatively short time. By 2011, *HuffPost* had 68 sections and three international editions. In the same year, it garnered more than one billion monthly page views and approximately 54 million

comments. Despite the accusation that it was a “thief of journalism produced by others”, *HuffPost* won a Pulitzer Prize in 2012 (Shapiro, 2012).

The use of social media in journalism has also been prevalent in the reporting of crisis events. From 2010 to 2011, the *National Public Radio* analyst Andy Carvin applied this reporting method to cover the political conflict in the Middle East known as the "Arab Spring". Carvin collected data from social media networks to obtain field information that he could not access himself (Knight and Cook, 2013, pp. 16–18, 156, 237). A summary of the reports, curated in his book entitled *Distant Witness: Social Media, the Arab Spring and a Journalism Revolution*, demonstrates this trend among online media outlets (Carvin, 2012).

Another journalistic activity inspired by social media is live blogging, a form of reporting carried out by journalists that involves "a single blog post on a specific topic to which time-stamped content is progressively added for a finite period – anywhere between half an hour and 24 hours" (Thurman and Walters, 2013, p. 83); this definition is based on observation of live blogging in *The Guardian*. This UK-based news outlet has also conducted curation journalism experiments using the *Storify* curation application (Supriadi, Srimulyani and Wibowo, 2013).

The trend has also been witnessed in international media publications such as *CNN* and *The Telegraph*. Examples of reports on the “Paris Attacks” incident in November 2015 provide evidence of international media networks using the public’s videos from *Periscope* and *Snapchat*, as well as eyewitnesses’ comments on *Twitter* and *Facebook*.

Many terms have been created to describe these collaborative and collective contributions from audiences, including ‘user-generated content’, ‘citizen journalism’, and ‘participatory journalism’ (Singer *et al.*, 2011, p. 2). The practice of managing these contributions in this context, however, is called ‘curation journalism’. This term is specific to the world of online journalism and its relationship with public conversations in social media.

Curation is also common in art studies and the art exhibition industry, relating to the process of collecting, selecting, and displaying selected artwork (Obrist and Raza, 2015). The practice of curation in the art world is an effort to build connectivity

between art-preserving institutions and the public as art consumers. The collection process is conducted by searching for artefacts from various sources, including both anonymous and known sources. Subsequently, a selection process is carried out to determine which artefacts have artistic and historical value and are important for the public to be familiarised with. The curation process is concluded by displaying selected artefacts within a specific context that can explain their meaning and benefits. These processes are carried out by curators.

Furthermore, the public also plays a role in contributing context. The development of communication technologies has enabled the rise of social network relationships. Consequently, in some cases, the public itself acts as a curator of a display space, with that space made possible in turn thanks to digital technology (Graham and Cook, 2010; Obrist and Raza, 2015).

The term *curation* has been used broadly in a number of fields. In fact, the process of curation in other fields is very similar to what journalists do today, particularly in the information gathering process. The objective of this thesis is to examine the practice of curation from a journalistic point of view. The term *curation* has been adopted to explain an emerging phenomenon in today's news gathering process, which now occurs in the midst of the social network era. Thorson and Wells (2015) use the term *curation flows* in discussing the gatekeeping process presented by Shoemaker, Vos, and Reese (2009). Specifically, a curation flow refers to the raw materials gathered and selected from dispersed online sources, particularly social media content, which are then verified and contextualised by journalists before being packed and published as a structured news story (Bradshaw, 2013; Guerrini, 2013, pp. 7–9; Knight and Cook, 2013, pp. 121–122; Guallar, 2014, p. 27). The practice of curation is indistinguishable from the common role of the curator in the development of an art exhibition.

In practice, curation journalism can be explained as a journalist's effort to create a story by making use of information from various sources, including the voice of the public on social media. Journalists are not only reporters who work in the field to search for facts, but also curators who collect, select, and contextualise existing information from their audience. This role was particularly challenging in traditional

journalistic practices. However, the emergence of the Internet and social media communication have made it easier to search and collect information in part because it is now freely shared on social media platforms, available to access at any time. This advanced technology is the basis of curation journalism's development, as it allows the practice to exist together with the growth of public participation in social media.

Arguably, the phenomenon of curation journalism is not restricted to international networks or media in developed countries; it has also influenced the media practice in developing countries such as Indonesia, the focus of this paper. Over the last five years, leading Indonesian news companies have been attempting to consult social media content as a source and to use it as part of the story structure in online publications. *Kompas.com*, for instance, published an article about the crashed Air Asia QZ8501 aeroplane in December 2014 by using people's statements on *Twitter* to build the story (Rahardjo, 2014). The article described reactions to ethical violations by some journalists while reporting the incident and quoting statements from *Twitter*. *Kompas* then explained the events in part by integrating content from *Twitter* into the story. Furthermore, in January 2015, the Indonesian version of *Deutsche Welle* (DW, 2015) released an article consisting of a compilation of posts on *Twitter* to consolidate a story on a corruption case that involved a high-level Indonesian police officer.

Hypothetically, the practice of curation journalism should be well-developed in Indonesia because the citizens of this country are among the most active social media users in the world, achieving even higher levels than those in the US, the UK, and other European countries (Kemp, 2017). This activity is an important element in the practice of curation journalism because it promotes the openness and transparency of information, as well as the efforts to give a voice to the voiceless. Some scholars like Cecilia Friend and Jane B. Singer, or Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel, have highlighted the significance of this element as a factor that enhances transparency, which is itself key to traditional journalistic principles (Friend and Singer, 2007, pp. 70–76; Kovach and Rosentiel, 2007, pp. 92–96).

However, regardless of the high levels of social media activity, the reality in Indonesia is somewhat contradictory. Based on a preliminary research on news presentation in online media outlets, both Indonesian and international, there are a number of key

differences. The editors of Indonesian online media seem to have developed a unique way of publishing curation results, differing from what is usually done by international and Western media platforms such as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, or *The Telegraph*. One of these differences is that Indonesian online media, in general, do not use direct social media statements in news stories. News platforms do not necessarily favour including direct quotes or even links to the original post on social media. Most curated content is rewritten and presented in a format that reflects traditional interview quotes.

These findings represent the background that was used to create the initial research assumption that news publishers in Indonesia do not respect public participation as a crucial element of curation journalism. This assumption contrasts with what Western or international media outlets have been practising. However, such an assumption needs to be demonstrated before being presented as fact. Therefore, this thesis conducted a comparison study between Indonesian and international media practices. The comparison employed a multiple case study method (Stake, 2005), which is required to see the differences between curation in multiple outlets. This comparison adopted the “Jakarta Bombing” in 2016 as the case to examine differences between the news coverage across countries.

This event was chosen because of its influence on Indonesians and the international public alike; the event attracted attention from both Indonesian and international news platforms. The comparison study indeed found evidence of the differences in media coverage of ‘Jakarta Bombings’. This thesis also compared the practices of international news networks and Indonesian media outlets, including comparing the situation in 2016 and 2019 to discuss the more recent context.

This thesis’ inquiry is whether Indonesia has engaged properly with new technology and traditional journalism. Within that inquiry, there exists the possibility that Indonesian journalistic practice is unique in how it has adapted to covering local issues. These questions are fundamental because Indonesia is a democratic country familiar with social media and interactive networks. Based on the observations, there is a possibility that some areas of the Indonesian media are still reluctant to embrace an open society, transparency of information, and freedom of expression because there

is uncertainty regarding the credibility of ordinary citizens as news sources. Concern about this possibility is at the core of this thesis.

Another important component of this investigation is the impact of curation journalism and other new technologies on traditional journalists themselves in Indonesia. This thesis also examines, in turn, the impact on the traditional news audience and the growth of new types of media consumption in Indonesia, where politics have become more democratic following political reform in 1998. Furthermore, because Indonesia has already engaged with the social network development, it is important to determine how Indonesian journalists regard the practice of curation journalism within their work. This perspective might clarify the reason for the differences between their work and practice in international news networks.

These two fundamental baselines, the Indonesian national culture and the public's engagement with the social media world, lead the inquiry into a main question in relation to the current practice of curation journalism in Indonesia. Namely, this thesis formulates the following question:

To what extent do online journalists in Indonesia implement the practice of curation journalism in a specific cultural environment?

This study splits this main question into four sub-questions. The first question relates to differences in the application of curation journalism between international news publishers and Indonesian outlets and discusses how journalistic media applies the practice of curation journalism by examining news visual displays. As discussed later in this study, visual displays were key in identifying the application of curation journalism. This decision was based on various definitions and models that define the display as the final process of curation. This thesis determines that the practice of curation is apparent when examining the visual form of curated material.

The second question asks how the world of journalism in Indonesia actually views the practice of curation journalism. This question is important considering that Indonesia is one of the biggest users of communication technology in the world, though there are significant differences in the application of curation journalism compared to other countries, as found in the preliminary research.

Third, this thesis asks how traditional journalistic principles are used in the application of curation journalism in Indonesia. This question is intended to determine a shift in traditional principles in the practice of curation connected to the development of communication in the digital age. This thesis assumes that a collision will occur, particularly when considering the development of social technology, that allows for the relationship between the media and its audience to be more fluid than before. However, traditional journalism still operates based on the pattern of linear communication between the media and the audience, where the media is considered a source of news producers, and the audience is comprised of passive news readers. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to determine how journalistic practices, particularly in Indonesia, make adjustments to adapt to changes.

Fourth, this study also inquires what it can contribute to the study of contemporary journalism, particularly in Indonesia. This question is intended to be answered by offering an overview of the implementation of curation journalism in Indonesia. Arguably, a discussion of journalistic practices in one nation can be beneficial for the global study of journalism.

The four questions above are a reflection of the assumption that the practice of curation journalism in Indonesia is a component of the current standards of journalistic conduct across the world. By including the global development of new media technology, as well as the rise of public participation, this practice may apply not only in developed countries, or in Indonesia, but also universally. Accordingly, this study on curation journalism is important in its examination of how possible changes in traditional journalistic practices may be leading to the establishment of a new set of primary journalistic principles in Indonesia. Furthermore, the study may also lead to enquiries in clarifying the position of curation journalism in Indonesian journalistic traditions.

To provide context for the discussion of these issues, I begin this research by providing two chapters of literature review. These chapters are related to the fundamental discussion of the journalist's role as a professional in a democratic environment and its circumstances within the new media era. The chapters also discuss actual practice, including in Indonesia as a democratic nation amongst developing countries.



Chapter One discusses relevant journalistic principles and their link to the practice of curation journalism in theory, including technical terminologies in the present era of social networks. This chapter initiates the discussion by defining the differences and similarities amongst the terminologies to obtain the most accurate definition of curation journalism as a professional practice. There are also discussions of theories that have been applied in the context of traditional journalism that may also apply to the current situation. Curation, rather than being a new kind of journalism, is actually an improvement of traditional methods. For example, this chapter discusses the gatekeeping process (Shoemaker, Vos and Reese, 2009; Bruns, 2018) and points out curatorial work as a gatekeeping format (Thorson and Wells, 2015), subsequently bringing up the role of curation as an effort to maintain a democratic society. This chapter also discusses the theoretical frameworks of professionalism studies (McQuail, 2013) and presents factors that support curation journalism as a professional journalistic practice rather than just an aggregation of non-journalists' or the general public's statements.

Based on the journalistic code of ethics, this thesis argues that curation journalism has potential issues of ethical violations. It is possible for news curators to be deceived by unreliable sources, which may lead to them delivering inaccurate information to the audience. Therefore, to highlight the boundaries necessary to maintain the quality of journalistic work, this chapter provides a discussion of worldwide journalistic codes of ethics by summarising samples from a number of countries. With this method, similarities amongst the ethical principles are discovered based on a compilation of the five major journalistic themes identified by the Ethical Journalism Network, namely accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity, and accountability (EJN, 2015). As I argue in Chapter One, there are universal ideas of ethics that apply to journalistic practices around the world.

Another component of professionalism in journalism is verifying the news values before publishing a particular story. In an attempt to examine these values, this chapter discusses the measurement for determining news by evaluating concepts by Galtung and Ruge (1965) that are key in academic work on news values (Brighton and Foy, 2007, pp. 1–9; Allan, 2010, pp. 72–74; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017, pp. 1470–1488). This paper discusses challenges and adjustments of Galtung and Ruge's concept of

the development of public participation and the practice of curation journalism. Arguably, regardless of the adjustments that should be made, a number of issues are still relevant at present.

In Chapter Two, I begin by relating the practice of curation journalism in the current context of Indonesian online journalism. This chapter introduces the case of Indonesia, where the practice of curating, as well as the use of social media in journalism, is different from what is usually done by international news networks such as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*.

Because a deeper understanding of Indonesian journalism situation is required to elaborate on the current phenomenon, this chapter presents the historical development of Indonesian journalism, specifically the development of the online industry in Indonesia, by referring to the nature of online journalism in general. There are also descriptions of the widespread usage of online technology in Indonesia as it is among the top ten most active countries online (Kemp, 2016, 2017).

The facts of online communication development in Indonesia seem to contradict the reality of social media use in Indonesian journalism. This chapter presents the argument that this contradiction is influenced by Indonesians' habit of using online technology and social media. Arguably, there is a relationship between uniqueness and Indonesian communication culture, which is the high-context culture (Hall, 1981; Jandt, 1995), oral culture (Ong, 2002) and collectivism (Hofstede, 2011; Mulyana, in Rudi, 2017; Sihombing & Pongtuluran, 2011). I also argue in this chapter that cultural aspects have influenced the quality of Indonesian audiences' participation in journalism. This argument is probably one of the reasons for which the process and output of curation journalism in Indonesia differ from what is seen in international online news media.

Chapter Three presents the research design, including the research methodology, which is based on the social constructionism paradigm (Schwandt, 2000). This paradigm is used because this research requires a number of interrelated frameworks. On this basis, the information can be quarried with the model of qualitative study cases; the most appropriate model is the collective or multiple case studies, introduced by Stake (2005). This model allows the researcher to overview multiple cases with the

primary purpose of generating an understanding of a concept. In this research, the multiple cases are taken from observations of and interviews with journalists of *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*, three online media outlets based in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. One of the reasons for choosing these three companies, as I describe in Chapter Three, is their popularity in Indonesia (Alexa, 2016). To bring the discussion to an international context and to highlight differences, this research focuses on one news event covered by both international networks and Indonesian media. The chosen case was the "Jakarta Bombing" on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, which is explained further in Chapter Three.

Chapters Four to Seven present the findings and analysis from the field research that I conducted in three media newsrooms. I begin these chapters by discussing the results of the comparative study in Chapter Four based on the reports on the case of "Jakarta Bombing" in 2016. This chapter discusses the differences between the news visual display on international websites and Indonesian online news outlets. The international examples are taken from representatives of Western media that cover international stories, such as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*. The news examples from Indonesian media publications are obtained from *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*, which are also the subjects of this research's field investigation. This chapter highlights the physical differences between international outlets and Indonesian news media based on the contents of published stories.

Chapter Five discusses the format of news presentation and economic values within the practice of curation journalism in Indonesia. Similar to Chapter Four, the materials of the discussion are based on the visual evidence found in the comparative study. This chapter mainly discusses the format of the news presentation found in each outlet's online publications. The physical evidence from Chapter Four is strengthened by the results of observations and interviews to explore the intentions and policies behind the differences. The characteristics of communication culture are also discussed to explain the background of the editors' policy in involving the public's comments in the news (Supriadi, 2016, 2017).

Chapter Six focuses on the use of social media content in news production. The primary objective of this chapter is to explore how outlets include social media content

and the position of public voices is in the newsrooms. The discussion here is based on the textual findings from the comparative study in Chapter Four and the results of the observations and interviews. This chapter includes findings on the relationship between news production and public relations strategy because the use of social media content has been involved in media marketing (Saragih, Agustin and Supriadi, 2017; Supriadi and Agustin, 2018). This chapter also provides considerations of Indonesian reading habits and communication culture, as well as collectivism, which has had influenced the format of the news (Supriadi, 2016, 2017).

Chapter Seven is a discussion of ethical issues in curation journalism. The chapter examines editorial judgment on ethics related to the use of social media contents and public opinion in the news in comparison to the principles of the code of ethics that are internationally recognised.

Chapter Eight brings the discussion on the case in 2016 to the circumstances of 2019. This chapter discusses the latest developments in the three Indonesian media outlets that are the subjects of this research. This chapter is important because the cases discussed in the previous chapters occurred in 2016, and there is a possibility that some facts obtained at that time are no longer be relevant. The discussion in this chapter is based on the results of the second field research conducted at the end of 2019. In this second research, I revisited the three newsrooms to review possible changes. In research planning, the second interviews were meant to be conducted with the same informants. However, in organisations, there are always rotations, mutations, or shifts in workplaces; this second research therefore tolerates data taken from different sources, though the respondent had to be the employee who now occupies the position held by the original source.

This thesis is concluded in Chapter 9, which presents the topic being investigated, the findings, and the implications of these findings. This chapter summarises the analysis by answering the three research questions and provides valuable points as contributions to the current study of journalism, particularly in relation to recent events in the field of social media and public participation. This chapter states that, although the findings were taken from only three media outlets in Indonesia, there is the possibility of considering them reflections of the country on the whole. This argument

is based on the similarities among the three companies' responses, which are concluded comprehensively in the final section of the chapter.

In terms of the significance of this study, I argue that advanced journalistic practices such as curation are worth considerable academic concern for a number of reasons, particularly in Indonesia. Firstly, the growth of online citizen journalism in Indonesia has been quite significant. I assume that the development of social media technologies, the existence of free blogs, and the emergence of online communities has strongly supported said growth. As a result, people can easily publish their information and thoughts outside of the restraints of mass media. However, Indonesia has also been experiencing social problems caused by irresponsible individuals who share false news and hate speech on social media platforms. Furthermore, most Indonesians, as members of a society that follows collectivist ideals, trust these messages, which leads to a lack of trust in mainstream media.

This situation is a significant challenge for the media, particularly online companies, in terms of how they embrace the more social practices of journalism. Yet there has been limited research conducted in this field in Indonesia. Therefore, it is important to obtain an accurate understanding of the use of social media content in news production and curation journalism because it will allow both the field of journalism studies and the general public to have a more accurate understanding of public participation.

Furthermore, this study will produce significant findings that can allow Indonesians to gain knowledge on the use of online media in promoting democracy. Because Indonesia is one of the most active countries on social media, these platforms have a lot of room to be exploited. The results of this study will offer an overview of Indonesia within the media industry, which, arguably, will provide a more comprehensive understanding of democracy. Therefore, this research is particularly important.



# Chapter One

## The Practice of Curation in Journalistic Principles

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### 1.1 Introduction

The emergence of curation practices with the development of social communication technology has led to significant changes in the practice of journalism. These changes have affected not only the presentation format of the news but also the functional structure and culture of communication with the audience. These changes challenge the traditional principles of journalism established before the era of social communication. However, despite the necessary adjustments to journalistic practice, this thesis argues that a number of the fundamental philosophies of journalism may still be relevant today.

This chapter discusses key concepts of journalistic practice in the context of curation journalism, which may still reflect traditional notions. The chapter begins by defining curation journalism to distinguish the practice from the term in art studies. From the perspective of conventional journalistic practice, curation journalism is identical to the gatekeeping process, a process posited in classical mass communication studies by Lewin (1943) and further developed by Shoemaker *et al.* (2009). The process was revisited by Bruns (2018), who prefers to call it gatewatching in order to bring the discussion closer to the citizen journalism phenomenon. The chapter then attempts to scrutinise journalism's position as the gatekeeper of a democratic society, particularly in relation to the perspectives of liberal pluralists and Marxists. These perspectives are relevant to the conditions in Indonesia, the main focus of this thesis. Furthermore, the chapter continues to a discussion of professionalism concerning the relationships between the journalists, the society in which the practice of journalism takes place, and the elites as the ruling party within the social system.

These relationships are expressed in the frame of fundamental principles which tend to be viewed as a code of ethics. This chapter examines similarities among code

examples promoted by press organisations in the UK, the US, and Indonesia as representatives of press systems across nations. Through this comparison, this chapter illustrates that the consideration of journalistic principles appears to be internationally adopted across these country examples, though no specific document claims to be an international code. Subsequently, further details about those principles are broken down in a discussion of news values and how news organisations decide which stories are published. As is the case for the code of ethics, values in deciding the news may also be considered universal, or at least applicable in most democratic countries.

## **1.2 Defining Curation**

### **1.2.1 Curation in Conventional Art and New Media Art Studies**

The term *curation* is often associated with art collection or exhibition. Hans Ulrich Obrist, an influential intellectual of art studies, considers curation in the contemporary art world, including at museums, to be a relatively new profession (Obrist and Raza, 2015, p. 2). However, curation practices today are still related to the origin of art preservation work, supporting the meaning behind the term's Latin etymological root of *curare* (to take care of). The profession of curator thus stems from "the sense in curare of cultivating, growing, pruning and trying to help people and their shared contexts to thrive" (Obrist and Raza, 2015, pp. 24–25).

Traditionally, an art museum features a set of categories defined based on form or medium, location, and chronology. This process of defining categories occurred even before the existence of the so-called digital media challenge. The term *digital media* here does not necessarily relate to new media technology in communications. However, the form of new media art was established in an environment of new technology in which the borders between many areas disappeared and the traditional 'unities' became blurry. This shift is similar to what has happened with mass communication. In other words, the characteristics of new media have been implemented to recognise the most effective way of presenting or curating new media art (Graham and Cook, 2010, pp. 2–4). As Obrist and Raza (2015) observe, a professional curator has at least four functions: preserving the artwork, selecting the artwork, contributing to art history, and displaying and arranging art on the walls in



the galleries. These functions mean a curator also adopts a more advanced role as *Austellungsmacher*, or exhibition maker (Obrist and Raza, 2015, p. 25). The latter role used to be filled by one specific person, or maybe two. However, in the age of new media, the curator is operating in a new environment. In that environment, the relationship between the art institution, usually a museum, and the public, which includes the artist, has changed. As a result, the work of curation has also changed.

For example, in the case of web-based work, which is a common type of artwork in the new media era, curation prioritises the process rather than the object. This prioritisation discourages transferring one's activities into a structure constructed around a static object, such as a presentation table in a museum. Rather, this era of new media art promotes self-organized work, wherein artists are the curators of their own work. Self-curation is preferred because artists know their own artwork best. Furthermore, the era of new media promotes a peer audience, the presentation of the project to that audience being the final outcome.

Another possibility is for curators to act as activists. In the new media environment, curators can determine what values artwork expresses and even create new art genres based on their own interpretations and presentation efforts. As Diamond (2003) notes, the new media environment prompts curators to not only collect artefacts but also create their own creative displays: "In new media curatorial practice, there is often a mix-up between the role of the curator as a creator and interpreter of the exhibition space and the role of the artist as creator" (Diamond, 2003, in Graham and Cook, 2010, p. 254). This blurring of lines may occur when curators adopt technology-based presentation methods that influence or alter the original work.

These examples show that the practice of curation in the world of new media has the potential to involve all elements of the artwork creation; it is not just the work of one specific person with a specific skill. The public as spectator, the artist as creator, and the web-administrator can all act as curators. The system emerges as a consequence of the blurred borders among the elements, where the audiences are also editors thanks to advanced online technologies and social media networks.

### 1.2.2 Curation in Journalistic Practice

The emergence of social media communication and online technology has extended the scope of curation. The practice is often related to extensive frameworks. Obrist and Raza (2015) observe that curation is being applied in more contexts than ever before, from art exhibitions to political issues: “Even the verb form so commonly used today, to curate, and its variants (curating, curated) are coinages of the twentieth century” (p. 23).

Amongst the varied implementations of this term in activities outside of art studies, curation is also used in one specific practice of online journalistic work. Namely, the term represents the process of gathering information from dispersed sources – in this case, sources spread across social media – and then packing the selected information into a structured story (Bradshaw, 2013; Guerrini, 2013, pp. 7–9; Knight and Cook, 2013, pp. 121–122). Similarly, Guallar and Leiva-Aguilera (2013, translated to English in Guallar, 2014) define content curation as follows:

Content curation is the system used by a specialist (the content curator) based on continuously searching, selecting, characterising and disseminating the most relevant content from several web information sources about a specific topic (or set of topics) and a specific area (or set of areas), aimed at a specific audience (an organisation or individual) who could be on the web (which is the general tendency) or in other contexts (e.g., in an organisation), offering added value and therefore establishing a link with its audience/users. (p. 27)

The key concept of this definition is that the journalist, as a curator, is serving not only as a publisher but also as a bridge between the media and the audience. In other words, curation in the context of journalism involves not only conducting the gatekeeping process but also allowing the audience to play an active role in producing news. This assumption is the basis of this thesis, in which public participation is one of the elements specifically evaluated.

As a comparison to the same term used in art studies, the role of the journalist is equivalent to the work of a curator in an art museum. By bringing these functions into journalistic practice, modern journalism similarly offers assistance in creating a cohesive whole from many parts of news and information in the same way that a curator in a museum organises artefacts in a themed exhibition to enhance people’s

understanding and appreciation of the pieces' broader history and context (McAdams, 2008; Kolodzy, 2012, p. 6; Schweigert, 2012). This relationship between a curator and the exhibition attendees blurs the distinction between them, as both the curator and attendees create the understanding of the displayed artefacts. A relationship similar to that between the art institution and the public also happens in the field of journalism, which is discussed in further detail later in Section 1.2.3.

#### *1.2.2.1 Curation Journalism and the Concept of Gatekeeping*

Curating is not a new concept in journalism. According to the traditional definition of journalism, journalists' primary responsibility is to gather information from scattered sources and then pack it into a structured, meaningful story. This task is fully in line with the concept of curation. In both, the journalist provides a space where the public can contribute information while controlling the information feed from the public. This function of the journalist may be used to maintain essential journalistic principles within the practice of citizen or participatory journalism and bring the gatekeeper to the media.

Revisiting Lewin's (1943) theory of gatekeeping, Shoemaker *et al.* (2009) formulate a process that offers the same practice as curation (p. 73). Gatekeeping is a central component of curation. Figure 1.1 reflects the process of gatekeeping research.



The visual description on Figure 1.1 supports Shoemaker *et al.*'s (2009) description of the gatekeeping process as “the process of selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news” (p. 73).

On the basis of this concept, and because the way in which journalists source their stories has become increasingly complex, understanding the journalists' role of gatekeeper is crucial in understanding curation journalism. As Knight and Cook (2013) observe, both social networks and traditional sourcing are essential methods in writing journalistic stories (p. 14). Social media is considered to supplement the research conducted by the journalist. Within a networked environment, the closer that the journalist works to the network, the more that journalist may rely on feeds from the public, particularly ones about specific issues related to everyday life.

#### *1.2.2.2 Curation as a Method of Information Gathering*

Thorson and Wells (2015) draw a clear connection between the term *gatekeeping* and the concept of curating by discussing gatekeeping within a new media framework and adopting the term *curation of flows*. The authors also introduce the term *journalistic curation* to discuss how journalists decide which content to select when they sort through the flowing output of social media. Because mainstream news organisations dominate spaces on social media, the role of journalists as curators who decide which information will be taken and reported is crucial in this era (pp. 31-32).

Hermida (2012, cited in M. Knight and Cook, 2013) states that the journalist is a trusted party who authenticates, interprets, and contextualises information taken from social networks “where knowledge and expertise are fluid, dynamic, and hybrid” (p. 16). These roles of the journalist explain how curation works in journalism. As curation in museum or art exhibitions deals with art, curation in journalism is understood as the process of gathering sources such as interviews, comments, and facts and publishing an collection of some of those sources in an online channel as a finished product. Furthermore, curation journalism is also a way for journalists to contextualise or filter information, while also adding an adequate analysis, as Bradshaw (2013), Guerrini (2013), Knight and Cook (2013), and Guallar (2014) argue. Jenkins *et al.* (2013, cited in Thorson and Wells, 2015) explain the job of curators as more than merely receiving messages or filtering them out; journalists also expand messages, as

journalists “search out content and engage in reframing and remixing [that content]” (p. 31).

The term *curated flows* has been used to explain the new framework of information dissemination in the new media era beyond the existing mainstream practice in mass communication studies. The control of the information flow is determined in part by the journalist acting as the producer and disseminator while working alongside four other curating actors. Those four curating actors are “individual media consumers themselves; social others embedded in online and offline networks; strategic communicators; and algorithms designed to shape the discovery and presentation of content in many digital contexts” (Thornson dan Wells, 2015, p. 31).

Thorson and Wells (2015) specifically use the term *journalistic curation*, which may be interpreted in this research as curation journalism, to emphasise the involvement of news organisations in the process of selecting, using, and controlling the flow of information in digital formats (pp. 31-35). Journalistic curation primarily deals with curation of online sources and social media, as well as other forms of curation, such as social curation, personal curation, strategic curation, and algorithmic curation.

Another perspective related to the phenomenon of keeping the public from unfiltered information comes from Bruns (2018). His term *gatewatching* is particularly useful in emphasising the position of so-called citizen journalists. Bruns notes that, as of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, mainstream news outlets continue to practice their in-house gatekeeping processes while other online media operated by citizen journalists have different protocols. Instead of acting as gatekeepers, citizen journalists and audiences may select news that is important or meaningful to them, enhance contexts, criticise existing stories, and offer background information and source materials:

This, then, is a distinctly different approach that I have described as *gatewatching*: the continuous observation of material that passes through the output gates of news outlets and other sources, in order to identify relevant such material for publication and discussion in the gatewatcher’s own site. (Bruns, 2018, p. 27)

Interestingly, the concept of gatewatching is close to the existing understanding of curation. Therefore, the gatekeeping practised by mainstream media outlets may have

a different context from the process defined by Shoemaker *et al.* (2009). Taking the observation from Witschge (2012), which also applies to art industries, as Graham and Cook (2010) point out, the outlets recognised as mainstream media before may have changed now into a different form of media. Today, the differences between the public and the information source have created a new environment, where the readers are also editors and the gatekeepers are also the gatewatchers. When the media uses curation, it also acts as an audience member selecting particular stories that match their needs and can be built in a full story with a specific context.

In practice, curation journalism cannot be separated from the other four curation forms that Thomson and Wells (2015) present because the media industry is significantly influenced by the development of social, personal, strategic, and algorithmic elements. However, I do not explore these developments further in this research because the focus of this thesis is on curation journalism, which is growing alongside the development of the information published on social media. This particular form of curation has become increasingly significant in journalistic work. As Sternberg (2011, as quoted in Supriadi *et al.*, 2013) states, “The art of information gathering, analysis and dissemination have arguably been strengthened over the last several years and given rise and importance to a new role: the journalistic curator” (p. 1).

Carvin, a journalist and strategist from American *National Public Radio* (NPR) who is frequently cited for his work on social media as a source, offers an ideal example of early journalistic curating (M. Knight and Cook, 2013, pp. 16-18, 156, 237). Carvin’s reports on the Arab Spring in 2010 and 2011 are recognised as detailed stories that compensate for his lack of access to the actual site because of local authority restrictions at that time. He, therefore, became a ‘distant witness’ by collecting and selecting real-time tweets from networks around the location to create stories based on them (Carvin, 2012).

‘Distant witness’ is a term closely related to the practice of curation journalism, which in turn is identical to the practice of gatekeeping materials from scattered sources. This curation principle is a fundamental idea that I expand on later in Section 1.2.5. Arguably, what Carvin describes with this term is something that has been happening in journalistic practice in many places in the world, including in Indonesia.

### 1.2.3 Curation and Public Participation

Curation journalism and the involvement of social media in journalistic practices are indications of how journalism operates socially. Indeed, per Witschge's (2012) perspective of journalism, the distinction between journalists and audiences has grown uncertain as audiences have gained greater ability to create and distribute information themselves: "Audience participation in the news process challenges the traditional relationship and distinctions between the audience and professionals and shifts the power from the journalists to the audience" (p. 117).

This phenomenon of public participation may represent the next stage of the relationship between journalism and society, which has always been related to efforts to empower citizens to be more informed and involved in policymaking. As a concept, journalism is a means of defending the human right to know and receive information, as clearly stated and guaranteed by Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (as adopted by the UN General Assembly 1948): "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, this right includes the rights to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (McQuail, 2013, p. Appendix §1). This article has been used to justify journalists' work in covering stories and supports the idea that journalism, in part, is a social responsibility.

The task of protecting the right to seek information and freedom of expression, as stated in the Article 19, is part of what curation and social media journalism promote; the liberal pluralists even name this task as the reason why journalism is integral to democracy. As Allan (2010) observes, journalism has been the central component of the market-based system of the mass media industry, as journalism ideally acts as a protector of this right. The liberal pluralists maintain the idea that the media institutions represent the fourth estate of society, joining the church, the judiciary, and the executive (or Commons in the UK). Its position as the fourth estate means that journalism has the crucial responsibility of ensuring that members of society can absorb information and gain a sense of the world around them. This responsibility, which is also mentioned in the UN declaration, puts journalists at the centre of public



life, emphasising the belief that “democracy is impossible without journalism to support it” (Allan, 2010, pp. 18-17).

Allan’s (2010) statement makes the relationships among curation, social media, and democracy even stronger. Supporters of the idea of public involvement in contributing to the media industry usually emphasise the democratic side of the contribution to facilitate more extensive opinions and heterogeneity, which overall benefit public discussion as a component of democracy (Quandt, 2011, p. 158).

Journalism’s position in democracy has long been a subject of debate. In countries where the democratic environment is still in a relatively early stage, including in Indonesia, the position of journalism is in a continual state of flux. There have been conditions under which journalism was considered to be not only an agent key to preserving democracy but also a crucial agent of change. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) present an example in Poland in the late 1980s, where journalism was treated as an action key to building a democratic community, citizenship, and democracy amid conditions where none of these elements were initially present (pp. 9-12). Generally speaking, throughout history, the primary purpose of journalism has been to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing. Indeed, in Indonesia after the fall of the repressive regime in 1998, the press institutions previously controlled by the government started to be afforded greater power and were used as an important channel in promoting freedom of expression. Six years after the 1998 reform, the basic ideas of journalism as a component of a free and open society were seriously discussed at schools of journalism and news organisations in key cities across Indonesia (Kovach and Fiore, 2004, p. 86).

Journalism’s power to influence the public is the basis of curation journalism development at a time where social communication technology has helped journalists to encourage ordinary people to share their voice freely with the public. In many examples of the practice in relation to the discussion of democracy, curation often occurs along with ‘crowdsourcing’, a public democratic movement.

Before the term *crowdsourcing* was popularised, traditional journalism used the term *street journalism*. The latter term refers to journalistic activity that harnesses any group of people, particularly a crowd, to respond to a topic or event. Therefore,

crowdsourcing is actually a modification of a concept from traditional journalism. The difference lies in the form of meeting and the relationship between the journalists who collect opinions and those who have been polled. If the meetings in the traditional journalistic practices are held in a physical arena, crowdsourcing is using the cyberspace arena, namely social media (Supriadi, Srimulyani and Wibowo, 2013, p. 55).

Similarly, Howe (2008) considers curation journalism a movement inspired by the development of open source software that provides a kind of perfect meritocracy, which is possible since anybody can share information on the Internet without taking into account qualifications, gender, race, or other factors. As Howe states,

Contrary to the foreboding, dystopian vision that the Internet serves primarily to isolate people from each other, crowdsourcing uses technology to foster unprecedented levels of collaboration and meaningful exchanges between people from every imaginable background in every possible geographical location. Online communities are the heart of crowdsourcing, providing a context and a structure within which the "work" takes place. (p. 14)

Building on Howe's opinion, McAdams (2008), a professor of journalism at the University of Florida, argues that crowdsourcing is a notable method in democratic journalism which involves open public participation. McAdams defines the term as "the act of taking a task traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call" (McAdams, 2008).

With crowdsourcing, journalists are able to draw information from various scattered sources or correspondences. Journalists can accomplish coverage of places that are inaccessible to them personally by relying on their sources at these locations to send them reports about the events.

McAdams (2008) also offers four terms associated with crowdsourcing. The first is *user-generated content*, which describes media content that is organised and developed by the audience. The second is *crisis mapping*, which refers to the media's effort to collect information from the audience, particularly in terms of crisis. The third is *participatory journalism*, which was presented earlier in this chapter to describe journalistic activity involving audience participation. The final term is *curation*. As

discussed already in this chapter, curation refers to the action of collecting and selecting materials from various sources in order to describe an event.

User-generated content (UGC) is the primary factor of public participation and has contributed to business marketing more than journalistic practices. This contribution to marketing is a result of marketers' ability to use UGC to produce publications instantly, such as by simply sharing photos or videos posted to Instagram about the product or business. UGC is widely available due to the public's eagerness to use social media as an information channel, as social media allows ordinary people to share information that they consider significant for the public to know. However, what ordinary people do in generating content is actually beneficial for the business that they have visited because their publication serves as a source of free advertising for the company.

Buffer (2018, cited in Supriadi & Agustin, 2018) investigated this marketing phenomenon and found that UGC has become a promotion device that is more effective than standard advertising. Buffer's research on Starbucks' marketing via Instagram found that people actually trust the messages from UGC applications such as Instagram seven times more than information shared via conventional advertisements. 45% of the customers surveyed in the research confirmed that they were inspired by the photos, whereas 56% claimed to become interested in buying some products after reading or seeing messages on Instagram.

Openness is important in UGC applications, as openness supports the ability of UGC to spread information in a relatively short time. Nasrullah (2015, cited in Supriadi and Agustin, 2018) observes that messages seemingly expand by themselves because they are not only published by the owner, but also developed and spread by other accounts within the network. This spread of information is supported by social tools on the UGC applications, such as comment columns, the thumbs-up ("like") icon, and the share button. These tools open up opportunities for other accounts to contribute to the message and spread it to a wider audience.

Advances in social network technology are beneficial to social media and UGC, specifically in making these social communication channels accessible around the world. This ability is an advantage for distributing information. Therefore, it is fair to

view the development of journalistic practice as journalism becoming more ‘social’, even though companies are also seeing the change as a marketing opportunity rather than as journalism. A longer discussion of this argument is offered in the research’s findings chapters (Chapter Six to Eight).

In summary, curation is a practice closely associated with crowdsourcing, and curation itself is a method of data collection. The overlapping definitions of these terms makes it difficult to distinguish curation and crowdsourcing, which both encompass similar activities. However, curation is different from crowdsourcing because, in curation, the journalist acts as a guide, a collector, an interpreter, a researcher, and an archivist. These acts are done by carrying out tasks as a reporter, such as collecting and organising information, placing that information in a broader context, providing historical information, adding a background story to the information, and determining the most appropriate format to publish it (Schweigert, 2012). In other words, instead of only collecting and posting people's statements as happens in aggregation and crowdsourcing (Hall, 2001, p. 32; Howe, 2008), curation allows journalists to maintain control over the information, which, as pointed out by McQuail (2013, p. 177), is crucial in the new media era.

The above considerations make journalism a major contributor to promoting freedom of speech in the state of democracy. This stance is clearly from a liberal pluralist perspective. There are some sceptical arguments to be noted, specifically those from a political economy framework influenced by Marxism. This alternative perspective suggests that mass media institutions are only an extension of the ruling class that has power over citizens with their ‘ruling ideas’, which can be understood as the representation of the ‘dominant ideology’ (Allan, 2010, p. 17-19).

However, in terms of the emergence of public participation in the practice of journalism, which is a fundamental idea in this thesis, the perspective of Marxism appears to be irrelevant. Instead, I argue that this study is closer to the perspective of liberal pluralism because it presents the issue of empowering citizens through a new practice in journalism. The discussion of curation journalism, public participation, and the responsibility to maintain the public’s rights to know have allowed journalism to ‘give voice to the voiceless’, a proverb meaning an attempt to empower society that

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) use to emphasise journalism as a monitor of power (pp. 139-159). This emphasis brings the discussion to the subject of journalistic professionalism, which includes the debate about journalism's role as a defender of democracy, its level of independence, and its relationship with the state.

As with democratisation, technological determinism has also been a lens for the analysing the development of curation journalism. Howe (2008) looked at the public movement and the flexibility of the Internet as consequences of the existence of open-source software. McAdams (2008), in the same sense, considers technological developments as crucial in promoting democratic journalism. Even Marx, regardless of his point of view on democracy, is a technological determinist who developed a theoretical framework based on the idea that changes in technology influence the development of social relations.

Hauer (2017) is one of many scholars who has presented the perspective of technological determinists on the origin of a modern information society. Hauer states that, according to technological determinists' point of view, the information society has arisen as "a result of the development of innovations, new technologies, and their social and political implications" (p.1). Technological determinism itself, as generated by American sociologist Thorstein Veblen (cited in Hauer, 2017), is a perspective that looks at technology as a primary initiator of the society's change. According to its supporters, social change in any aspect or form is "controlled by the technology, technological development, communications technology and media" (Hauer, 2017, p. 1).

Therefore, considering the standpoint of technological determinism, it is understandable to view the emergence of crowdsourcing and curation journalism as interconnected with technological development. If examining Howe's (2008) and McAdams' (2008) perspectives, it may be understood that, without the emergence of user-friendly software provided by the newest communication technology, the innovation of crowdsourcing and curation journalism would not have occurred. Consequently, for places that have not achieved advanced communication technology, as in developing countries, curation journalism might not be as popular as in industrial

nations. This difference is the fundamental idea of the term *global divide* (Norris, 2001, pp. 4-5) in the theory of digital divide (Hargittai, 2003).

In some ways, the digital divide has caused hesitance in embracing curation journalism formats in developing countries such as Indonesia. It is reasonable to assume that Indonesia has not arrived yet to the era of participatory and curation journalism because of the lack of technology and accessibility to the Internet. However, the fact that Indonesia is among the most active nations on social media may invite discussion from another perspective. This thesis argues that the obstacle to involving the public and conducting curation journalism in Indonesian news production is not merely technological, but more cultural and related to the local context. This argument makes this thesis closer to the cultural approach rather than to a technological perspective, as discussed further in this thesis.

#### **1.2.4 Professionalism in the Practice of Curation Journalism**

Regarding the journalist's responsibility to maintain the public's right to know and express themselves, McQuail (2013) considers the subject from a more practical perspective, defining the responsibility as a well-founded expectation based on law, customs, or morality that the press should promote the public good and avoid harm (p. 28). This definition relates to standards of quality (truthfulness, independence, fairness, decency, etc.), alleged harmful effects, and questions of the positive obligation to serve a public purpose.

This breakdown of responsibility leads to the conclusion that journalism is a specific profession. Only those who fit the standards of quality can be considered journalists. However, this specification also poses a crucial question when opening a discussion of curation journalism. Can curation journalism, which involves ordinary people as information sources and, in some levels, storytellers, be considered a profession? This question arises because of the involvement of the public as non-journalists in producing a news story. The involvement of non-professionals means that the practices of curation journalism, citizen journalism, and participatory journalism theoretically may reduce the essence of professionalism in journalists' tasks.

Many optimistic commentators consider citizen or participatory journalism as a fundamental change that makes the audience part of the journalistic process. *We the Media* (Gillmor, 2006) carries the notion of 'grassroots journalism' and observes that the roles of journalists and audiences have long been blurred in news reporting. Gillmor's statement was made before social media, and technology has now made it easier for everyone to become a writer and publisher. The current relationship between journalists and their audiences might have attracted a shift of the profession of journalism from a traditional form to a more democratic environment in the community (O'Sullivan and Heinonen, 2008, p. 368). This change may mean that the influence of the Internet on the practice of journalism has brought about a new understanding of professionalism.

However, from a more pessimistic perspective, the technologies that allow participatory journalism are not always advantageous. To some extent, the technology also weakens the professionalism of journalism. Larson (1977, cited in Quandt, 2011, p. 158) refers to the scepticism that considers journalism is a serious profession that requires special education training and regulation, meaning that it cannot be performed by ordinary people as promoted by the participatory journalism.

For some people, the debate is not actually a problem because they are doubtful that journalism itself can be categorised only as a profession. In classic professional studies, there have been doubts about journalism's status as a profession, particularly compared to traditional professions such as medicine and law. There are also local issues that have influenced this assumption. One of these issues is explained by Marr (2004), a well-known British journalist, who explicitly says that journalism, particularly in Britain, is not a profession. Marr's argument is based on the observation of the practice of British journalism. Marr admits that the situation may be different in the US, where American journalists are considered professionals of a more respected position. Many people in the US go to journalism school and are taught journalistic technical skills and ethics. These individuals carry professional standards and have a positive reputation in American society. Despite the existence of several training institutions for journalists in the UK, such as the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) and the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), Marr argues in his book *My Trade* that the education that exists in the US is

not available in Britain. Marr believes that journalists have often been 'volunteer exiles' brave enough to leave a secure profession to live a more risky, interesting life. Having observed the work of reporters who only distribute gossip, Marr concludes that journalism in Britain is less respected:

Journalism is a chaotic form of earning, ragged at the edges, full of snakes, con artists and even the occasional misunderstood martyr. It doesn't have an accepted career structure, necessary entry requirements or an effective system of self-policing. Outside organised crime, it is the most powerful and enjoyable of the anti-professions. No country in the world has been as journalism-crazed as Britain (Marr, 2004, p. 3).

The above argument is clearly based on Marr's personal observations. Considering the general conditions of British journalism today, I argue that his perspective on professional journalism is debatable. Marr himself even notes that the quality of a journalist also depends on the company that the journalist works for. His study cites results from a *YouGov* (2003) poll, which found that journalists for *BBC News*, *ITV News*, and *Channel 4 News* are highly trusted. These journalists gained 81% in a 'trust index', which put them at one level below family doctors and slightly above head teachers. On the other hand, according to the results, journalists working 'red-top' gossip tabloids were only trusted by 16% of those asked (p. 2). Based on this polling data, though professionalism may be considered as important in journalism, these findings are not sufficient to measure the reality of the characteristics of journalism across the world.

Nevertheless, even amongst those who believe that journalism is a genuine profession, the scepticism about participatory journalism and other practices related to non-journalist people still exist. This scepticism is in line with the idea of a standardised, trained, and specialised occupation, which is presented by Freidson (2001) as the factors of being professional, emphasising the need for knowledge and skills specialisation in terms of professionalism in order for a profession to be respected by society. According to Freidson, there are two general ideas to be established in the essential framework of distinctions that place knowledge and skills at the basic of professionalism:



The two most general ideas that underlying professionalism are the belief that specific work is so specialised as to be inaccessible to those lacking the required training and experience, and the belief that it cannot be standardised, rationalised or commodified (Freidson, 2001, p. 17).

The existence of citizens as journalists, as well as the practice of participatory journalism, has challenged this theory. From some perspectives, the position of professional journalists is in danger because there is a possibility of being substituted by untrained reporters. The stress is on professional norms, such as accuracy and objectivity, as well as the potential for journalists to lose their jobs. Turner (2009, cited in Witschge, 2012, p. 118) argues that journalism is one of the victims of what he acknowledges as “the demotic turn in popular culture”, wherein the ‘ordinary person’ is now more visible in media content. I argue that this phenomenon is one of the reasons for the scepticism about using non-journalists’ voices in news production, such as in Indonesia, a country that has specific audience characteristics. The following chapter discusses those characteristics in greater detail.

Concerning new media development, McQuail (2013) predicts a number of consequences of the press institution's state, firstly arguing the term ‘press institution’ itself is vaguer and weakened as a result of the increased diversity of types and sources in journalistic practice (p. 174). This idea has challenged the professional characteristics of journalism since it is ‘diluted’ by competition from untrained and ‘amateur’ news producers.

The next problematic issue that McQuail (2013) highlights is the standard and quality of the press, particularly newspapers. As he sees that newspapers have a declining position in the overall media market and the particular media system, McQuail argues that the newspaper “begins to lose its positions as a corner-stone of ‘the press’ and arbiter of standards of journalism quality” (p. 175). The institution is no longer an adequate representation of the voice of the press itself, and the new development of active audience is not yet an adequate successor to this role.

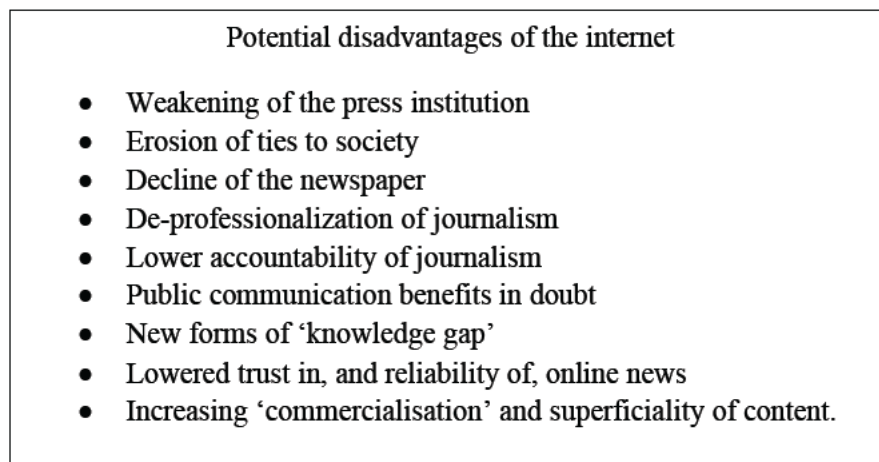


Figure 1.2 A summary of the Internet's potential downsides in the new media journalism.  
(Source: McQuail, 2013, p. 175)

As shown in Figure 1.2, McQuail (2013) highlights the concerns in terms of the reliability and credibility of news on online sources. Because technology allows people to provide information and publish their own versions of a story, to what extent can the public trust online sources? This issue is compounded by the commercialisation or commodification of the Internet, which may only take the focus of new media journalism further from the public interests as McQuail argues. Information might only be published if it supports the interests of a specific group of people. From this perspective, the original bonds of obligation to the public and society in terms of enhancing media roles in the democratic process have been misplaced (p. 175).

Due to these disadvantages, some commentators have rejected citizen and participatory journalism as part of professional journalistic practice. For example, a news executive from BBC interviewed by Tamara Witschge in 2007 stated that, instead of calling it citizen journalism, his company prefers the term *citizen newsgathering* (Witschge, 2012, p. 121). This statement reflects the persistent belief among mainstream media that what non-journalists do is not a profession and what non-journalists produce does not meet the standards of 'real' journalistic work. Another online journalist also interviewed by Witschge in 2008 mentioned that citizens are not reporters. Rather, this journalist stated, the general public is made up of news consumers or audiences who can be treated as sources for stories, opinions,

or feedback. Therefore, though members of the public may play a role news production, they are not really journalists.

Compared to past discussions of journalism, the focus in current debates is shifting. Scholars have noted that there used to be a distinct definition of journalism, which then distinguished the positions of professional journalists from audiences. McNair (2009) suggests the following:

The dominant model for journalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a trained professional delivering objectively validated content to a reader (or viewer, or listener). There was also room for journalism of analysis and opinion given by an authoritative public voice, where authority was determined by consensually accepted forms of organisational, professional and cultural status. (p. 347)

The role of non-journalist people who carry out journalistic activities is similar to that of an online publication as an alternative to mainstream press. Some of these non-journalists even perform amateur journalism without expecting to gain financial benefits from it. As Witschge (2012) observes,

Journalism is still a porous profession, and different voices contribute in a myriad of ways. Viewing those alternative voices from the audience perspective does not allow us to grasp the dynamics of the field of journalism in the current digital environment. (p. 119)

According to Witschge, the position of amateur journalists on the overall journalism landscape is complicated. The new relationship between journalists and audiences should be carefully investigated. moreover, citizen's involvement in the journalistic world cannot be denied. If looking at the existence of the public's voices within the news arguably, the mainstream media industry, to some extent, has benefited from it.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in a democracy, the actual meaning of the participatory format of journalism should be more comprehensive. As pointed out by McQuail (2013), ideas about the potential effects of the new format of journalism in society are debatable. Even the development of social interrelations between journalists and the public has been suspected to be a form of hegemonic control. In other words, instead of freeing the press from hegemony as is expected in democracy, the relationship has been argued as the end of the mass communication. At one point, the new media has come to maintain the basic

informational needs of a democratic political system and the public sphere. From an alternative perspective, a fundamental doubt also remains since the indicated benefits of online media are suspected to only empower an active minority and leave others in a 'knowledge gap' (McQuail, 2013, p. 174-175).

In relation to this argument, a further examination is required to determine how meaningful the public's involvement is in the news process (Witschge, 2012, pp. 120-127). This analysis is aimed at critically investigating the connection between so-called public participation and the aims of democratisation, as well as examining journalist's views about the active role of the audience. Based on this analysis, journalists, in general, are keen to maintain a distinction between professional content and the UGC. In this study, journalists prefer to use traditional journalistic principles as a legitimate profession to propose the idea that user contributions are not journalism. As Witschge (2012) suggests,

Journalists are protective of their 'craft', even though most of our interviewees acknowledge that journalism, as it is currently performed, is not at its best. In their derelictions, they show they have high standards for professional journalism and actually find it difficult to come to terms with the fact they cannot practice journalism to those standards most days. But inspired by their ideas about journalism, they then do argue that what the audience does (apart from some exceptions) is not considered journalism or news: 'In fact, most user-generated stuff is the conversation'. (pp. 121-122)

Witschge's finding is sceptical and represents the protective response of professional journalists towards public activity in making news under the UGC. However, these journalists could not deny the public movement and admitted that the UGC, particularly social media, may be the future of journalism. Examples such as the coverage of the election protests in Iran (2009), the bombing of London (2005), the Paris attacks (2015), and the Jakarta bombing (2016) highlighted the importance of public contributions in the news. In these instances, there were a limited number of the UGC's contributions, which are narrowed to particular areas of the story that are more closely related to personal and everyday life-oriented content rather than news content. However, the journalists also stated that UGC and social media provide a quick means of gaining information. As Witschge points out, citizen journalism has given the audience a competitive advantage as a 24/7 news provider (p. 125).

Having elaborated the contradictory findings in Witschge (2012), it may be concluded that journalists are still cautious about opening the access of news process to the public, particularly for serious news coverage. Professional journalists are largely against the discourse of citizen journalism, which allows anyone to be a journalist. Nonetheless, it cannot be concluded that journalists do not consider the value of the UGC and social media. In fact, UGC may be significant in the news process, which has always relied on stories brought by people. The more stories that journalists obtain from the public, the higher the news value is. The only issue is incorporating these public contributions in the news process without compromising journalistic values. Therefore, this study argues that, as an attempt to anticipate the actions of people in UGC in democratisation nature, professional, even rigorous, journalism is needed.

Arguably, here, the practice of curation journalism leads public participation as a professional framework. This practice may change perspectives on traditional journalism as it involves the interactivity and technological aspects of new media development. Ideas such as timeliness, continuity, and composition need to be interpreted with different approaches. Although the process of sourcing and writing the news has become quicker due to the technology of social media and the UGC, it does not mean that the process is more straightforward, particularly when the news organisations have to maintain their objectivity, fairness, and impartiality. These values must be considered by journalists as professionals and curators who select and define the context of what the public says.

However, by preserving journalistic professionalism, particularly by performing curation journalism, there are at least three points that remain unchanged among traditional journalistic values. The first of these points is the discipline of verification, which emphasises truth and accuracy and the second is public accountability. The third and final point is the aspect of humanity reflected in the content of the stories that journalists write.

Within the practices of curation journalism, editors not only play the role of collector and aggregator, but also maintain the accuracy and relevancy of news pieces by performing verification and contextualization. As argued by M. Knight and Cook (2013), curation is not aggregation since it must provide the journalist's own voice,

and a compilation cannot be automatically generated (p. 122). This specific understanding aims to emphasise the role of the curator as a gatekeeper in journalistic practices.

Meanwhile, when a journalist curates people's voices on social media, he or she does not take and publish opinions as if the materials were his or her own. After verifying the facts, a journalist must also identify the owner of the social media content to prevent a hoax or fraud. Furthermore, the journalist has to acknowledge or credit the owner of the social media content when he or she publishes it as a part of the news story. One reason for giving credit is to maintain the objectivity of the information and not mix it with the journalist's own statements in order to distinguish who would take responsibility for the quoted comments. Another reason is to provide the apparent source related to the issue of the copyright, although the debate is ongoing regarding the right to use social media content, specifically whether it owned by individual account holders or considered public (M. Knight and Cook, 2013, pp. 138-139).

There have been doubts expressed regarding accountability in this new media era. McQuail, for example, mentions that a combination of weaker press institutions, de-professionalisation, and audience fragmentation has made the accountability of journalism to society difficult to achieve. McQuail (2013) expresses that there are uncertainties about the capacity of society to accomplish suitable regulation form over the practice of online media, "whether for control or accountability short of blunt censorship" (p. 174). However, curation journalism seems to be able to overcome this controversy because journalists, to some extent, still have the power to control the flow of public voices within the news.

The third aspect, which is defined as 'humanity' by EJM (2015), is the notion of journalistic principles and ensuring that journalists do not publish stories that may be harmful to the public. This notion includes images of casualties, a face of sexual assault victim, or bigoted statements. Despite the ongoing trend of sensational headlines or clickbait that can be found in political media, which sometimes contains insulting remarks towards some people, professional journalists should be aware of the impact of their words and images on the lives of others. Therefore, the curating process allows journalists to act carefully, particularly when selecting and collecting

social media content. Curation should not be used to discredit or disrespect any member of society.

However, it is not necessarily true that the practice of curation journalism is always the ideal way of conducting journalism in this interactive era. There are some disadvantages related to the credibility of the source, particularly when journalists have to deal with anonymous sources from social media. Furthermore, the closeness to the practice of crowdsourcing, citizen journalism, and participatory journalism makes it even harder to maintain objectivity on the news. Therefore, curation journalism cannot escape from the same ethical boundaries present in traditional journalism. The following section further discusses the conventional principles that affect curation journalism.

#### **1.2.5 What is Curation Journalism?**

Based on the various definitions, this study finds that curation journalism is a curating activity conducted by a journalist in the form of actively seeking, selecting, and publishing information objects from scattered content on social media from a specific context and build a news story using them. It may therefore be understood that curation here does not just refer to collecting random social media content. Moreover, curation journalism must pay attention to the quality and feasibility of being known by the general public.

In accordance with this chapter's theoretical discussion, this study looks at curation journalism from two perspectives. The first perspective posits curation journalism as a method of finding information, in which it is closely related to the concepts of gatekeeping, gatewatching, and crowdsourcing. The implementation of these concepts will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Secondly, curation journalism, as a form of visual display, takes the philosophy of curation conducted in art museums. Therefore, by looking at the visual display of a news story, readers are able to see that the flow of storytelling is created using curation journalism.

These two viewpoints are at the margin of the analysis in this thesis. In the following section, the identification of the implementation of curation journalism in Indonesia are discussed from these two perspectives.

### 1.3 Curation within the Conventional Principles of Journalism

Curation journalism, which expands the exclusivity of the newsroom to the public, creates many debates, including of the definition of journalism itself. These debates include questions of what the real function of journalism is for society. Scholars have debated what journalism really is and what its roles are that could be learnt today, including those relevant in the era of contemporary media. The crucial position of journalism within a society is disputable; it is unclear whether it plays significant role in democracy in empowering people, is an important profession, or serves as a business or information trading space.

Regardless of the debate, it has always been clear that journalism is strongly connected to the public. Journalism does not relate only to the way in which a message is distributed from the source to receiver through a certain channel as stated by Lasswell's question, 'who says what to whom, through what channel and with what effect?' (cited in McQuail, 2010, p. 70). Moreover, journalism is closely related to professionalism. As McQuail (2010) argues, journalism, in everyday terms, refers to the activities and outcomes of those professionally engaged in collecting, analysing, and publishing particular information, or 'news'. Therefore, a discussion of journalism in a broader context has always been related to 'the media', 'mass media', or 'news media' (McQuail, 2013, pp. 1-2), which can be considered professional institutions.

Furthermore, related to professionalism, McQuail (2013) offers a more specific definition of journalism: "Journalism is the construction and publication of accounts of contemporary events, persons or circumstances of public significance or interest, based on information acquired from reliable sources" (p. 14). This definition argues that journalism is related to at least three notions. The first notion is *the publication*, which can also be understood as periodical media published by mass media companies. This term presents the idea of business, which considers journalism as part of a broader mass media industry and suggests a type of information that only is to be understood as journalistic if it is published by a media institution or within a mass media publication, where journalists can deliver information to a wider audience simultaneously.



The second notion is information important to the public, or of *public interest*. This information is recognised as ‘the news’. Fleming *et al.* (2006) admit that defining the news is challenging since there are so many different influential factors in the selection and production process; in its most straightforward meaning, news can be defined as the reporting of events to an audience (pp. 4-5).

However, not every event can be treated as news. Journalists must use their professional judgment to determine whether an event is relevant to the public interest or not before including it as part of a news story. Another critical consideration of this judgement is that news can be seen as a construction rather than a set of raw facts or reality. Vasterman (1995, cited in Harcup, 2015) argues the following: “The news is not out there, journalists do not report news, they produce news. They construct it, they construct facts, they construct statements, and they construct a context in which these facts make sense. They reconstruct ‘a’ reality” (p. 42). Vasterman’s argument about reconstructing the news is centred around examining to what extent journalists construct the reality that they receive from the public into a story that can be published as news. Based on this argument, it may be understood that journalists not only consider events that they have experienced in reality or learned about via eyewitnesses but also reproduce reality as something that attracts people's attention. As Hall (1981, cited in Allan, 2010) comments, the news that journalists produce is a set of selected facts, a small portion of millions of events from reality (p. 72). Journalists, therefore, must consider constraints or principles that obligate them to select the most newsworthy information from an almost infinite number of facts available, an obligation which is discussed later in this chapter.

The final notion appears in the definition of journalism is *reliable sources*. Sources are the people, places, or organisations from whom potential news stories originate, as well as the people, places, or organisations to which journalists turn to when investigating potential stories (Harcup, 2015, p. 55). It is likely that sources can derive from anywhere. However, most of the time, journalists have to narrow the range, particularly those who work in daily newspapers. One of the reasons to narrow the search is because exploring scattered sources is time-consuming, and journalists do not have much time to meet deadlines. Furthermore, too many sources may cause the focus of the news to become unclear. Gans (1980) argues that, in many cases, reporters

who must collect information in a limited time frame, therefore, acquire the most appropriate news from the sources as quickly and efficiently as possible (p. 82). Therefore, journalists need to possess special skills to select the most relevant sources but still maintain the objectivity and balance to cover all aspects of a story.

The skill of selecting reliable sources can be challenging. Readers tend to choose the authorities as their only dependable sources. For example, there are many headlines and articles that quote statements from people that are considered to have a certain level of authority. These people can be including members of government, Head of the police department, Chief of the fire brigade, a Prime Minister, or President. These quotes are usually assumed by the readers to be factual and confirm the reality of related events. On the other hand, the voice of the ordinary citizen is traditionally regarded as something that needs to be confirmed or is classified as a rumour. As Bell (1991, cited in Harcup, 2015) mentions, to a very large extent, what people consider as news is what an authoritative source tells a journalist, while alternative sources, including minorities and the socially disadvantaged, tend to be ignored (p. 44).

However, these conditions may be different in the era of new media. In this era, public voices are considerably stronger than in the past because technology has provided means for ordinary people to check information, challenge the wisdom of said information, and share it with their own conclusions (Bradshaw and Rohumaa, 2011). Furthermore, there has been a shift among the younger generation, which leads them to leave traditional media and find more social methods of obtaining information (Kolodzy, 2012, p. 1; Knight and Cook, 2013, pp. 2–4).

In the discussion of curation journalism, professionalism has also become a debatable issue. As found in the online news on the protests in Iran (2009), the bombing of London (2005), the Paris attacks (2015), and the Jakarta bombing (2016), curation journalism involves voices from the public retrieved from their comments or status updates on social media. This involvement of non-journalist speakers creates an impression for one group of people that curation journalism contradicts professionalism because it allows materials from non-journalists or non-public figures to be part of the news. However, based on the discussion about reliable sources (Harcup, 2015, p. 55), using civilian as a news source is part of journalistic practice

because professional journalists still do their job as gatekeepers in selecting and verifying the facts that they acquire from social media.

Despite the use of the general public, as well as the technical aspects of social communication, Gans' (1980) comment on the significance of journalists' skills in finding the most accurate information is still relevant. It has been argued that the traditional method of finding proper information resources will always be needed, including in the social media era. This argument applies particularly to the issue of truth and accuracy.

There exists the possibility that journalists from any era may produce news with a certain level of inaccuracy; they could be misled by their sources when reconstructing reality. Journalists may also be distracted by the influence of political bias, interference in the communication process, or incomplete facts gathered due to a strict deadline. Therefore, in order to avoid inaccurate news, journalists have a significant responsibility to always convey the truth for every fact that they include in their reports. Journalists should be guided by either ethical or practical principles in order to maintain their responsibility.

This responsibility emphasises that journalism is not only a concept of the effort to increase people's knowledge by distributing the truth. Journalism is also a profession, and journalists must possess a high level of professionalism to maintain the objectivity and accuracy of the news. However, these two perspectives are not separable because they arise simultaneously in practice.

Therefore, the discussion of curation journalism should be followed by describing fundamental journalistic ethical principles as publisher and information gatekeeper, the characteristics as a profession and the consequences related to objectivity, truth-seeking, and independence. Non-journalist citizens may be unaware of the constraints of journalism as a profession, such as ethics or the importance of being objective. Rosenstiel (2007, cited in Friend and Singer, 2007, p. 35), a former media critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, claims the following: "Anyone can be a journalist, and some may be, whether they like it or not. The question is whether their work constitutes journalism". Rosenstiel emphasises that the most important of journalism is how the work is conducted in respect of professional journalistic principles such as

“truthfulness, an allegiance to citizens and community at large, and informing rather than manipulating”, principles that distinguish journalism from other communication activities.

## **1.4 Curation Journalism and the Code of Ethics**

### **1.4.1 Storytelling Skills in Curation Journalism**

In the practice of curation journalism, most information comes from available messages sent by the public on their social media accounts. Because of the central principle of curating, many curators simplify their work by connecting one comment to another. Sometimes the information is random, which makes a curator trapped by the emotions attached to the information. This impartiality is unacceptable in curation journalism. For example, in a bombing incident, an efficient curator cannot only focus on distributing people’s statements that expressing mourning or anger; he or she also needs to have the skill to find and formulate a positive narrative and accurate story. It would be beneficial to a story if a curator discovered a Twitter or Facebook account whose owner recognised the perpetrator or is familiar with the person’s background. Again, the skills must be accompanied by the sense of verification; a curator must be able to explore information thoroughly and verify a source (McAdams, 2008).

This challenge means that curation journalism has a sensitive relationship with the code of ethics. There is a significant potential to violate the code, considering the nature of dealing with sources on online communication, which are sometimes anonymous, irreversible, or without physical boundaries. Furthermore, distributing curated information is challenging because the journalist may lose the context of the scattered information he or she collects. Therefore, the practice requires specific skills to overcome the challenge, one of which is storytelling.

There is a critical challenge in distributing curated information in online media when the journalist must compete with more attractive information such as audiovisual news on television. Here, the ability of storytelling becomes a crucial component that will stimulate the audience’s “theatre of mind”. This kind of visualisation aligns with the nature of online media because the audience can search for information through social

media and let their knowledge, as well as their imagination, expand unlimitedly. However, the audience must be guided by an accurate story and not just by an aggregated people's statements.

The ability to wrap stories from people's comments on social media becomes significant in formulating appealing news. The easiest way to wrap a story is to find materials from a thread. A thread is a continuous conversation about a particular issue, while people who follow the issue can add comments and replies, allowing the conversation to expand. This kind of discussion is usually found on social media with a textual format such as Twitter. It is easy for a curator to see relevant comments on a thread because the content is largely on one topic. As a journalist, a curator needs to add facts and data from a verified source.

An example of using a thread can be looked on a story on the live experiences of a victim on a tragic incident, such as a bombing, fire, or traffic accident. The story will be valuable and easily curatable. Usually, the thread will expand and lead to the creation of similar threads from other people. Because the event is already compiled, this thread can be a guide for curators to create a complete story. Moreover, every single person involved in the thread conversation represents a unique contributor that has a narrative that can be developed by the curator. Eventually, these contributors can be developed as a specific character within the story.

For incident stories, an effective curator will not only tell the story, but also inspire the audience if he or she could find the human-interest side from the source. For example, a bombing victim who suffered but made a reconciliation message on Twitter to forgive the bombers would motivate the audience. Furthermore, the curator can develop a story by including interactions within the thread. This example shows that a curator can make factual information attractive to read without violating the code of ethics.

A curator must pay attention to detail. Details in the storytelling are important elements in building the compilation of stories (Zulkarnain, 2017, cited in Budiastuti, 2017). To situate the real conditions of an event and develop the audience's theatre of mind, a curator can add nuanced details, such as temperature or weather conditions when the event occurred. Another thing that could be attempted is estimating the

number of people gathered, describing the gusts of wind, and detailing the physical details of an event's location. These elements strengthen a story. However, all descriptions must be based on facts and data, as well as additional information from the public's comments.

Furthermore, a journalist, as a curator, must have an active imagination and the ability to empathise with those at the event. These abilities are needed to explore a pattern on social media content. Studying patterns is one of the methods used to develop the nuance of the story. For example, a curator could see the number of 'likes' and 'shares' of posts, which can help to build a consideration before taking it as a story. However, one should exercise caution because these likes and shares can skew context when the curator is not aware of the tendency of the content. This problem usually occurs in the case of political messages. People will like and share a particular post if they think the message is politically appropriate and aligns with their own ideology.

Titling is also crucial in building a story. The story title in curation journalism must be intriguing to attract the attention of the audience (Budiastuti, 2017). Usually, social media users use hashtags to draw attention to their social media post. A curator can make a title taken from the hashtag to make the story easy to find. Moreover, a sentence used in hashtag is usually short but expresses the whole idea of the content. Therefore, a title that includes a recognisable hashtag may allow for the curator to tell a story.

There are several elements that a curator needs to prepare before creating a story. The plot is the main component of storytelling, followed by the character, the accuracy of the chronology, the accuracy of the place and time, and the motives of the actions that can make the public remember the event (Budiastuti, 2017; Bianchi, 2017). Therefore, curation journalism needs to be trained and studied.

Creating a story by using a character taken from the source can be useful. Choice of character is one of the factors. A character who makes a story based on personal experience will afford the story a high news value (Yudiono, 2016). This character choice is what Carvin (2012), an American journalist, achieved when he created a story about Amina. Amina, one of Carvin's correspondents in the Middle East, had lived through remarkable experiences during the 2011 crisis in Syria. Carvin made the

story about this individual by following her social media account. The story was exciting to read. Unfortunately, however, Carvin had been following a fake account, which is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Regardless of the mistake that Carvin had made, he demonstrated that making a story from a particular character's perspective could be captivating because the person will give more information than required. A curator must have editing skills to select the appropriate information from that provided, a key challenge in curation journalism.

To highlight the valuable elements of a character when storytelling, a curator needs to understand the sense of personal psychology. This sense of psychology includes having empathy for the chosen character. Characterisation will bring readers into the character's world combined with other people's voices on the character's network.

In terms of the effort to add chronological elements to a story, curators may use elements considered insignificant by other audiences. For example, to estimate the time of a bombing event in a shopping centre, a curator can use someone's selfie on the location uploaded just before the bombing had occurred. This attempt will add not only the information about the time, but also an idea of the shock, fear, and nuance. A photo of a payment receipt, shopping list, or plastic bag from the shopping centre taken by people on the site is also a detail that will enrich the storytelling atmosphere. To include these elements, a curator should observe social media applications that contain photos, videos, and live stories, such as on *Instagram*, *Snapchat*, or *Twitter*.

Again, this method also has a potential to violate the code ethics, and a number of key issues must be considered. Firstly, a curator needs to pay attention to the posting time to avoid using irrelevant information posted long before the incident. Secondly, a curator has to verify the copyright of the material. Thirdly, a journalist must avoid taking inappropriate materials, such as a photo of a bombing victim covered in blood, a close-up photo of a child, or a video showing people doing inappropriate things that others may find offensive.

These issues are fundamental principles in journalism. Philosophically, curation journalists must return to the purpose of the reporting. An effective curator will prepare the story with the intention of motivating the audience to have a more positive

attitude. This moral value cannot be separated from journalistic products, including curated storytelling.

A curator also must ensure objectivity and not be dragged by the intention to exaggerate the story. Sensational stories indeed can be more attractive but may also compromise the meaning of the story if they mean that the truth of the story is doubted. A curator is not creating a fictional story despite using a storytelling technique. Therefore, a curator needs to focus on telling the truth and being honest (Yudiono, 2016; Bianchi, 2017). Moreover, sensational stories have the potential to drag people into a conflict against one another. A curator needs to avoid this conflict since, as a journalist, he or she must maintain objectivity and impartiality. The goals of a curator are to share stories taken from the people back to the people and eventually create a more positive community. It is also acceptable to curate inspirational messages from people who are tired of conflict, and a curator will be able to have a positive impact on society by curating a solution to overcome the friction that might be caused by an individual or a social community.

Regarding potential conflict, a curator should be careful when using emoticons, clips, and memes posted by the public on social media. Even though these elements will make the story more interesting to read, some memes are created to show satire or even sarcastic messages. Therefore, these memes may compromise the humanity of others and create further conflict. For some audiences, a meme can be entertaining, whereas it might be painful for others. A curator must be able to neutralise any negative impact if he or she wants to use a meme in a curated story. For this reason, it is crucial for a curator to understand and be sensitive to social issues in the environment in which a story takes place.

An effective curator will make his or her writing memorable to the audience. After reading the article, the audience should be able to recall the curated information and place themselves in the position of the people whose voices were included in the story. Consequently, a curator must re-read the curated materials before the story is ready to publish to find the most appropriate epilogue. A curator must possess sensitivity to the impact of writing to close the story. The closing of the story can be in the form of moral values summarised by the curator. These values are promoted to overcome



obstacles, risks, and expectations that appear in the curated information. Furthermore, by using the storytelling technique, closure will offer a significant emotional experience to the readers, who feel empathy and are inspired by the story (Yudiono, 2016).

To summarise, storytelling can make a curation journalist reach a different level of newswriting. However, creating a story from curated information should be performed with caution. The case of Andy Carvin and the fake account is an example of how easily an inaccurate source can mislead a curator.

### **1.4.2 The Ethical Perspective on Professional Curation**

In terms of ethical issues in journalistic practice as a profession, Hallin and Mancini (2004) approach a journalist's characteristics by focusing on three dimensions of professionalisation, namely autonomy, distinct professional norms, and public service orientation (pp. 34-36). Schudson and Anderson (2008) also note this attempt as "the strongest case for severing the link between objectivity and professional standing in the world of journalism" (p. 93).

Autonomy occurs when journalists exert control over their own work process. As Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue, the autonomy of journalism starts when journalists are hired by a media company and fulfil specific job roles that differentiate them from other occupations. Meanwhile, distinct professional norms will be achieved when journalists are able to distinguish their work from other professions by practising their specific rules, processes, and behaviour. Hallin and Mancini (2004) note that journalists, as professionals, have to, as the latter authors state, "organise themselves 'horizontally', with a particular style of life, code of ethics, and self-conscious identity and barriers to outsiders" (p. 35).

In terms of the third dimension, i.e. public service orientation, Hallin and Mancini (2004) point out that professions are usually public service oriented and bound by ethical issues. This dimension is clearly related to journalists' task in maintaining public trust. Journalists do not have the exclusivity; therefore, they base their autonomy and authority on their claim to serve public interest. One of the applications of this ethical pillar can be seen in the mechanisms of journalistic self-regulation in

the form of independent organisation, such as ‘press councils’ or ‘the press complaints commission’ (Cohen-Almagor, 2015, pp. 159-181). These mechanisms sometimes operate informally but still have considerable power.

Arguably, these dimensions contribute to an overall set of journalistic principles on which a practice can be based. The principles can become key ethical considerations in the core of professional practice. This critical thought is probably the most important reason for which journalists are constrained by laws, regulations and practicalities related to news production in order to protect both those being reported on and the journalists themselves (Fleming, 2006, pp. 2-3) because journalists, in theory, need to maintain their practice based on ethical considerations. Therefore, according to this theory, journalists must be guarded by rules and regulations stated in formal documentation.

A challenge occurs when journalism uses the more open practice that allows non-journalists to be part of the news production process as curation journalism. Carvin (2012) and McAdams (2012, cited in Supriadi, Srimulyani, & Wibowo, 2013) note, based on the Syrian crisis, that curation has the potential for journalists to obtain information due to the open communication channels, which means that anyone can report anything, including inaccurate facts or irresponsible opinions. As discussed later in this section, Carvin himself experienced this error when he was misled by the creator of an account passing as a victim of the Syrian crisis. This issue becomes particularly important in journalism when a mistake is published and when debating the accountability of curation method because the practice encourages journalists to take voices on social media or other online instant publications and put them into their journalistic work. This situation has been subject to debate mainly from the perspective of ethics since, in the practice of conventional journalism by traditional mainstream media, journalists are not encouraged to take statements from unverified sources.

There has also been disagreement about quoting directly from social media without the account holder's consent. Following traditional ethics, journalists should not take an individual's statement without permission. On the other hand, when considering communication on social media networks, it is believed that, when people have

already posted something on social media, the opinion is automatically considered eligible for public use because anything that they say or write can be directly viewed and commented by social media users within the same networks. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to ask for permission from the author to quote or republish content.

However, using social media contents as news material does not appear to align with the traditional conceptions of journalism. Pessimistic perspective may consider this approach as lazy because journalists can now obtain information easily without the necessity to go to the field in the same way as traditional reporters. The effortlessness involved in using other people's posts is supported by the interactive facilities on social media applications such as share, retweet, repath (one of sharing methods of *Path* application), or likes. Practically, when a Twitter user wants to retweet material posted by another user, he or she is not required to ask for permission because sharing of the material is part of the process of posting on social media. In the registration process of joining a social network, users are made to agree that what has been written or conveyed within the network may be viewed by many people and used in a wider network, which is for the reason for the 'share' and 'retweet' tools. In fact, a social media message going viral is often viewed as something extremely positive. happy and proud if their statement on social media is quoted or retweeted by others.

However, when social media content is cited in a news story and republished on mainstream media or news agencies' sites, some concerns remain. Journalistic work is usually associated with traditional journalistic principles and journalistic ethics. On this basis, there has been debate as to whether it is ethically acceptable to use social media content in journalism if the journalist guarantees the process of selection and verification. Moreover, traditionally, the use of statements from civilians who do not have credibility in terms of prominence value is arguable.

Indonesian columnist Pepih Nugraha (2013, cited in Supriadi, Srimulyani & Wibowo, 2013) argues that it is possible construct a story using social media contents as long as the author of the story cites the source (pp. 31-35). For instance, quoting a statement from a specific Twitter account is acceptable because the content has already been published and read by many people. Nugraha argues, that within this context, the owner of the Twitter accounts should exercise caution when writing; they need to

understand the risks of social media usage, where their statements can be easily claimed as publicly owned.

This debate is ongoing in Indonesia. One of the reasons for this debate is because there are no clear regulations on the use of digital information in the news. The Indonesian Press Council has not regulated the ethical issue of citing from UGC such as social media in official law or regulation. There is guidance for cybermedia (Dewan Pers, 2012), but it is not a strict regulation and includes general suggestions about using cyber content based on traditional press law (known as The Act No. 40/1999) and the Indonesian Journalists' Code of Ethics. As a result, the practice that involves social media content is looked at from the perspective of traditional media, where reporters are encouraged to introduce themselves to their source and ask permission to use conversation as a source.

Similar, more detailed guidance may be found in more advanced nations such as US and, contrary to Marr's statement, also the UK. The American-based *Associated Press* (AP), for example, developed special guidance for using social media, which was revised in 2013 for its employees (AP, 2013). The rules are not significantly different from those in the Indonesian Press Council's guidance, but there are specific terminologies in terms of sourcing from social media contents. The AP admits that verifying sources in a social network can be difficult. As is the case in Indonesia, the AP encourages its employees to treat this kind of source in the same way as those found on any other media, which is to be verified traditionally. This treatment must be carried out to avoid false accounts that have been widespread in the social media. The AP also reminds reporters to verify copyright issues on content that they want to include in their reports. Some exceptions require foregoing the permission procedure, but the reporters must discuss them with the AP's Nerve Centre and legal department to be sure. Reporters also should use their journalistic instincts to control whether the social media content is suitable and should consult with a manager before deciding to do so.

Though there is no specific term on the position of social media content as a source of the news in AP guidance, The BBC News Group's *Social Media Guidance for Staff* acknowledges that information produced in UGC is not automatically 'public domain'

or 'free to use' in the UK (BBC, 2015). The guidance states that, together with the process of verifying for authenticity, permission to use videos or stills from the author or the distributor is required. However, using UGC as a part of a story is not prohibited because the BBC recognises the contribution from non-professionals willing to share their content. In its guidance, the BBC states that its staff must treat non-professional UGC with respect, which means that every story that includes this kind of content should give on-screen credit to the content's owners unless they ask not to or if revealing their name would put them in danger.

In terms of breaching privacy rights, curation pioneer Carvin does not consider curation journalism as an activity that violates these rights. In contrast, Carvin even argues that he has actually put the public in prominent positions as news producers, sources, witnesses, and evaluators. With this argument, Carvin considers that what he has done is collaborative journalistic activity, in which all components are complementary. There is no violation of privacy rights because all social media content that he has used is verified and published on an already public social network (Supriadi, Srimulyani, & Wibowo, 2013, pp. 60-61).

In the same sense, McAdams (2012, cited in Supriadi, Srimulyani, & Wibowo, 2013) states that the most significant ethical violation is not the practice of curating or crowdsourcing, but instead when journalists are no longer critical and forget the need for verification (pp. 59-60). Without these two key principles, journalists could be easily deluded by the 'babble' in the virtual world and led by incorrect information. McAdams categorises this delusion as a journalist's very fatal mistake because the journalist needs to be responsible for the accuracy of the information received in order to be ethical.

McAdams refers to the errors mentioned earlier in this section, such as that that Carvin made when following a fake account. As Carvin states, he had been following the Syrian crisis by using the perspective of a Syrian American woman named Amina Arraf, who was also a supporter of homosexuality. Based on her posting on social media, Carvin was convinced that Amina was the ideal eyewitness to report from inside the crisis. Carvin believed that Amina, who had been living in America, had decided to return to Syria just as the Arab Spring crisis began. In the next

developments, the news was spread on social media and blogs that Amina was missing and presumed kidnapped in the middle of the crisis. After a long time searching for information about Amina's existence, Carvin then realised that no one in Syria had ever met her. Carvin finally figured out that, during his time writing about Amina, he had been deceived because there did not exist a Syrian woman of American descent named Amina. The account was, in fact, created by an American man who lived in Edinburgh named Tom MacMaster, who created Amina's persona in order to garner attention about Syria (Carvin, 2012, pp. 186-210).

The mistake has made crowdsourcing or curation journalism inseparable from the responsibility of journalists in practising the basic principles of journalism. Despite major developments in technology, the code of ethics of journalism, which is based on traditional journalistic practices, still plays an important role in ensuring the truth of the news.

Nevertheless, there is no document that posits universal journalistic code of ethics to be applied anywhere in the world because every society has its own norms and moral judgment regarding the practices of journalism. Instead of having one international journalistic code of ethics, there are differing norms in each nation. In fact, it is possible to see more than one code in one country.

The locality of the journalistic code of ethics can be seen in the following examples from the UK. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) published the *NUJ Code of Conduct*, which was established in 1936 and updated in 2011 (NUJ, 2011). This guideline contains 12 professional principles that have to be obeyed by the NUJ's members. Meanwhile, the UK Press Complaints Commission (PCC) that changed on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014 into the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) also developed its own *Editors' Code of Practice* since 1991. This code of practice has 16 clauses applied for IPSO members to regulate editorial practice in the UK media (IPSO, 2016). Moreover, some UK media companies have their own code of conduct, such as the *Editorial Guidelines: Guardian News & Media Editorial Code*, developed by The Guardian (2015).

As an attempt to provide an international comparison, this thesis also looks at US press institutions that have produced many codes to encourage greater responsibility among

journalists. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the most broad-based journalism organisation in the US, generated the *SPJ Code of Ethics*, which contains four major codes applied to its members to seek the truth, be respectful to the public, act independently, and be accountable (SPJ, 2014). There also exist the *Editorial Guidelines for Editors and Publishers* that is published by the American Society of Magazine Editor (ASME) in 1982 (ASME, 2015). There is also an ethics handbook for radio journalism and public radio business, which was initially provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and compiled in a handbook by the NPR (NPR, 2012).

Further examples can also be found in Indonesia. In 2006, the Indonesian Press Council released the newest version of the *Indonesian Journalistic Code of Ethics*. This formula was signed by 29 press organisations in Indonesia, supported by the oldest union for Indonesian journalist, *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* (PWI, Indonesian Journalists Union (PWI, 2013). Similarly, *Aliansi Jurnalis Independen* (AJI, Alliance of Independent Journalists) also published its own code of ethics (AJI, 2015). This alliance has many members who have not or do not want to be allied with the PWI. However, the content of both sets of guidelines is similar.

These examples from three different countries are evidence of the importance of local context within the journalistic code of ethics. However, having read the guidelines thoroughly, these documents have many similarities in the context that might lead to a universal understanding. For example, there are sections in the *NUJ Code of Conduct*, the *SPJ Code of Ethics*, and the *AJI Code of Ethics* that emphasise the same ideas: accurate information; clear sources; and differentiation between fact and opinion. Furthermore, some points in the guidelines developed by the IPSO, NPR and PWI show that the issue of prejudice and discrimination is still a significant point to be considered.

The various terms found in the different codes show that every system has its own language for describing principles in journalistic practice. However, the core principles that the press system tries to highlight in every country are almost identical. Even though language and expressions are different, the examples described are pointing to the same considerations, which are publishing only fact, protecting the

public's needs, and verifying information to avoid misjudgement or misunderstanding. It may also be concluded from the examples that journalism in every country is a form of practice with an approach in moral issues, in which practitioners must apply specific rules to protect the public's rights.

The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), an online network that supports ethical journalism practice, tries to compile the similarities. A lecture by Aidan White, the Director of the EJN, describes five core principles of journalism that become the fundamental ideas of ethics guides across the world: accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity, and accountability (EJN, 2015).

The principle of accuracy is usually close to the concept of the 'truth'. However, there exist a range of perspectives in the practice of journalism in defining what truth really means. Seib (2004), for instance, argues that, for journalists, the truth is a reality in the format of "facts that are verified and explained" (Harcup, 2015, p. 75). From an alternative perspective, Kleran (1998, cited in Harcup, 2015, p. 75) uses another argument from the perspective of journalists' objectivity:

In journalism, as distinct from fiction, there is a truth of the matter and this is what objectivity in journalism aims at. ... Where reporting turns away from the goal of truth and journalists treat events as open to many interpretations, according to their prejudices, assumptions, news agenda or the commercial drive toward entertainment, the justification and self-confessed rationale of journalism threatens to disappear.

Problematically, it is often not simple to provide a single truth among the many interpretations that the public will receive. Reporters are often confused by the decision to choose which part of the reality is the most appropriate to be cited in their news story. On the other hand, the audience has its own beliefs and context that aid in interpreting fact. These conditions are a challenge for journalists since the accuracy to publish accurate information is crucial. Lippmann (Lippmann, 1922), *Public Opinion*, argues the following:

News and truth are not the same things... The function of news is to signalize an event (or make people aware of it)... The function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality upon which men can act.



This statement emphasises that realism and reality, or accuracy and truth, cannot be easily understood in the same meaning (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 39). The BBC Academy aimed to explain the term *accuracy* in a journalistic context. Accuracy can be described as the effort to verify facts objectively, which means not only confirming names, places, dates of birth, quotes, or the results of sporting fixtures, but also accurately reporting opinions expressed by a source. The same principle also applies to publishing opinions expressed in speeches. According to the BBC Academy, accuracy in reporting opinion exists on two levels: firstly, by ensuring that the quote or report accurate; and secondly, by ensuring that the reporter accurately conveys the broader meaning of the quote or opinion (BBC Academy, 2016).

This position of accuracy, of course, is still debatable because social reality is always influenced by bias. Every social system has its own way of valuing realities, which might differ from one another. This variation brings a notion of what Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) term 'journalistic truth', where the truth involves more than accuracy. Journalistic truth, which is also discussed by McQuail (2013) in relation to the term *independency*, requires taking into account society's conventions such as beliefs, cultural aspects, and norms (p. 58). Fuller (n.d., cited in Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, pp. 42-43), in *News Values*, mentions two tests in revealing the truth, namely correspondence and coherence. Since the facts retrieved from correspondence often contain polarise discussion or just political rhetoric, coherence becomes the ultimate test of journalistic truth. Fuller argues that people need the whole picture of the truth, not just a part of it. However, the audiences are more likely to get only part of the truth, which is due to their personal interest.

Regardless of the level of truth that the audience will receive, accuracy still plays a significant role; it is the foundation of everything: context; interpretation; debate; and all public communication (Fuller, n.d., cited in Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 43). Accuracy is crucial because journalists have to minimise mistakes and the distribution of inaccurate information as a sign of respect to their responsibility to citizens.

Independence is crucial in reporting the real truth since journalists are required to be free from any faction and need to be independent. Hence, journalists should be able to make stories without any bias. White (2015) states that journalists must be

independent voices and not act on behalf of special interests, whether political, corporate, or cultural (EJN, 2015).

This position is related to attempts to minimise obstacles in revealing journalistic truth. The most significant test for the truth in journalism is the coherence of the whole story. Therefore, journalists will not be able to be truthful in representing what really happened in the field when they have personal involvement. Although, journalists need to use their personal judgment, particularly in order to value the newsworthiness of an event before writing the cover story. However, this judgment is not intended to influence the audience in an ideological way. Therefore, it is crucial for journalists to become independent when they cover a story in order to minimise their personal bias. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) emphasise this point:

It is important to understand the difference between an opinion journalist and a partisan propagandist intellectually. Living up to that distinction can be harder. Friendships, opportunities and flattery all will conspire to seduce the opinion writer to cross the line. (p. 120)

McQuail (2013) uses the term *significance of transparency* as one of the criteria in explaining the importance of a journalist's independence (pp. 58-60). The term refers to a clear identification of the journalists' position, interest, or purpose. To be independent, journalists should avoid unidentified communications, hidden propaganda, or bribery by sources. Only by ensuring these principles can a journalist be totally independent and able to divulge the truth. Regardless of the difficulties, I argue that independence is a subject to be preserved at any time by journalists, including in practices that involve public participation such as curation journalism. It is important to maintain a high level of independence in journalistic practice.

The third principle, impartiality, discusses the journalist's position when at an event. White brings up a suggestion that most stories have two sides (EJN, 2015). One story can be told differently in various contexts. A story may be different with a more traditional form of media that has limited space, such as on a news programme on television, meaning that a producer must select which side of the story is the most accurate to be published. However, although a story may not report the details of all aspects of a story, journalists still have to maintain the balance and, if necessary, accurately add context to the stories. McQuail (2013) explains that balance is one of

the criteria by which journalistic truth can be assessed. Namely, balance is an attempt to understand all realities from every point of view:

This criterion recognises the subjectivity and uncertainty of all perception and interpretation and looks for an acknowledgement and representation in accounts of different perspectives and interpretations that are most likely to be relevant to understanding. (McQuail, 2013, p. 59)

In other words, journalists are regarded as fairer and more impartial if they represent the reality of an event from every side and interpretation. Theoretically, journalists cannot write a story before examining all, or at least a range of, perspectives from various sources.

Impartiality is often considered interchangeable with objectivity. However, as Harcup (2015) argues, there is dissimilarity between impartiality and objectivity: “Impartial reporting is normally defined as being neutral, while objective reporting is taken to be the reporting of variable facts” (p. 78). McQuail (2013), on the other hand, takes Westerstahl’s diagram to describe the relationship between objectivity and impartiality. As seen in Figure 1.3, facts and impartiality are key elements in the discussion of objectivity. McQuail (2010) interprets impartiality as a “neutral attitude and has to be achieved through a combination of balance (equal or proportional time/space/emphasis) as between opposing interpretations, points of view or version of events, and neutrality in presentation” (p. 202). In other words, impartiality deals with balance and neutrality, whereas objectivity involves the importance of presenting reality as an overview.

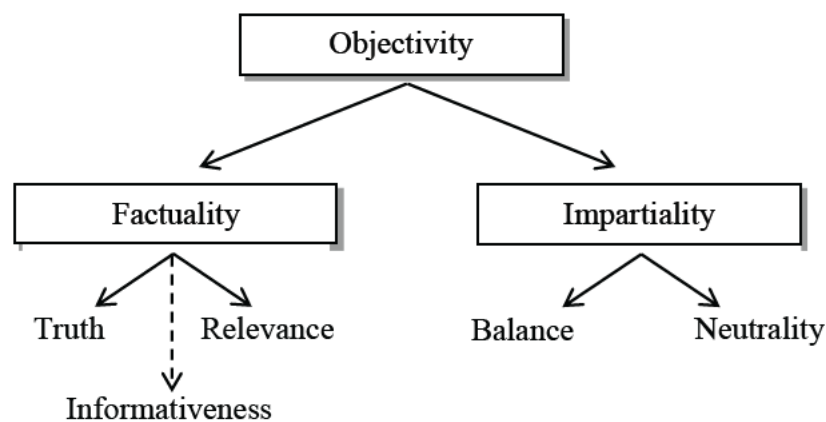


Figure 1.3 Component criteria of objectivity  
(Source: Westerstahl, 1983, cited in McQuail, 2010, p. 202)

However, it may be more difficult to decide which notions to deal with. Westerstahl's (1983) and McQuail's (2010) suggestions have caused scepticism in journalism practice. Journalists may struggle to implement these ideas because objectivity and neutrality consist of tasks that are difficult to carry out. The challenges can be seen in Schudson's (2001, cited in Harcup, 2015) explanation of the term *objectivity*:

The objectivity norm guides journalists to separate facts from values and to report only the facts. Objective reporting is supposed to be cool, rather than emotional, in tone. Objective reporting takes pains to represent each leading side fairly in a political controversy. According to the objectivity norm, the journalist's job consists of reporting something called "news" without commenting on it, slanting it, or shaping its formulation in any way. (p. 77)

Based on this statement, I assume that objectivity requires journalists to avoid sharing their own opinion and to exclude any influence from their surroundings from their stories. Therefore, objectivity itself is mostly regarded as an impossible task for journalists because a news report is still “a selective and mediated representation of reality” (Harcup, 2015, p. 78). The existence of objectivity has become a point of debate, at least in the world of journalism.

Gillmor (2005, cited in Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007) argues that journalists are humans who have biases, personal backgrounds, and a variety of conflicts that might influence their professional work on a daily basis. This statement is one of many examples of the scepticism surrounding the notion of objectivity in journalism because no individual can be free of bias. Gillmor suggests journalists drop the term *objectivity* and substitute it with *thoroughness*, *accuracy*, *fairness* or *transparency* (p. 81).

The notions of objectivity, fairness, and impartiality must be considered more as practical methods of covering stories rather than the final target of journalism. Eventually, by applying this combination of methods, journalists will be able to reveal the journalistic truth demanded by the public.

Humanity, the fourth principle, is brought by EJA to highlight that journalists should not do any harm to the audience. The stories that journalists publish may be hurtful; however, journalists should be aware of the impact of their words and images on the lives of others. This notion originated from the context of journalism as part of society. Journalists dedicate their work to serving the public interest and fulfilling the public's

right-to-know. However, as McQuail (2013) states, some forms of theory are enhanced with the broader interactions of journalists and the public in their social environment. McQuail offers three levels of attention to explain the practice of journalism in terms of their relationship with society: society itself; the news organisation; and the individual journalist (pp. 5-7).

McQuail (2013) argues that journalism plays a strong role in every aspect of public events and interests, regardless of whether it is related to cultural, social or political events. By finding and delivering information related to the public interest, journalists become a bridge that connects what the public wants and how the authorities fulfil these needs, and vice versa. This function brings journalism into an essential part of a community that it serves. Consequently, McQuail states the journalism institution has “to be governed, organised and conducted according to the same fundamental principles that are supposed to govern the rest of society” (p. 5). Using this statement, this study posits that journalism has to control its tasks with a strict self-regulation system in order to maintain its responsibility to the public, including retaining the equal freedom of speech, public participation, and the truth of the news content.

Institutions such as newspapers or media corporations should apply a system compatible with the structure of the market and social system, particularly in terms of reporting and publishing behaviour. News institutions should focus on the legal and regulatory system that, according to McQuail (2013), applies to wider society, the controlling system of the media ownership that suit the social system’s conventions, the relationships between media and politics, the needs and demands of the market, and organisational policies (p. 6). Media enterprises have to adjust their systems to the existing conditions of the society in which they operate. The work system refers to the hierarchy in the media organisation bound by agreed rules, cultures, operational standards, and specific ideology or policies. Regardless of the ideology or policies that the media has, they must consider legal aspects, the political system, and culture within society. The organisation must pay attention to these aspects to collaborate with the public and conveniently play its role in serving the community. This level emphasises the key relationship between journalism and public interests.

On the level of the individual journalist level, McQuail (2013) clarifies that a journalist is “a person dealing directly with other individuals, especially those who are considered as sources or as objects of reporting” (p. 7). Among the three levels, this level is the most significantly related to the notion of humanity and is where journalists must control their reporting and not cause harm to the public.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) also developed another notion to translate humanity, namely loyalty to citizens, explaining the relationship between journalists and the public as employees and their employer. This relationship may even go beyond that of employer and employee since journalists have their real employer within the media company. The responsibility of being the public agent of information brings the loyalty to citizen beyond and above that with the real employer (Kovach dan Rosenstiel, 2007, pp. 51-54). This commitment may align with the idea of liberal pessimists, who consider journalists as servants of democracy.

The final core principle, accountability, is brought by the EJA as a sign of professionalism and responsible journalism. Amongst many significant issues that the media has to deal with, accountability is inevitable. For journalism, it is important to be accountable because journalism has to maintain public trust and its professionalism.

This principle is debatable because it is necessary to determine to whom journalists should be accountable. McQuail (2010) provides one definition of accountability from the perspective of a media company: “Media accountability is all the voluntary or involuntary processes by which the media answer directly or indirectly to the society and those immediately affected the quality and/or consequences of publication” (p. 206). From the definition, in order to place media accountability in the general operations of an open society, McQuail (2010) suggests four actions that the media should perform: esteem the rights to publish ideas freely; avoid harmful effects occurring from publication on their audiences; promote the positive impact of the publication; and be public and transparent (p. 207).

In the media industry, journalists are members of a business organisation and must be accountable to the enterprise for whom they work. However, this relationship will lead to a conflict of interest when the media owners or stakeholders have their own agenda. Following an owner’s agenda will reduce a journalist’s objectivity and devalue the

truth that the public is owed. For this reason, idealists always hold their position as objective journalists and place their accountability to the public or the audience. As stated by the Director of BBC Radio, Helen Boaden (2008) states the following:

I believe it's essential for the development of our journalism and our public purpose of informed citizenship. But BBC journalism is also rooted in some core values – truth and accuracy, impartiality and diversity of opinion, independence, reporting in the public interest and accountability to audiences. So embrace change and modernise we will, but those traditional values will always remain the lodestar of BBC journalism.

The consequences of accountability arise as a result of media relationships with stakeholders or other parties. The importance of freedom of expression brings tension between media and their audiences regarding the publications' content or reporting process. As McQuail (2010) argues, the pressure on the media could come from any direction; it could be from their own audience, sponsors, news sources, or the subjects of a report. Media owners, regulators, affected social institutions, or other interest groups may also be affected by a media publication (p. 209).

After thoroughly examining the five themes, this study sees that journalists must fulfil their objective to find the truth, their responsibility to be fair and defend public interest, and their obligation to be accountable to the public. These objectives bring the discussion to the *Elements of Journalism* by Kovach and Rosentiel (2007), who identify essential principles and practices that can be applied as moral guidelines for journalists. Initially, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2003) developed only nine elements in the first edition of their book. However, the most recent edition took into account the broad use of new media that allows citizens to be more active in their relationship with journalists, choosing to add a further element.

The ten elements show that Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) are following the school of liberal pluralism, where journalism is placed as a service for the public and defender of democracy. The elements cover the basic tasks and responsibilities of journalists, starting from revealing the truth and maintaining relationships with the audiences to the practical principles of reporting the news (see Appendix 1 for details).

The first and the second points of the elements emphasise journalists' responsibility in relation to the truth and their position with the public. Some other points even have

a strong relationship with journalistic practice today, particularly in the discussion of journalism and new media technology. While existing formal codes put an emphasis on the ideal journalist's behaviour, these elements bring the public, or citizen, as Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) state, into greater consideration. For example, the authors remark on the sixth element about the obligation of journalism to provide a forum for public criticism and compromise, encouraging the press institution to provide more space for the public's participation.

Another clear point that brings journalistic practice to public involvement is seen in the tenth element, which says that citizens also have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) suggest that audiences also have a high level of responsibility to evaluate the credibility of the news because they also be part of the production process. The idea of taking public involvement to this level might occur because the authors have formulated their ideas in the middle of the interactivity age, where society members have greater access to involvement in news production.

These elements can be seen as a summary of what can be found in the Journalistic Code of Ethics. These considerations are moral and should be possessed by every journalist. Unlike the codes, these elements are not formal rules. There are no journalism boards or organisations that use this list as legal constraints for their reporters. However, these ideas have been cited in numerous journalism studies in the US, as well as in other democratic countries where the press system tends to be liberal, such as Indonesia today.

### **1.4.3 News Values and Judgment in Curation Journalism**

Curation journalism is actually a form of gatekeeping process that involves collecting and selecting information. Due to their responsibility to the public to inform the truth and the significance of information, journalists must carefully choose the most accurate information to be published amongst many facts. Therefore, journalists need to have standards of quality, which are widely known as a series of 'news values'. These values are operationalised by every journalist to determine which facts or events have the highest significance as part of a news story. Hall (1981, cited in Allan, 2010) suggests the following:



Journalists speak of 'the news' as if events select themselves. Further, they speak as if which is the 'most significant' news story, and which 'news angles' are most salient, are divinely inspired. Of the millions of events which occur every day in the world, only a tiny proportion ever become visible as 'potential news stories'; and of this proportion, only small fractions are actually produced as the day's news in the news media. (p. 72)

The operation of news values helps the reporter to justify the selection of facts or events. The term 'newsworthy' describes news materials by which certain 'news values' are embedded and used by reporters to enforce rationality to the context within the public whom they serve.

The implementation of news values may be a means to 'reconstruct "a" reality' (Vasterman, 1995, cited in Harcup, 2015, p. 42). Following Vasterman's argument, which was discussed earlier in this chapter, journalists are not only writing facts that they see in the field because it will be too much for the public to understand. Instead, journalists must construct the material, including people's comments and the context, to make the information accessible and easy for the audience to consume.

Scholars have noticed that there is an entire body of research concerned with news values and newsworthiness discussion, though most are related to one original study, an innovative 1965 study by Galtung and Ruge (Brighton dan Foy, 2007, p. 1-9; Allan, 2010, p. 71-74, Harcup dan O'Neill, 2017, p. 1470-1488). This study developed informal rules and codes of newsworthiness to identify key factors significant in evaluating news, such as conflict, relevance, timeliness, unexpectedness, prominence, cultural specificity, and negativity (see Appendix 2 for further detail).

To some extent, these values are still applicable to online media. The audience tends to prefer a user-friendly website with clear icons or marks to choose and make it easy to navigate. According to Galtung and Ruge (1965), an event will be valuable if it represents an attractive component of the website with an interesting composition, such as the footage of an event or a video clip that can be published on the website that is easy to play.

While social values are changing over time and are used differently by every news organisation, relevant news values, as defined by Galtung and Ruge, are relatively consistent concerning producing significant news. As Brighton and Foy (2007, p. 2)

comment, Galtung and Ruge's study has become ground-breaking research, and almost every study that has followed has been built on its findings.

Arguably, to take the development of communication technology today into account, newsworthiness factors proposed by Galtung and Ruge need to be adjusted. For instance, in terms of the factor of timeliness, a problem may occur when journalists misuse advanced technology by ignoring the essence of detail and discipline of verification to publish the story as quickly as possible, which is possible due to the high speed of the transmitting process, as well as the ease in searching for online data within the new media era. Because of this advantage, other factors such as continuity and composition need to be looked at from a different perspective. The existence of online and social media has made those tasks more manageable and quicker rather than simpler. Therefore, media organisations now can ensure continuity and create a more solid composition of the news because resources are more accessible to be allocated and compiled. Furthermore, the emergence of social media and interactivity has made audiences' trends easier to predict, which allows a journalist to map the audience's preferred news types.

The relationship between a journalist and the audience has become a factor in the element of Galtung and Ruge's work. Brighton and Foy (2007) see that, by pointing out issues of resonance and cultural proximity, Galtung and Ruge expect that the audience takes part in selecting the most appropriate news. However, I argue that, in this era of new media and interactive technology, the role of audiences in producing news needs to be measured not only within the proximity. Audiences are now becoming co-producers rather than just readers as assumed in traditional communication theories. Moreover, as well as the issue of time and continuity, proximity must be redefined in the world of new media, an era that no longer has time limitations or physical boundaries.

While Galtung and Ruge (1965) used the audience's point of view in selecting news, Gans (1980) puts key points to be considered before writing a news story from a news media perspective. Journalistic practice deals with the exclusion of values and an ideology in an attempt of being objective and while including certain values related to story selection or what is referred to as 'news judgment'. Schrag (1974, cited in Gans,

1980) states that “every reporter operates with certain assumptions about what constitutes normative behaviour, if not the good society, and the more ‘objective’ he tries to be, the more likely those assumptions will remain concealed” (p. 182). In other words, what should be excluded are journalists' conscious personal values. The effort to eliminate these values is not only a goal, but also a practical consideration because journalists must defend themselves against actual or possible criticism, as well as influential critics of censorship and self-censorship.

Gans (1980) states that journalists are exempt from including enduring values such as national values. These values are usually built into news judgment unconsciously when journalists are asked to make preference statements about a nation and society. The preference is stated because, when selecting a story, journalists should tell the readers what they perceive to be essential information. However, the aim of indicating choice is not ideological. Therefore, journalists still leave conscious values out of their story through the practice of objectivity, the contempt of implications, and the rejection of ideology, particularly the ideology of the political elites or stakeholders, which is sometimes difficult to avoid.

Maintaining absolute objectivity and excluding conscious values may also be challenging due to the conditions of the new media era. Journalists' objectivity is blurred by the existence of an active audience who participates in news production. Arguably, the interactivity and technological aspects of new media development affect existing news values. News organisations must adjust their values to anticipate a blurred border between audience and the newsroom, particularly in the practice of curation journalism, where the audience's voice is of the newsmaker.

## **1.5 Identifying Curation Journalism in News Stories**

Based on the ethical perspective presented in Section 1.4, it is understandable if there have been doubts about embracing public participation as citizen journalism into ‘real’ journalistic practice. One of the reasons for these doubts is the discipline of verification and the sensitiveness in quoting public opinion as news material. Thurman and Schapals (2016) observe that bloggers and citizen journalists seldom take other people’s statements or cite other people’s name within their stories: “live blogs—

despite allowing the relatively easy integration of social media, such as tweets—actually quote citizen and activist sources less frequently (on a per word basis) than both traditional online articles and print articles” (p. 289). Arguably, this method allows citizen journalists (who are not protected by press law) to cover their work without needing to create disputes with others. These journalists concentrate on their own statements, meaning that there will be no allegations regarding copyright violation.

How is curation journalism conducted by traditional online media? Based on observations of a number of online media outlets, particularly those that include the public voice in their news stories, there seems to be a tendency to not just quote statements from the field and social media. These journalists are careful to include credentials in every statement taken from social media, and some even embed the original link of the quote to allow readers to see the original post directly on the source's social media account.

Similar to the definition presented of curation journalism earlier in this chapter, McAdams (2008) states that curation can be seen as a movement and method of crowdsourcing. Therefore, curation journalism is both a journalistic technique for gathering information and essential in presenting the story. When discussing an information gathering technique, it may not be possible see the form of curation in a physical body of news. Curation is similar to journalists already do, namely seeking information from a number of sources. The results of the curation process are seen when the audience reads complete news published in mainstream media outlets. However, readers may not immediately recognize whether the journalist has used curation techniques or not, unless they are shown or explicitly mentioned in the story.

Guallar and Levia-Aguilera (2013, cited in Guallar, 2014) suggest a model to describe the process of curation journalism. This model is the 4Ss and describes content curation's process in four sequential phases, namely searching, selecting, sense making, and sharing. The phases of searching and selecting refer to journalists' efforts to conduct information management to find relevant material. This process is something that journalists have always done for a long time for documentation purposes.

The third S, namely the sense-making phase, requires creativity from journalists because it involves the process of ensuring that the relationship between curated material and the news content makes sense. Here, the curator adds context and value to the curated content. This phase is discussed from the beginning of this thesis as a characteristic of curation that distinguishes from aggregation activity.

The final stage, namely the sharing phase, is the activity that is crucial in the practice of curation journalism. This phase is where journalists use online communication to engage in dialogue with audiences who are increasingly active in participating in news production. In the practice, a news product that involves curated content from public statements originating from social media, will illustrate involvement by displaying relevant links.

Based on this model, specifically the final S, it is clear that the most obvious implementation of curation journalism is seen in how media outlets present their news visually. Therefore, this thesis determines two methods of identification to evaluate whether a journalist has conducted curation journalism or not. The first method is when a journalist puts an identical copy of the social media content, including a live hyperlink to the original source, as seen in Figure 1.4.

### Gunman 'blamed Hollande'

A witness told a journalist: "All this is the fault of your president," Les News is reporting:



Hollande is on his way to Bataclan.

Figure 1.4 Example of how the media quotes a whole post of a social media user, including its live hyperlink  
(Source: Fraser & Henderson, 2015)

In using this method, the journalist can be objective and protect their credibility as a news media member because, regardless of the type of content, it is clear that the statement has been made by the social media account's holder.

The second method is when the journalist chose not to clearly display public statements, whether from social media or other online sources, as part of the news manuscript he or she made. For example, the journalist may choose to include public contributions indirectly. In this case, the journalist rewrites the original statement and then put the source's account name or the social media platform's name as the credential. This alternative is usually easily found in a news visual display, as shown by the example in Figure 1.5.

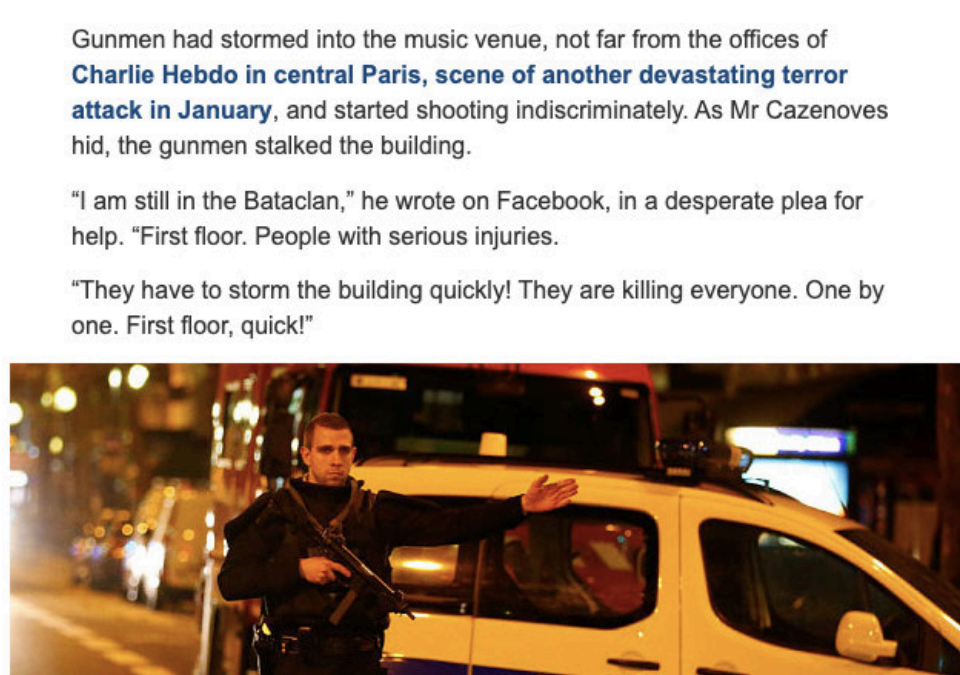


Figure 1.5 Example of how the media quotes social media content by rewriting it  
(Source: Fraser & Henderson, 2015)

The second alternative is more difficult to identify and occurs when the journalist does not include the original link and does not rewrite the story, though the journalist did perform the curation process when collecting information. For this second alternative, the researcher cannot directly identify the practice of curation because there is no overt

evidence. Therefore, further research is required that conducts interviews with and observations of relevant media outlets.

These two ways of identifying curation are major focus in this thesis, and the study aims to scrutinise visual differences between Western media news and Indonesian platforms. A more detailed discussion of the news presentation format in the curation journalism era is presented in Chapter Two.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to discuss issues concerning the social functions of journalism and professionalism, which are critical in understanding the practice of curation journalism as a gatekeeping process. The chapter opened with the introduction the practice of curation and the debate on its professional position in the democracy. Key points were presented, including the notions of professionalism, ethics, and news values to describe the uniqueness of journalistic skills in determining newsworthiness.

Because the primary concern of this study is to examine the position of curation journalism within journalism studies, it is necessary to emphasise that the practice is an enhancement of the so-called gatekeeping process in traditional mass communication. Some points in gatekeeping and gatewatching have raised discussion of how the media and audiences are blended in terms of their functions and role, in that the audiences are also editors to some extent. This chapter highlighted the identical purposes of gatekeeping and curating that are significant in journalistic practice, particularly in selecting and determine valuable information amongst a variety of scattered sources.

This chapter generated a concise definition of ‘curation’ that applies to this study in order to establish a more explicit curation journalism standpoint. The term was defined as a journalist seeking, selecting, and publishing dispersed information on social media into a news story with a specific theme and context. The definition sees curation journalism as both a method of gathering information and a unique visual display that enhances regular news stories with curated content.

The issue of journalism as a profession has also been presented to discuss journalism's position and importance in the society that it serves. The reason for raising this issue in this chapter is the belief that professionalism is a crucial state of journalism that must be maintained because profession in new media era is challenged by the existence of citizen journalism and social media. The idea is actually contested by the perspective that considers journalism the business or trade of information, as stated by Marr (2004), who describes professionalism in British journalism from a pessimistic perspective. This chapter provided opinions from other researchers that offer professionalism characteristics that, fit with journalism's position in a democratic society in a broader context.

The existence of ethical guidelines such as a code of ethics has brought journalism to a more stable position as a profession. This chapter compared documented ethical guides from three different countries, including Indonesia, to compare similarities and differences. Having examined these documents, this chapter argued that the core principles of ethics guide are the same. Regardless of the differences in terms or notions as the result of different contexts in each country, these codes emphasise the necessity of publishing only fact, the loyalty to the public's needs, and the discipline of verifying information. These emphases support the suggestion that, even though there is no formal documentation of the universal journalistic code of ethics, the same principles are applicable around the world.

The existing code of ethics, which is based on the traditional format of journalism, may not work for the present new media era. However, the basic principles of these ethics remain the same and relevant today. This chapter also presented the idea of *Elements of Journalism*, which may fit with the existing code of ethics around the world today, particularly in the social context of journalism due to the development of online and social media.

The same may also occur in the discussion of news values, which becomes important in stating how journalists decide which parts of an event are newsworthy. Since there are millions of events that happen every day, journalists must produce a set of selected facts from a small portion of these millions. Having discussed the news values presented by Galtung and Ruge, as well as the notion of news judgment stated by



Gans, it may be concluded that existing theories are difficult to argue, even in the practice of online journalism, which provides more space for the public's involvement in news production. However, theories are based on the traditional news format. Some points, arguably, should be adjusted in the era of online communication to align with the discussion of curation journalism.

This chapter also present main problem of this thesis, which is whether or not news companies in Indonesia have practiced curation journalism in the same way that international media does. Therefore, researching the visual composition of online news is necessary. The formulation of the 4Ss model from Guallar and Levia-Aguilera and the definition of curation from several other studies are the basis of this research. This chapter then proposed two ways of identifying the application of curation journalism. The first of these ways involves seeing the direct involvement of curated public voices in news visual displays, and the second involves examining the process of gathering information carried out by journalists through interviews and observations when the visual display of the news does not clearly demonstrate the application of curation practices.

To summarise, this chapter found that the practice of curation journalism has become a key component of current issues in journalistic studies. Consequently, curation journalism should be viewed within the fundamental principle of journalism. However, the principle itself should be adjusted to the current conditions of journalism, which now have a more social function due to technological developments and increased public participation.

Moreover, research on the nature of new media journalism in Indonesia is limited. In fact, there is, to date, no significant study on the impact of curation journalism in Indonesia. Therefore, it is the objective of this thesis to fill the research gap by investigating the practice of curation journalism in the Indonesian online journalism industry. In order to emphasise the significance of the study, the next chapter begins a discussion of online journalism in Indonesia, specifically its relationships with the significant developments in social media communication in the country.



# Chapter Two

## Curation Journalism in the Development of Indonesian Online Media

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how social media has created a more interactive environment, which makes the information exchange process more accessible than it was in the past. This change has affected the relationship between journalists and the audience, particularly in online journalism, because it may increase the audience's involvement in the process of news production.

This development of interactivity strengthens the optimistic perspective on the use of online technology in journalism, as discussed in Chapter One, which looks at it as a vital element in surviving the competition of contemporary media. Because of technological developments and the shift in communication preferences, media companies are obliged to move their business from the traditional sphere to online. Besides the business consideration, this move is also advantageous for the development of democracy because people have a greater chance of being heard and acknowledged. This chapter notes an increase in public participation in journalism amongst mainstream news media industries. The user-generated content (UGC), as well as social media, has become an alternative channel for the public retrieve and distribute information. Traditional media must deal with the trend of a networked newsroom, which, for some observers, is the gate to granting the public more space in the news production process (Kolodzy, 2012; Witschge, 2012).

This chapter offers a discussion of the specific situation in Indonesia and is based on the assumption that public participation has already been developed in Indonesia. The media in Indonesia has begun to use the public as contributors or stringers through their social media accounts, which arguably has the potential to bring audiences' activity in a more "controlled" environment without losing the essence of

democratisation. This public involvement of the public is where curation journalism actually applies, which this thesis argues is also occurring in Indonesia.

Regardless of the development of the public participation and curation journalism, a number of issues in Indonesia have hindered the widespread use of online media. Firstly, the optimism surrounding social media involvement in journalism has not been ubiquitous in Indonesia. There are concerns from both the media and the public about the credibility and quality of citizens' voices. Therefore, although some editors and media owners are technological optimists, many of the media stakeholders, including journalists, do not consider social media content an appropriate news source. As a result, some media companies still pursue traditional journalism.

To some extent, the conditions in Indonesia are a consequence of the fragile process of democratisation, as well as the practice of freedom of expression in Indonesia. Regardless of the openness that Indonesian citizens have in expressing their thoughts on social media, what they say on social media is not considered valuable in the media industry. As a consequence, many social media users only write about insignificant issues from daily life rather than contributing useful information to the public. Therefore, it may be argued that Indonesians have not used social media to fully support democracy.

Respect towards the freedom of expression in Indonesia is why reality seems to contradict the statistics. The data shows that Indonesians have high usage of social media and the Internet (Kemp, 2016, 2017). However, a high level of activity does not reflect the high quality of information, which creates hesitation to use the contents as news materials. This contradiction is caused by a specific communication culture of Indonesians that relates to their habits and the collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2011; Mulayana, 2017, cited in Rudi, 2017) and orality (Ong, 2002), which influence the ways in which the public shares information on social media. This unique characteristic has prevented the uptake of social media use in journalism.

Another issue is that Indonesians are arguably still influenced by traditional communication values. Theoretically, the Indonesian cultural style of communication, in general, can be included in what was popularised by Hall (1981) as "high-context culture". As observed by Jandt (1995), most of the information in high-context

cultures is rarely explicitly seen as part of the message (pp. 201-205). People in these cultures are more sensitive to non-verbal messages, which makes them more likely to provide a context and let a point evolve in the communication process. Therefore, it is uncommon for Indonesians to use straightforward communication to express their opinion towards others, particularly in direct interpersonal communication.

This style of communication may exist because most of the Indonesian public has been living in a collective society, which may be described as a cultural custom whereby people are concerned with maintaining harmonious relationships with one another, meaning that they resist being too opinionated in direct communication (Sihombing and Pongtuluran, 2011).

As well as collectivism, another customer has characterised Indonesian habits when distributing information. Deddy Mulyana, Indonesian Professor of Communication Studies, states that Indonesia had missed the literary tradition before entering the era of new media. In other words, Indonesia does not have a developed literary tradition. Therefore, much of the population of Indonesia cannot be trusted as reliable sources, particularly on social media. Mulyana states the following: “Information from digital media suddenly overwhelms people who do not like to read. Because of their essential character as an oral community, they usually share information instantly without further verification” (Mulyana, 2017, cited in Rudi, 2017).

As discussed later in Section 2.6, collectivism in communications, as well as the oral culture, dominates Indonesians' information exchange. However, people from this culture are not used to supporting information with reliable data or evidence. This communication mode affects the way in which Indonesians share information within their online social network.

Indonesia is also a relative newcomer to democratic society and freedom of expression as the result of a long-term repressive government regime from 1965 to 1998. Therefore, most Indonesians are hesitant when sharing their opinion. These cultural characteristics may be why curation journalism on Indonesian online media is different from what usually appears on international news networks or Western media.

It is interesting to see the contradiction between the statistical data on social media activity and cultural communication factors that delay democratisation. This thesis uses this contradiction as a fundamental in understanding the meaning of curation journalism and public participation from the perspective of Indonesian journalists. Another crucial point is the fact that Indonesian online media uses a different method of curation, which is shown in the way that journalists create stories for online media publications. There are a number of differences between quoting people's voices or social media contents in Indonesian online media and international news networks.

The current development of online media and the relationships between actors in the practice of journalism, particularly differences between and uniqueness of the Indonesian online journalism in terms of public participation, are at the core of this chapter. To begin the discussion in the Indonesian context, this chapter initially describes the use of social media content as a journalistic product. Following the practical explanation, this chapter continues to discuss the nature and development of online journalism, outlining the various characteristics and the ways in which they may have changed the traditional values of journalism in this new media era. This discussion includes a section mapping the shift of codes and principles that occur in the changes of journalistic practice. Arguably, there are different types of online journalism, which means that it may be necessary adjust traditional journalistic principles.

The discussion related to Indonesian culture, particularly concerning the unique characteristics of online communication behaviour, follow the previous discussion. This section argues that Indonesian people still hold traditional values and describes the specific circumstances of Indonesian people's activity in online correspondence. Technological improvements to web-based social networking and the concurrent administration in the broad communications industry has brought a higher quality of interactivity, which enhances dynamic environment among audiences and makes them more confident when publishing their voices. This interactivity should increase audiences' participation in the news process. However, as discussed in Section 2.6, Indonesia is unique in how it involves public voices compared to what can be seen on international news networks. Essential differences are discussed in this chapter to gain

an understanding of how Indonesian online media uses the development of public participation and the practice of curation journalism.

## **2.2 Social Media Content and Public Voices in Online News**

The significant impact of online communication development on journalism has been a global phenomenon; the Internet has brought significant changes to the process of gathering and distributing news. As McQuail (2013) comments, the Internet has brought journalism “an explosion of new outlets and types of journalism”, which allows people usually regarded as playing insignificant roles within society to express and form an opinion and act as critics (p. 177). This involvement of the public has changed the general culture of journalism. New media technology has affected the hierarchy in the newsroom, and editors, reporters, and sources communicate in a new way. The change has also attracted advertisers to renew their efforts to look for inexpensive ways of spreading their message. In other words, the changes in economic, regulatory, and technological structures within the practice of journalism in new media era have transformed the relationships between journalists and their employers, the audience, their sources, and other journalists (Lee-Wright, Phillips, & Witschge, 2012, pp. 149-150).

The acquaintanceship between journalists and the Internet began in the early 1990s. Journalists began to use e-mail, intranet, newsletters, and basic information sites (Bradshaw and Rohumaa, 2011). Siapera and Veglis (2012) note that the first development of the website occurred in 1993 after the launch of Mosaic, the popular first web browser (p. 1). The Journalism Department at the University of Florida used the browser initially to publish information, though it was only a static website updated only occasionally on nights and weekends. The greater involvement of the Internet in journalism followed in November 1994 after the UK's Daily Telegraph launched the Electronic Telegraph. As Siapera and Veglis (2012) observe, a similar static page contained articles one on top of the other as an online publication that would follow the print publishing version. This kind of page is considered the beginning of online journalism history and can be considered as “the creation of a new kind of journalism that has changed the face of journalism forever” (Siapera & Veglis, 2012, p. 1).

Siapera and Veglis (2012) observe that the development of online journalism has been dealing with the slow adoption of the Internet's features of 'hyperlinking, interactivity, and multimediality' from traditional media, as well as the radical shift toward the participatory web and social media, which brings the audience to a new position in the news production (pp. 1-2). The initial hesitancy of the early journalistic online media to employ these features was eventually substituted with the freer use by the public, particularly with the emergence of blogs, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts. As Witschge (2012) states, within the growth of these technologies, audiences have increasingly become part of the journalistic process. Hence, it is difficult to envisage exclusively offline journalism in this new media era.

Currently, people's activities on social media have created an open, democratic system because it is possible for anyone to create reports about anything. The ability of social channels to quickly approach essential events in the public's daily life has meant that it is able to publish crucial information more quickly than journalists of mainstream media. Consequently, journalists must use this information by taking or quoting it as part of their story. In other words, social media users have unofficially become the media's stringers, contributors, and field reporters.

The increase of public participation in online journalism has occurred as a global phenomenon. Observations of online news formats in some international news networks such as *CNN*, *BBC*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, as well as national news enterprises in Indonesia, emphasise that there is a new trend in storytelling structure involving more common people's voices. Arguably, this factor supports the emerging of curation journalism, where journalists are using social media content to tell a story. The structure is arguably a significant challenge to traditional news storytelling styles since the media now involves their audiences as a part of the news producer by embedding social media comments into the story.

The public's involvement in news production occurred when the media was covering a major public event, an incident with significant casualties, or live crisis updates. The coverage of the "Paris Attack" in 2015 is an ideal example. As Figure 2.1 shows, The Guardian provided a live report with minute-to-minute updates during the crisis, using social media posts from the public close to the incident.





Figure 2.1 An example of the "Paris Attacks" live report that contains minute-to-minute updates, including those that came from public posts on social media, published by The Guardian  
(Source: Phipps and Rawlinson 2015)

As seen in the example in Figure 2.1, which became increasingly longer because of the updates, most of the content came from the public who posted amateur live reporting through social media channels such as Twitter, Periscope, YouTube, and Facebook. The editor would have to select social media content from among thousands of posts on the same issue to create comprehensive, sequential storytelling. This effort is evidence of how journalists curate. Curation journalism was used for this study because the reporters did not just collect the information from the public, but also add context and place the public's voices in a recognisable narrative structure that would be consumed by the audience.

Furthermore, as seen in Figure 2.2, there is also a trend on online media of embedding people's voices on social media into the body of the story. This news format is commonly found in many online media platforms. However, having observed the

news format on international news networks and compared them with the Indonesian online media as the prime subject of this research, there are key differences in the Indonesian storytelling structure.

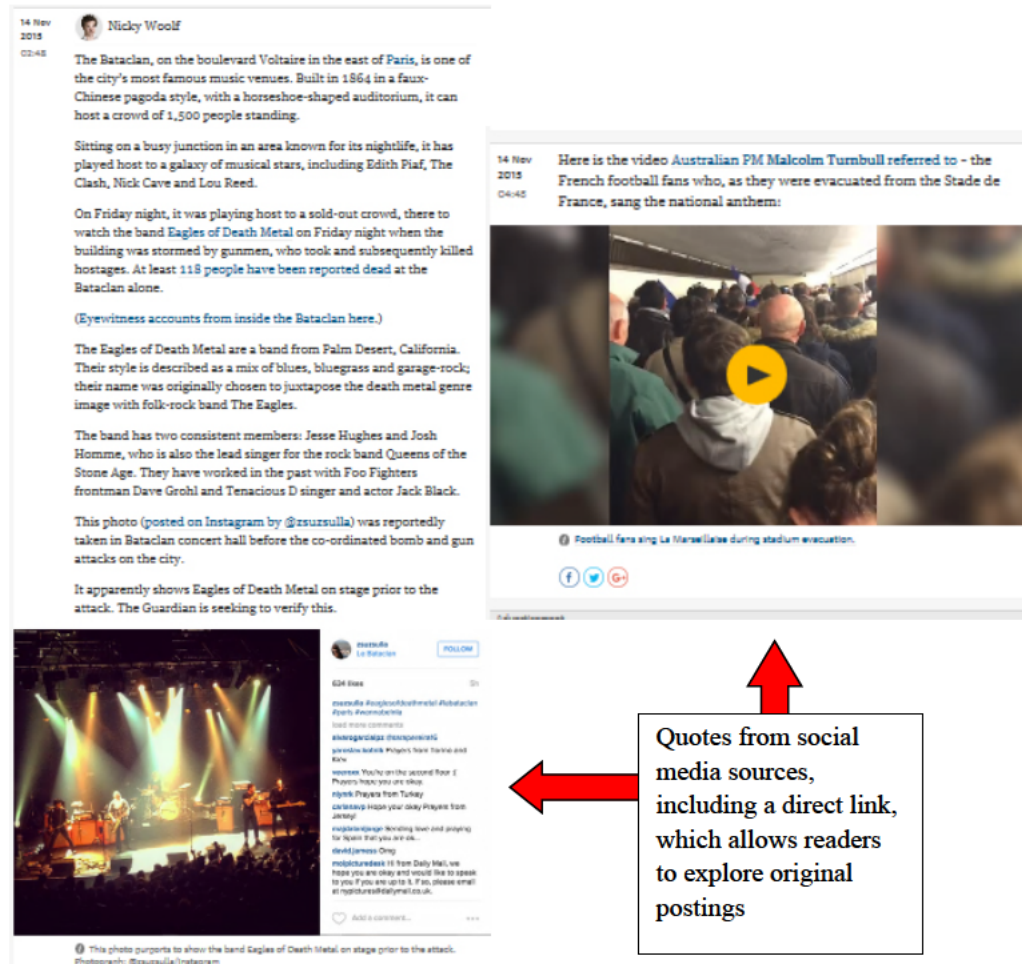


Figure 2.2 Examples of social media posts used as part of a storytelling structure, published by *The Guardian* on the “Paris Attacks” live report (Source: Phipps and Rawlinson, 2015)

As can be seen in Figures 2.3 and 2.4, Indonesian media has used curation journalism by collecting amateur documentation from non-journalist. However, the storytelling structure is similar to the traditional format seen in newspapers. These differences may imply different perspectives on using curation journalism in Indonesia. Examples in Figure 2.3 and 2.4 clarify this point.



Figure 2.3 An example of “Paris Attacks” report on Tempo.co, an Indonesian online newspaper with embedded video documentation from the public but more traditional interview citation style  
Source: Tempo 2015

The two parts of the Tempo.co in Figure 2.3 show public statements that are rewritten as traditional interview excerpts. The first part is a statement from the Deputy Mayor of Paris Patrick Klugman, who commented on the possibility of increasing the number of victims. The second box shows a statement from radio reporter Julien Pearce, who described the situation on the ground when shots were heard. This excerpt is similar to traditional journalistic practices in newspapers. In fact, journalists are likely to obtain these statements from posts on social media.

The image shows a screenshot of a news article on Viva.co.id titled "Saksi Tragedi Paris: 10 Menit yang Mematikan!". The article is dated Wednesday, November 2, 2015, at 10:55 WIB. The main headline is "Saksi Tragedi Paris: 10 Menit yang Mematikan!". Below the headline is a photo of a street scene in Paris at night, with people running and a red car. The article text includes a quote from a witness on Rue Bichat, which is attributed to the *Daily Mail*. Another quote is from a radio reporter from Europe 1, Julien Pierce, who is also attributed to *Tempo.co*. The article is annotated with two boxes and arrows. The first box, labeled "The traditional interview format seen in newspapers", points to the quote from the witness on Rue Bichat. The second box, also labeled "The traditional interview format seen in newspapers", points to the quote from the radio reporter Julien Pierce. The article also includes a "PILIHAN REDAKSI" section with three items: "Nama Hotel Alexis Sudah Lengah dari Jakarta", "Cerita Seno Mencari Bunya di Publik Maroon yang Maledak", and "Kelompok Bersenjata Papua Perkosa Penduduk di Malam Hari".

**Saksi Tragedi Paris: 10 Menit yang Mematikan!**

BERITA > DUNIA  
Sabtu, 04 November 2015 | 10:55 WIB

**PILIHAN REDAKSI**

- Nama Hotel Alexis Sudah Lengah dari Jakarta
- Cerita Seno Mencari Bunya di Publik Maroon yang Maledak
- Kelompok Bersenjata Papua Perkosa Penduduk di Malam Hari

**"Saya mendengar suara ledakan-ledakan. Saya berbalik dan saya melihat situasi dengan topi muncul dari balik pintu. Ia mulai menembak ke arah saya. Orang mulai berjatuh dan melemparkan diri ke tanah," kata salah seorang saksi yang berada di Gedung Konser Bataclan, Rue Bichat seperti dilansir *Daily Mail*.**

**ARTIKEL TERPOPULER**

- Kelompok Bersenjata Penduduk di R...
- Nama Hotel Alex...
- Cerita Seno Mencari Bunya di Publik Maroon yang Maledak
- Kuartal III 2015, Asas Bank BJB Tambus Rp14,2 Triliun

**Eks Pakarja Penelitian: Menebak Kalau**

**"Ini pertumpahan darah. Orang-orang berteriak, semua tiarap ke lantai. Penyerangan hanya 10 menit, tetapi mengerikan. Orang-orang tiarap, sambil melindungi kepala dan tangan," kata Pierce.**

Ia mengaku mendengar banyak tembakan dan pelaku melakukannya dengan begitu tenang. Bahkan, sang penembak sempat mengisi senjata tiga hingga empat kali. "Mereka tidak berteriak apa pun. Mereka tidak mengatakan apa pun," katanya.

Figure 2.4 Example of "Paris Attacks" report in Viva.co.id, another Indonesian online media, with a similar news format to Tempo.co's story (Source: Pribadi 2015)

In Figure 2.4, the first box shows a quotation from witness Rue Bichat, in which it is apparent that the reporter from Viva.co.id actually did not interview the person directly. The statement was taken from the news reported by the *Daily Mail*. However, instead of displaying the original form accompanied by a link, Viva.co.id prefers to write it as a single interview quote in the same way as a newspaper would. The same is also true of the second box, which displays a statement from the same radio reporter quoted by *Tempo.co*.

The most unique characteristics of these articles include that Indonesian journalists did not directly quote public's voices as they appeared on the user's social media account. Instead, the journalist reproduced the quotes by interpreting their voices. In



other words, Indonesian journalists are not letting the public speak for themselves. However, in stories published by international new networks, journalists are willing to embed public voices in their original format and with links included. Furthermore, it appears that then Indonesian media prefers to publish numerous short articles rather than a long story with minute-to-minute updates as usually is done by international news media.

There may be many causes for these differences; however, they may be the result of how people in various nations respect the presence of online technology. Significantly, it is important to investigate the nature of technology in society to understand people's behaviour. The following section discusses in further detail the fundamental principle of online communication, as well as its characteristics in terms of journalistic practice.

## **2.3 The Nature of Online Journalism**

A significant factor that influences the nature of online journalism is the nature of the Internet itself. One unique condition of online journalism not prevalent in traditional journalism is interactivity, in which journalists and the audiences can exchange information efficiently. As Bradshaw and Rohumaa (2011) observe, interactivity offered by Internet technology has made it possible for anyone to bypass information powerbrokers, newspaper proprietors, network executives, media moguls, and journalists to independently share and verify information. By sharing information through online channels, people who used to be members of the passive audience could now defy received news and publish their own version of the story. This media revolution following emergence of interactive online web channels has meant that “anyone can broadcast 24/7 to the world; share and exchange information in real time; challenge vested interests and even defy censorship” (Bradshaw and Rohumaa, 2011, p. 5).

Bradshaw and Rohumaa (2011) highlight the reality for members of society who are already involved in new media communication culture, which I argue is also the condition of Indonesia. Interactivity should become the primary concern of mass media platforms that operate online. It is difficult to imagine there are still offline media exist at this stage of new media development because there exist a number of

alternative channels embedded with newspapers' publication or broadcasting programmes, which allow the audience to retrieve information from traditional news sources and expand on their experiences by accessing the provided online links.

In an attempt to explain the shift of traditional mass media to the online industry in the international development, some examples from the UK and the US may be used. The first instance in the UK was the emergence of an online version of The Daily Telegraph in 1994. This online publication was followed by the establishment of The Guardian's New Media Lab in September 1995 to support 'the proposed electronic publication of the Guardian and Observer', which became an initiation of theguardian.com today (The Guardian, 2017). Some other media companies followed the development, including the BBC. Meanwhile, in the US, traditional newspapers still have unique-value schemes that confirm their long-term future because they provide low-cost, comprehensive news (Steffens, 2006, pp. 7-10).

However, the Internet provides the technology that allows journalists to report up-to-the-minute news on their online publication. Most newspapers today in the US are accompanied by an online edition, such as the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, USA Today, and the New York Times. In fact, online news has become a central source of information for major breaking news and political information. For example, in 2004, approximately 63 million Americans went online for news or information about the elections; as observed by Friend and Singer (2007), more than half said that the contents of the online publication they accessed have helped them decide how to vote (p. 32). This example shows how information shared online has a major influence on public's life today, where people are freer and active to choose relevant information from a variety of online sources.

A positive review of online journalism comes from technological determinists, such as Curran or Örnebring. As quoted by Witschge (2012), Curran has been analysing the way in which journalists report on new media technologies and found a belief that "the new technology would prevail and determine outcomes" (p. 99). From this perspective, new media technology has been considered a leading factor in journalistic practice. Journalists who use online technology consider it as a valuable aspect that helps the practice achieve more positive results. The effect of technology is inevitable;

journalists believe that it would bring valuable changes to the practice journalism. This opinion is typically the perspective of technological determinists that technology has the power to change society. Örnebring also makes comments on the role of new media technology in journalistic practice:

When asked to reflect on the changes taking place within their profession and the world of news media in general, journalists frequently invoke technology as a self-sufficient explanatory factor. Journalists, in general, seem to view technology and technological development as inevitable, impersonal forces that directly cause many of the changes taking place within journalism. ... In the minds of journalists, many if not most of the changes taking place in contemporary journalism are essentially *technology driven*. (Witschge, pp. 99-100)

Witschge (2017) found identical results in her research on journalism and technology. The term 'technology-driven' is not only about the change in journalistic practice, but also concerned with the changing audience, which has become more fragmented in the era of online journalism. New media technologies are considered a crucial factor in responding to the change. Witschge (2017) underlines arguments to explain the implementation of new media technology:

First, there is an imminent threat to journalism. ... Second, the audiences are going online (and journalists need to chase them). Third, moving to new platforms and 'embracing' new media technologies are the only ways to follow the audiences. (p. 100)

These three arguments mainly refer to the condition of current news media business in the world, where the existence of interactive new media challenges the business of mainstream media. One of these factors is the growth of online advertisements, which increasingly dominates the flow of the media.

Arguably, this situation also occurs in developing countries in Asia. For example, in India, although online advertising has not yet surpassed newspaper and television revenue, there has been significant growth. Jain (2015) observes that advertising online has rapidly begun to provide a promising income. Between 2009 and 2012, for instance, the statistical data show that the value of advertising on the Internet is growing significantly, up to 50 per cent per annum (Jain, 2015, p. 157).

My argument is similar to that of Witschge (2012), who believes that the threat that we are witnessing today is the result of advanced technologies that have moved the

power of the newsmaker from journalists to the audience (p. 117). As Kolodzy (2012) observes, audiences' consumption behaviour, particularly among younger consumers, has been shifting from subscribing to newspapers and news magazines or watching the network evening newscasts to texting, Skype, YouTube, instant messaging, Storify, and news aggregators such as Google News and Facebook (p. 1).

Kolodzy's observation emphasises this paper's point that modern audiences are more independent in finding information alone. From an American perspective, Steffens (2006) also sees the current trend of audience's preference, in which radio is now primarily a "music and talk" medium, television is dominated by entertainment, and the number of American daily subscribers has declined as audiences are moving to more personal, local information sources (pp. 7-10).

Witschge (2012) suggests a further argument on the involvement of technological developments in the news industry. Because the drive comes from the audience, she argues that it is managerial policy to campaign for the implementation of organisational change in the newsrooms that have successfully attached technology to the progress of news production. As a result, embracing technology is the only means of surviving in the current news media climate. By putting the issue in the organisational change, as Witschge argues, reorganisations in the newsroom have been accepted without much resistance from the news organisation's members (p. 117).

Allan (2010) expresses his interest in the implications of so-called 'cyberspace' for journalism, citing essay by the managing director of *Time*, Gaines (1995), which outlines the enterprise's decision to go online in the early days of online journalism. Gaines calls this shift the 'cyberrevolution', emphasising the need to introduce *Time* to new media forms. This decision would also draw on the readiness of the magazine's human resources to embrace a new way of journalism. As Gaines (1995, cited in Allan, 2010) observes, "our editors, writers and correspondents have been familiarising themselves with yet another new journalistic venue: the ongoing exchange of real-time computer messages with our readers – friend and foe alike" (p. 14).

In this statement, Allan (2010) emphasises that the information flow in the era of cyberspace is no longer a 'one-way street'; it is now a reciprocal communication,



where journalists could anticipate receiving readers' feedback directly on a regular basis. Allan sees, at the moment of *Time* magazine's cyberrevolution in 1995, new awareness was being gradually reshaped over traditional rules and conventions from journalistic practice. As Allan observes, the debates over conventional concepts of journalism in cyberspace were taking up their places (pp. 14-15). Arguably, these debates have led to a discussion of more active audiences as experienced by the news media industry today. These arguments strongly support the significant impact of technology on journalistic practice.

A media organisation's movement from traditional methods to online-based practice is inevitable and ubiquitous because advanced technology allows the media to respond to audiences' requirement of interactivity. The arguments are now strengthening the technological determinist perspective, which places technology as an ultimate factor in surviving media competition in new media era.

This enthusiasm has also been expressed John Pavlik, the chair of the Journalism and Media Studies program at Rutgers University, who is also known as a new media observer. Pavlik (n.d., cited in Friend and Singer, 2007) observes that what is now considered online journalism is entering a new financially feasible stage in which the way that it distributes information "is finally finding the beginnings of sustained economic support". In a publicly known e-mail to the authors, he wrote the following:

In the early days of online journalism, there was necessarily no business model. This condition made it extremely challenging for news organisations to make a lasting commitment to providing original reporting online, especially featuring interactive components. Now, as more online news organisations find financial support through the growth of online advertising and premium services, they are developing increased original online news coverage. The importance of this from an ethical perspective is it means online journalism can provide extensive coverage of important news events (Pavlik, cited in Friend and Singer, 2007, p. 32).

Pavlik's comments on the business aspect of new media journalism align with current circumstances, where world-leading media survives thanks to the use of technology. This condition may be why contemporary news media has attempted to maintain the new culture of the newsroom in a convergent environment. Besides the financial benefits that all companies aim to obtain the media also needs to strengthen its capacity in covering news and providing accessible information.

Another essential issue in the new media culture is the increased level of interactivity. Because of Web 2.0 technology, the relationship between media and their audiences is fluid and more social than before. The media is not only building an open gate between the newsroom and the public, but also engaging public participation in enriching their stories. The enhancements of the gatekeeping process show existing media engagement. Gatekeeping is used not only to select input from reporters or the public who send news materials to the newsroom, but also to filter information that already exists on social media that is shared and ready to be used for a story.

This development is a challenge to traditional journalistic values. Traditionally, it is believed that the position of journalists when they do their job in the field can be argued to be representatives of the public. As observed by McQuail (n.d., cited in Heinonen, 2011), traditional mass media has tended to resist a more active audience in the editorial process by controlling access as well as limiting participation and dialogue (p. 36). However, many forms of reciprocal contributions among the people with whom the media consider as their receptive audiences have emerged. This interactive structure of communication within digital media has redefined the relationship between journalists and the audience. Moreover, journalists' professional role inevitably must be reinterpreted.

## **2.4 The Influence of Public Participation on Journalism**

The active participation of the audience in journalistic practice has been characterised by the involvement of individuals passionate about contributing to the news. This participation is the movement of the public who have switched their role as media audiences into news producers. Ordinary citizens, who, according to the understanding of traditional journalism, are considered passive recipients of the journalists' products, have become writers who can publish their own news on social media. Moreover, in the discussion of curation journalism, these people have even become the source to be quoted by mainstream journalists.

As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, many practitioners and scholars have given many names to the movement, such as grassroots journalism, participatory journalism, or even networked journalism related to the use of online social

networking (Allan and Thorsen, 2009, p. 18; Singer *et al.*, 2011, p. 2). The final term is often also associated with the 'user-generated content' (UGC), which is closely connected to the use of social media applications (M. Knight dan Cook, 2013, pp. 1-3). However, the most popular term at the moment is 'citizen journalism', which often opens debate between public movement supporters and professionals.

Regardless of the debate over professionalism, it can be historically observed that this movement has begun to obtain global attention due to the popularity of online communication via the Internet and has become influential in crisis reporting. One of the phenomenal milestones was after the tsunami in South Asia at the end of December 2004. As M. Knight and Cook (2013) note, this incident was a critical time for the development of citizen journalism being recognised as one of the new features of the journalistic landscape. During the disaster, personal video footage from camcorders and photographs from mobile and digital cameras were produced by ordinary citizens on the spot and were mostly published on blogs and personal websites (p. 3).

Similarly, Allan (2010) used data from Technorati.com, which suggests that, over the first three days after the tsunami event, around 55,000 personal posts related to the disaster appeared in blogs, with tens of thousands following afterwards (pp. 7-8). The mainstream journalism's news coverage then took these postings. Allan (2010) argues that news organisations experienced difficulties because they must depend on 'amateur' materials for moments that they might not capture without the work of the sources on the ground (p. 18).

In 2006, following the growth of the citizen journalism movement, Allan quoted a statement of the BBC's Director of Global News, Richard Sambrook, who admitted that, in Western and democratic countries such as the UK, “news organisations do not own the news anymore” (Allan, 2010, p. 169). Journalists and media can still perform validation, analysis, and explanation of information and tell the audience where to find what they need to know. Nevertheless, “they [news organisations] no longer control or decide what the public know. It is a major restructuring of the relationship between public and media” (Allan, 2010, p. 169). Therefore, the media might respect the public's power to choose the information. However, this consideration could be

different in developing countries with special conditions of ownership and control such as Indonesia.

Despite the differences across some countries, the development of the citizen movement has been strongly influenced by the rapid growth of social media communication, where materials can be quickly exchanged over social networks. The development is also affected by the rapid development of mobile communication technology, which has allowed ordinary citizens to quickly create their own stories about a particular event by using devices such as a smartphone and instantly publish them on their own social network. This system also attracts professional journalists who do not have access to the event location to curate materials.

One example is when Twitter user Stephane Hannache posted an video apparently of the explosions at the Stade de France during the 'Paris Attack' incident; she used her *Periscope* account and immediately gained more than 10,000 viewers (Newman, 2016). This kind of report may be defined as a form of citizen journalism because the materials came directly from the public. However, because the media treated these sources as raw materials to be reproduced and reposted, this citizen report was considered an eyewitness report rather than a citizen's news production.

This example emphasises that mainstream media at the moment currently uses social media to a large extent. Nic Newman from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism observes that, during 2015, the mainstream media significantly converted their news model to adjust to the developments in terms of the new format of publication. These developments cannot be avoided due to the growth of instant publishing services such as *Facebook's Instant Articles*, *Twitter's Moments*, *Apple's News*, *Snapchat's Discover* and *Google's Accelerated Mobile Pages*. Newman predicts that these instant publishing services will contribute significantly to existing news organisations (Newman, 2016).

Several parties have optimistically valued the excitement of involving social media in the news as a revival of the public voice, which made them believe that public participation is positive in democratisation efforts. The advantage is applied to both the public and the journalist. From the perspective of the public, the involvement of social media in journalism has enabled more people to be heard and more voices to be

included (M. Knight and Cook, 2013, p. 3). From the perspective of the journalist, the media benefits from members of the general public reporting on issues that may not be experienced first-hand by journalists (p. 16). This benefit encourages media institutions and regulators to activate new codes of practice and press regulations that include the practice of social media communications. As is discussed in Chapter Three, international media networks such as the Associated Press (AP) and the BBC generated new guidance related to the use of social media in journalism. Therefore, it may be understood that the mainstream media has already embraced the use of social media within their business. The new regulations and guidance are consequences of securing the future of journalism with irresponsible, unreliable information spread on social media. Therefore, mass media must maintain their reputation as trustworthy institutions while continuing to encourage public participation.

However, the benefits of the public's power in journalism have not attracted overwhelming optimism about using social media in journalism. There has been debate about how this practice develops an atmosphere of democracy in terms of professionalism, as discussed in Chapter Two. Aside from the optimistic perspective in democratisation discourse, the materials produced by 'amateur journalists' for some practitioners may lead to the demise of qualified journalism and the end of the professional mainstream media industry.

Regardless of the outcomes of this debate, this thesis argues that public participation in journalism still has a strong influence in shaping the democratic environment, including in Indonesia. What is occurring today in Indonesia, where news organisations have built a strong relationship with their audiences through social media, shows that the phenomenon is sustaining. As discussed in the following chapter, Indonesia has a number of specific characteristics regarding the involvement of public participation in journalism.

## **2.5 Online Journalism in Indonesia**

Before discussing the development of the public involvement in the Indonesian online media, it is essential to see how online media was developed in Indonesia. The rise of the Internet in Indonesia began in the early 1990s. Historically, the Internet at that time

was more popular as the Paguyuban Network (an association of networks) or *PaguyubanNet*. However, the history of online communication began in the 1980s, when a group of academics, students, and scholars ran their hobbies in computer technologies and amateur radio communication (Suseno, 2015).

According to Suseno (2015), networked communication was started by the establishment of the Amateur Radio Club (ARC) at the Bandung Institute of Technology in 1986. Among these amateur radio practitioners was Robby Soebiakto, an expert in building communication through a radio data packet. Soebiakto then became the initiator of TCP/IP technology in Indonesia. The packet with TCP/IP based technology was adopted by fellow scholars, which later became the foundation for *PaguyubanNet* to develop the Internet from 1992-1994. Soebiakto was also a pioneer who connected Indonesia through his radio club with amateur Bulletin Board System (BBS), an e-mail store and forward network system that connected amateur BBS "servers" across the world.

Suseno (2015) argues that network technology was initially used only by *PaguyubanNet*. This association was not considered an Internet Service Provider (ISP) because the technology was not yet provided for public use. The first ISP in Indonesia was called *Ipteknet* ([www.iptek.net.id](http://www.iptek.net.id)) that started operations as a public provider in early 1994. Following this public service, in the same year, *PT.IndoInternet* or *IndoNet* ([www.indo.net.id](http://www.indo.net.id)) initiated operations and became the first commercial ISP in Indonesia.

The establishment of the commercial service attracted a new business method across mass media. Margianto and Syaefullah (2013) state that it is difficult to determine which Indonesian media began the use of the Internet for the business. However, one clear documentation shows the emergence of *Republika Online* ([www.republika.co.id](http://www.republika.co.id)) that published first on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1994 as the online version of *Republika Daily Newspaper*. Following this publication, Margianto and Syaefullah (2013) record the establishment of *tempointeraktif.com* in 1996 by *Tempo Magazine* crews who had lost their job because the repressive government at that time prohibited the magazine. Following this publication, more daily newspaper companies started their websites, such as *Bisnis Indonesia*, *Waspada*, and *Kompas*. This generation was the first that

used online media in Indonesia, which just generally published the digital version of their print newspapers (except *Tempo* *interaktif*, which was no longer available in print version). During this era, the published news on their websites was static, including only read-only images. The Internet technology was also not popular yet, which meant that websites were only display windows and not a business-oriented media.

One of the crucial factors of this new development was in 1998, the moment of Indonesian political reform when the repressive government was ousted. This year became a new era of Indonesian online journalism, with the emergence of *detik.com*. This website may be considered the first online newspaper in Indonesia. Different from the previous newspaper websites that only displayed static images as the digital version of their print news, *detik.com* wrote its news directly on their web with the format of online design (Athiyyah, 2017). This site attracted Budiono Darsono (*detik.com*) to use the opportunity in creating new media that could not be banned by the government to quickly distribute information (Anggoro, 2012).

Without support from the mainstream media, unlike what happened with the first generation of online media, *detik.com* introduced a new style of journalism that was short, simple, and direct. For this reason, in many cases, *detik.com*'s news sometimes was not equipped with elements of the 5W + 1H formula, as is usually required in traditional journalism. Budiono adopted the 'running news' style, a serial news presentation that usually appeared on CNN or international news agencies such as *AP*, *AFP*, and *Reuters*. As observed by Margianto and Syaefullah (2013), this concept has attracted audiences' interest, though Internet penetration was still low and expensive at that time.

The success of *detik.com* and the new style of journalism inspired speculators and investors to examine opportunities for the online media industry in the middle of print media business stagnation, particularly after the 1998 reform of Indonesian politics. The opportunity was seen as beneficial because investment was considered more economical compared to the cost of establishing a new print media corporation. As a consequence, a boom of online media was occurring in Indonesia (Athiyyah, 2017).

Until 2002, there were approximately 500 online media companies in Indonesia, including those built and owned by local government. One of these companies,

*Kopitime.com*, even became the pioneer of online media and was listed on the Jakarta Stock Market as a public-shared company. However, the boom was not long-lasting. From 2002-2003, online media companies were forced to close down their business due to their inability to maintain operations. Even *Kopitime.com* needed to end the promising public share revenue after the drop of its paper stock's price to only five Indonesian Rupiahs (less than 0.03 pence) per sheet (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013).

However, despite the crisis of the online media industry, some companies still have optimism and tried to survive. The pioneer of Indonesian online media, *detik.com*, was one of the survivors despite needing to let go of many of its employees. Margianto and Syaefullah (2013) also note two other companies that survived, namely *kompas.com* and *tempointeraktif.com* (now *tempo.co*) that were strongly supported by their mother companies. As I explain in Chapter Three, the survival of these companies is one of the reasons for which they were chosen as research subjects.

In early 2003, Indonesian businessman Steve Christian came to the industry with his vision of creating entertainment information media, building *kapalagi.com*, the pioneer of 'infotainment' online media in Indonesia (Lukman, 2013). The establishment of this portal attracted optimism in the online media industry, and surviving companies were able to operate again.

In 2006, PT *Media Nusantara Citra* (MNC), who owns three national television stations launched *okezone.com* as another online news media platform. Soon after, another media group with two national television stations, namely *Bakrie Group*, was also interested in becoming involved in online media competition and created a news media platform under its subsidiary *Visi Media Asia* (Margianto & Syaefullah, 2013). This new online media that was named *Vivanews* turned to be successful and gain significant popularity over a relatively short period with the Indonesian public to gradually leave *okezone.com* behind. Later, *vivanews.com* changed its domain name into *viva.co.id* and became one of the most popular online news media platforms after *kompas.com* and *tempo.co* (Alexa, 2016). Due to this popularity, this company is also eligible as one of my research subjects.

The development of online technology in creating social networks has also brought opportunities for online media platforms to increase engagement with the audience.



The website started to open public spaces for comments and special discussion forums. The public's participation was provided through blogging services (forums) under the media management. These services, arguably, were the beginning of public involvement in the Indonesian news media industry.

## **2.6 Public Participation and Indonesian Culture**

The relationship between interactivity and democratisation has arguably spread across the globe, including in developing countries such as Indonesia. This development is interesting because Indonesia was not an actual democratic country in the past; it experienced a dictatorship for 32 years and was only free of said dictatorial government in 1998. Before the reform, Indonesia had inadequate freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The media was controlled by the government to avoid negative publications about the ruling political party. Although the country was declared a democratic nation, particularly after the fall of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965, the press system was closer to that of authoritarianism. 1998 became a momentous year for the freedom of expression when grassroots movements started to appear through the early stages of the online communication mailing list. This movement was also one of the vital channels that brought down the repressive regime at the time.

Before moving to the discussion of public participation in Indonesia, it is essential to revisit the historical journey of the country before the reform. The history of Indonesia is one of colonialism from 1670, when Dutch colonists occupied the country until 1945, when Indonesia gained independence from the Japanese occupation (BBC, 2018).

Escaping colonialism did not mean that Indonesia was free from repression. For 20 years, under the leadership of Ir Soekarno, the first President, Indonesia faced a number of internal conflicts. Independence attracted political interests, each of whom wanted to dominate the country. From radical Islam movements, ethnic dominations, to the Communist Party, rebellion has characterised the history of Indonesian violence. In September 1965, Indonesia experienced a dramatic military event, which then changed the political conditions of the country.

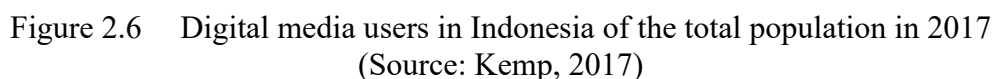
The Indonesian Communist Party was at fault for this incident, which was a coup d'état attempt against the government coloured by the murder of seven high ranked officers of the Indonesian Army. This incident ushered in a new regime led by Soeharto, a top-ranked General of the Army who became a hero and quashed the rebellion of the Communist Party. Soeharto's actions brought him to the highest chair of the Indonesian government, and he became the second President of the Republic of Indonesia, replacing Ir Soekarno, who was accused of having been compromised by communists.

This change was the beginning of a long dictatorship in Indonesia. As a military official, Soeharto ruled by "a violent and ruthless military bureaucracy which controls every facet of life" (Budiardjo, 1986, p. 1219). This regime was called the 'New Order', which did not tolerate left-wing ideology or political Islam. The government also repressed out-spoken people, including critical journalists who tried to speak negatively of the regime. However, with his tactical ability, Soeharto successfully brought Indonesia to the international stage. The performance of Indonesia gained appreciation from developed Western countries. The economy was boosted, coloured by foreign loans as a result of tactical international diplomacy. Therefore, even though he ruled the country with a dictatorship, Soeharto gained considerable international support and successfully sustained his position for 32 years.

During his rule, Soeharto limited the freedom of the press and imposed strict control on the media. This period represented dark days for journalism since the regime used the media for propaganda. The government produced a special permit to establish press companies, which was used to control the content of the news. Many news publishers lost their licenses for being too critical. One of these publications was *Tempo Magazine*, the predecessor of *Tempo.co* and *Viva.co.id*, the two media outlets that were selected as the subject of this thesis.

The era of repressive government under Soeharto ended with a mass rally in 1998. It was argued that one of the keys that led to the success of the rally was the emergence of online communication. Online messages were spread across the country to subvert government censorship. As a result, public opinion was shaped nationally. Soeharto could not repress demonstrations all over the country and decided to step down as

Indonesia has grown to be one of the most democratic nations in the South East Asia region, bringing ideas about press freedom and open society in active engagement and serious discussions (Kovach and Fiore, 2004, pp. 86–87). The shift to democracy has been supported by the rapid development of online social networks, which has strongly influenced communication culture in Indonesia. People in Indonesia can express themselves freely, something not experienced in the past.



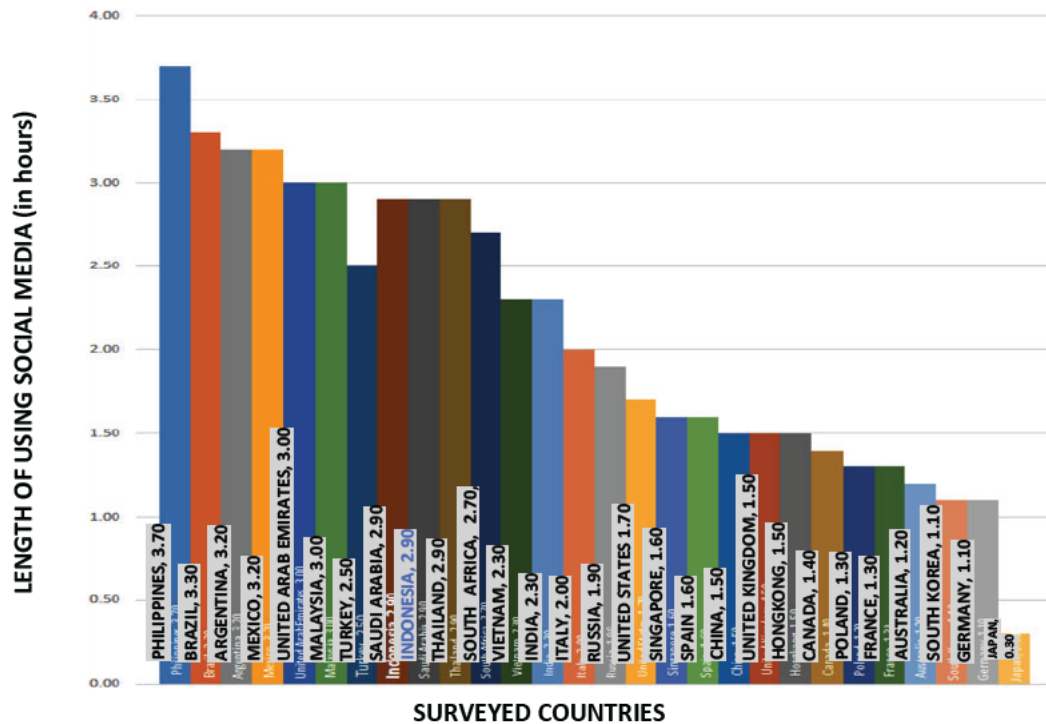


Figure 2.7 Time spent on social media: Average number of hours that social media users spend using social media each day in 2015, with Indonesia at the ninth position (Source: Kemp, 2016)

This freedom of speech and expression seems to have increased significantly among Indonesians, particularly those who have access to the newest technology on social networks. Data from *We Are Social* shows that there were 79 million people, or approximately 30% of the total Indonesian population in 2016, using social media. This year, the number increased to 106 million, or approximately 40% of the total population. Furthermore, the Global Web Index (GWI) references Indonesia as one of the 10 top countries in the world for time spent on social media every day.

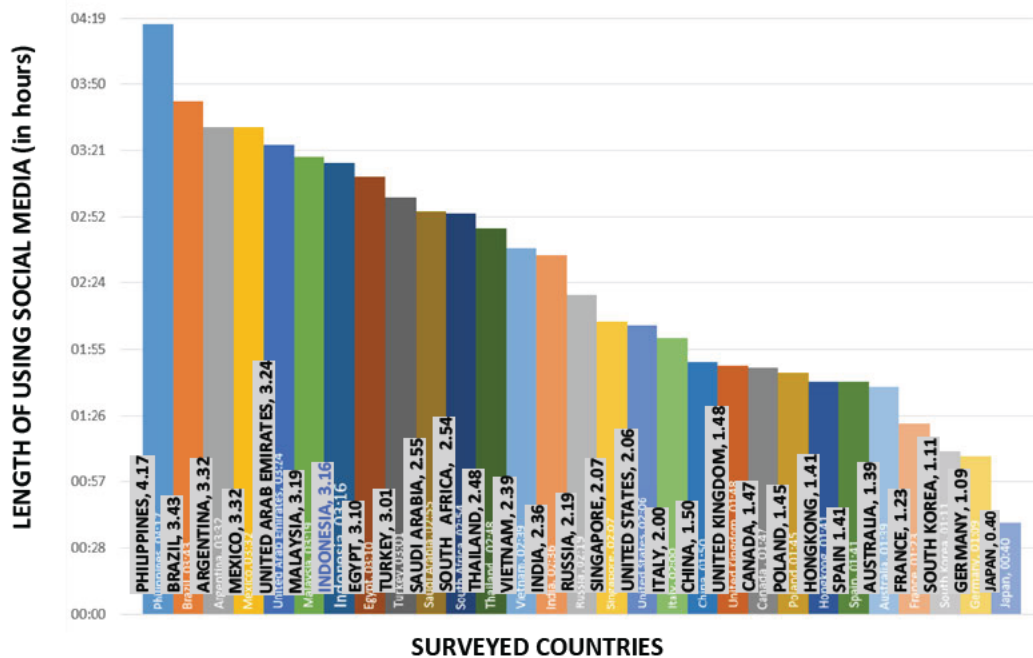


Figure 2.8 Time spent on social media: Average number of hours that social media users spend using social media each day in 2016, with Indonesia in seventh position.  
(Source: Kemp, 2017)

Figures 2.7 and 2.8 show significant developments regarding the freedom of expression via online media in Indonesia. The existence of social media has offered a new start for communication development, particularly for young people who never experienced the dictatorship.

However, one factor may delay the democratisation process on interactive media; this factor is related to real-life communication behaviour outside of online social networks. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the typical characteristics of Indonesian communication style are different from what is happening in social media because of cultural factors. Hall's high-context culture theory seems to align with the Indonesian communication style, which, to some extent, prevents the optimal use of social media in journalism. The Indonesian population's habit of building a complex conversation with implicit and non-verbal messages hinders forthright expression in direct interpersonal communication (Jandt, 1995, pp. 201–205).

This habit has affected the way in which Indonesian people express their opinions. Instead of speaking directly as Western people usually do, Indonesians choose to talk with metaphors and non-verbal cues to prevent conflict with other members of the population. As explained by Sihombing and Pongtuluran (2011), Indonesia follows the model of a collective society.

The collectivism in Indonesia has been studied by a number of scholars, including by the *Hofstede Insights*, a research institution that dedicates itself to a model of national culture posited by Hofstede. Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist, has been conducting research since the 1980s on culture, which applies to a group of people rather than to individuals. The assumptions are based on a body of previous research from anthropologists and sociologists, including Kluckhohn, Hall, and Parsons. Together with Shils, Parsons formulated that all human action is based on five pattern variables, which are the choice of five alternative pairs: 1) affectivity versus affective neutrality; 2) self-orientation versus collective-orientation; 3) universalism versus particularism; 4) ascription versus achievement; and 5) specificity versus diffuseness (1951, cited in Hofstede, 2011). These five choices are always present on an individual level, the level of a social system (group or organization), and on the level of normative culture.

These five alternatives became the basis for Hofstede to formulate what he refers to as the six dimensions of national culture. The model, which was refined in 2000, discusses six factors in community behaviour, consisting of the following: 1) Power Distance, namely regarding differences in problem resolution with respect to individual differences; 2) Uncertainty Avoidance, related to the level of tension of a society in facing the unknown future; 3) Individualism versus Collectivism; 4) Masculinity versus Femininity; 5) Long-term versus Short-term Orientation; and 6) Indulgence versus Restraint, which is related to gratification versus control of the basic human desire to enjoy life (Hofstede, 2011).

Using this model, Hofstede Insights conducted a survey and provided scores to determine to what extent individualism prevails among Indonesians. The results showed a score of 14, which was then concluded as being closer to collectivism than individualism (Hofstede Insights, no date). This finding is reinforced by the results of

a comparative study conducted by Sriwindono (2014) when comparing the conditions of Indonesia's national culture with the US. Using the results of the Hofstede Insights survey, Sriwindono concluded that Indonesia was collectivist.

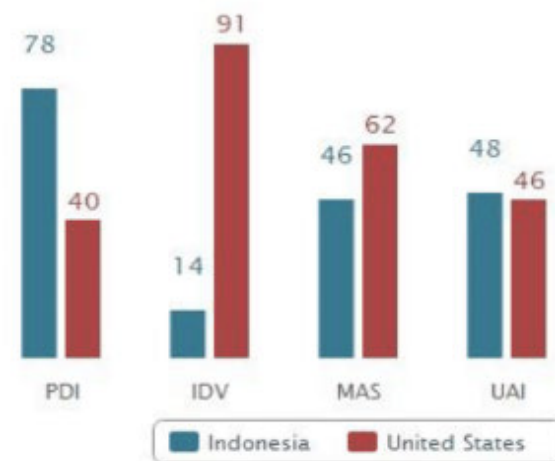


Figure 2.9 Comparison of Hofstede's score between Indonesia and the US  
(Source: Sriwindono, 2014)

In a survey, Minkov *et al.* (2017) used different scoring patterns to compare national cultures in 56 different countries. From the results of this comparison, this research found that Indonesia, in terms of individualism, was in position 54 with a score of -171. The minus score indicates that Indonesia is under balanced conditions and below the culture of individualism. In other words, the conclusion is still the same as before, with Indonesia being closer to collectivism (Minkov *et al.*, 2017).

In collectivist cultures, people are concerned with maintaining harmony within society. Because of this tendency, it may be argued that, even though people speak openly on social media to express their opinion, they tend to avoid in-person conflict (Sihombing and Pongtuluran, 2011). Furthermore, the message that Indonesians spread on social media are usually insignificant and related to their daily lives. There is hesitation to talk strongly or offer opinions about a specific issue, which means that the content on social media is often of limited value for news reporting.

This culture, arguably, has not changed in this digital era. Although Indonesians are statistically active in online communication, it may be argued that there is a hesitation

when expressing opinions. This argument is based on the evidence found in social media channels, where some Indonesians have been trying to cover up their real identity when discussing sensitive issues that could potentially create conflict. This phenomenon can be observed from anonymous and false accounts in social media, particularly when they are spreading sensitive political information. The situation has been worsened by the hoax or false news that is increasingly occurring, created by irresponsible people who misuse the freedom of expression for their own benefits.

Deddy Mulyana (Rudi, 2017), a Professor of Communication Studies at Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia, points out the primary factor that influences the distribution of false news in Indonesia. The factor is that Indonesian communities are not used to having vigorous debates and proper democracy. As a nation with a stable collective culture, Indonesian people enjoy gathering in a group and sharing stories, mainly through oral communication. However, Rudi also quotes Mulyana's statement that we cannot guarantee the truth of the conversation's contents because collectivism is not afforded the ability of data processing and documenting. Consequently, Indonesians usually make conversation without substantial evidence or reliable sources.

This habit of building informal conversations is a characteristic of orality or oral culture. Ong (2002) explains that one of the characteristics of oral society is that people are additive rather than subordinative, regarding expressing their thought in written form (pp. 36-56). People write in the way that they speak, adding more and more information in one sentence, using "ands" rather than subordinating words, which can be structurally and grammatically confusing. Besides this characteristic, Ong states that those who use oral traditions are likely to be aggregative rather than analytic. This habit may cause people to generalise an object without further analysis and be redundant or copious to make sure that both the speaker and listener are always on the track of the topic. This behaviour is typical of oral speech or conversations and less common in written communication.

Moreover, in terms of redundancy, Ong (2002) observes that oral societies are usually conservative or traditionalist because they need to maintain traditions to conserve old information. Furthermore, because of the lack of analysis and written documentation, the information shared is usually related to the human lifeworld. Therefore, societies



typically share information through observation and practice with minimal verbalised details, which also means that this type of communication is not favourable for citation in journalism.

Illiteracy seems to be prevalent in developing countries, particularly across Asia. India, for instance, as the most populated democratic country in Asia, has added more than 217 million people to its literate population in the last decade. However, as Jain (2015, p. 159) observes, this number does not necessarily mean that those people are educated well enough to read newspapers or any kind of written documentation, not only because of the level of poverty means that people cannot afford a good education, but also because the penetration of television has also shifted the culture from oral to watching. This change is similar to what has occurred in Indonesia.

Besides the collective and oral culture, it may be necessary to relate Indonesians' communication style to the repression. The long history of repressed freedom of speech during the New Order regime (1965-1998) has been influential. For the generation who during this period, the experience was traumatic and influenced their daily life, psychologically or mentally, even after the era had ended (Kovach and Fiore, 2004, pp. 86-87). This repression might not be too relevant to the younger generation, particularly those born after the era and who have grown up with technology. However, the stories of what had happened may have been told across generations.

Arguably, these characteristics are many areas of Indonesian society and can be seen when reading status updates, opinions, statements, or comments on social media. These posts are aggregative, lacking in analysis, and poor at providing evidence or credible documentation. Therefore, there has been hesitation about using social media channel as a reliable information source, which is a key factor that differentiates Indonesian journalism from the standard practice of international media. The level of trust towards public voices has created Indonesia-specific narrative structures, which still prioritise journalists' authority over the audiences. Yosep Stanley Adi Prasetyo, Head of the Indonesian Press Council even advises people not to categorise social media materials as news and discourages the direct use of social media in the news (Ramdhani, 2017). As a result, although Indonesia is no longer in a dictatorship and allows greater

freedom of speech, the future of a free press and freedom of expression “still hangs in tenuous balance” (Kovach and Fiore, 2004).

The practice of curation journalism in Indonesia has represented an effort to increase public freedom. As discussed in Chapter One, Obrist and Raza (2015) suggest an analogy to equalise curation and farming because, within the practice, the journalist is cultivating, growing, pruning, and helping people to thrive. In this sense, the journalist allows ordinary people to use the opportunity to voice their opinions in the public sphere. By creating a channel for the public to speak, the journalist has helped Indonesians to achieve the goals of democracy, which is to ensure that all of society has a voice in decision making. This ability allows for complete democratic citizenship. However, the number of Indonesian people still influenced by traditional culture may hinder this progress.

In addition to the cultural obstacles, there is also an issue of accessibility. Indonesia, an archipelago with hundreds of islands, is not entirely connected to the Internet. Today, there is still Internet inaccessibility among much of the rural areas of Indonesia. 30% of the total Indonesian population in 2016 who use social media live on Java Island, a resort business and industry centres. Therefore, regardless of the considerable number of the Indonesian users of social media, there are still many who are not affected by the Internet because they do not have access.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the influence of social communication technology on people's behaviour as mass media consumers, which has led to significant developments in online journalism. The presence of social media as a manifestation of the technology has created significant changes to the hierarchy of media consumption, where the public has become more active, not only as the information receiver, but also as the producer. Following the theories of technological determinists and liberal pluralists, this chapter argued that the development of public participation in the mass media industry is a key component democratisation.

This argument is based on an optimistic perspective of online technology's capabilities in allowing for interactivity. Technology has created a natural pathway for both the

journalist and audience to exchange information. Furthermore, despite civilian hesitation towards journalistic professionalism, online media's ability to connect with social media contents has expanded the audience's experience in exploring the news. This chapter mentioned examples in the UK, the US, and Indonesia to show how the recent development of online technology with social media has changed the relationship between journalists and readers.

Aside from the international phenomenon of non-journalist involvement in the news production and distribution, this chapter found that the characteristics of curation journalism are not the same across countries. A comparative analysis showed some differences between international news networks and Indonesian media in particular regarding attitudes towards social media content in news production. International news networks, which are mostly formatted by Western media, have been using opinions from the public on social media as news materials. There are quotes from social media in their original form with direct links to the original post embedded in the body of the story. In contrast, this format is not as frequently used in Indonesia. Instead of inserting people's statements on social media inside the body of the story, Indonesian journalists tend to rewrite or reproduce those statements in a traditional way. Regardless of the development of online media in Indonesia following the emergence of the Internet in the early 1990s, as well as the level of Indonesian citizens' social media activity, Indonesian media has displayed contradictory behaviour in respecting social media contents. Indonesian media has a different level of trust of non-journalists in comparison to Western media. This condition may reflect the unique characteristics of democracy in Indonesia. In other words, there cannot be a ubiquitous journalistic method for every country in the world. One method of online news gathering may not be applicable across different national contexts.

Indonesian media regards people's voices on social media as unreliable because statements that appear are often unsupported by reliable evidence. This chapter provided arguments for the causes for this hesitation. One of the reasons may be cultural factors. The reluctance to express thoughts freely in Indonesia is believed to be the implication of Indonesian communication habits in the frame of collective society, which have commonly been developed in a high-context culture.

This chapter also that Indonesians have skipped literary traditions. Society grew with a strong oral culture, which may be why Indonesians' way of writing is often mixed with spoken language. Consequently, the population is not used to a structured, logical argument that can be proven by adequate data. This oral tradition means that voices from the public on social media are often not considered reliable when being cited.

The final factor highlighted in this chapter was the issue of accessibility. Statistical data showed that many rural areas in Indonesia are still experiencing Internet inaccessibility. Therefore, not every region in Indonesia can contribute public information through social media, emphasising the need for conventional journalistic methods.

Regardless of how voices from the public are treated in the mass media, this chapter argued that the emergence of social media communications has influenced Indonesian online media, particularly in terms of the practice of curation journalism. However, it is clear that the Indonesian media has a unique method of curation journalism that makes it different from what has been used by Western media. A specific research method should be employed to investigate and describe the unique characteristics of the practice in Indonesia. The following chapter delivers the most appropriate research methodology, including the details of chosen research subjects, as well as the data analysis technique used in this thesis.



# Chapter Three

## Research Design

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### 3.1 Introduction

Studying news in the early era of communication research has been associated with studying art as items displayed by a museum or gallery. As observed by Tuchman (1991), the news has been looked at as any item outside advertisements that presented by a news medium and studied as an artefact possessing its contextual meaning (pp. 79-80). For this reason, researchers at the time tended to use quantitative research perspectives with a systematic method such as content analysis to define what news is.

Tuchman (1991) highlights the significance of using qualitative methods to define the meaning of news. Sociologists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had turned to a more phenomenological perspective to answer this question. In fact, the question is more relevant to the inquiry of how news-making processes are influenced by embedded ideological meanings, as is true of research on news organisations (p. 83).

From this perspective, this study employs a qualitative method. This approach has been chosen because this research is designed to analyse more than just textual aspects of what the journalist has written. Instead, the study aims to set to investigate how a news organisation created an understanding of the practice of news production.

This chapter described how the research is conducted based on the chosen theoretical foundation and examines the continuity between research methods and the research objective, which is to define how Indonesian journalism responds to the new culture of curation journalism where the involvement of public participation has become significant.

This chapter begins by formulating three research statements to break down the primary objectives of the study, which is followed by clarifying the case studies as the methodological approach to find Indonesian news media organisations' framing of curation journalism. In this part, this chapter describes the rationalisation of applying

an instrumental case study (Stake, 2005) in the effort to build a general picture of curation journalism in Indonesia by assessing a particular case as the instrument.

The chapter then presents a discussion of research methods in order to clarify reliable data gathering techniques. Based on the research objective, which is related to journalists' behaviours as individuals as part of an organisation, a number of relevant techniques are required, such as observations, interviews, archival documents, or visual methods (Herman-Kinney and Verschaeve, 2003, pp. 225–240). Therefore, it is appropriate to conduct the investigation by observing a number of news products, observations of the newsroom's environment, and interviews with journalists as individuals who, in turn, constitute a corporate policy as a media organisation.

As this chapter describes in greater detail, I sought to gather the data with two main research approaches. The first of these approaches was a comparative study to observe news products published by international network websites and Indonesian online media. This initial study aims to investigate how the practice of curation journalism in Indonesia differs from what is used by international news media, particularly in reporting a crisis event. This comparison is not only based on the content in searching the indication of curation inside the stories, but also determined by how the curation is implied visually within the structure of the news body. The two comparisons are in line with the discussion in Chapter One, which discussed the presentation of curation.

Secondly, the field research consisted of two methods of data collection, namely participant observations and interviews. This field study was conducted on research subjects in Indonesia with the aim of obtain qualitative data from Indonesian journalists on the practice of curation journalism. These interviews were based on the findings obtained in a comparative study of the visual display of news.

The subjects of the observations and interviews were three Indonesian online media outlets that have been chosen based on the following criteria: their existence as online news publishers; the ownership of the media organisations; and their relationships with the traditional practice of journalism. The rationale behind the selection of the three media, as well as the background business information, is presented in Section 3.4.

This description of research subjects is to clarify that the study focuses on occurrences in Indonesia, which are represented by the three media outlets. This study does not describe the implementation of curation journalism from a global perspective, instead focusing on a specific case of Indonesian journalism development. Some examples taken from international news outlets are used as a point of comparison in order to highlight the unique characteristics of Indonesian curation journalism.

### **3.2 Research Objectives**

This research focuses on the implementation of curation journalism as a method of news production and a presentation format for news stories in Indonesia. As a democratic country that has extensive engagement with social media technology, Indonesia, to some extent, has not fully implemented curation journalism, a practice that has been associated with using voices of individuals from social media. The problematic issues are related to how the media treat citizens' voices as part of the news story. As Chapter Two noted, Indonesian press has employed a unique curating method that, arguably, is still influenced by concern surrounding the reliability of citizens or non-professionals as sources of information. This concern may lead journalistic practices, particularly of online media in Indonesia, to maintain traditional methods instead of fully exploiting public participation. The practice is contradictory to the current trend in Indonesia on the use of new media technology, considering the position of Indonesia as one of the nations that most actively uses social media.

Therefore, it is important to examine changes in traditional journalistic practice embedded in the practice of curation journalism and how they may lead to the establishment of a new set of principles for the Indonesian online media industry. My argument is that the technological progress of the nation can support the development of curation journalism because the level of progress is relevant to the needs of the practice. However, I also argue that journalists in Indonesia have pessimistic views on the practice of curation, including the involvement of social media in news production as a characteristic of curation journalism. The perspective of these journalists may be a consequence of cultural problems, such as the Indonesian tendency to communicate as a collective society or the high-context culture within the nation. This tendency could also be caused by technical issues, such as a lack of sophisticated technology or



journalists' inadequate skills. Hypothetically, these issues may mean that journalists are less inclined to include the public, which, as I observe, is a significant factor in practising curation journalism. This argument needs to be further investigated. The purpose of this study is formulated into a main question as follows:

To what extent do online journalists in Indonesia implement the practice of curation journalism in a specific cultural environment?

This general question aims to achieve specific objectives to break down the purpose of the study into a more systematic format, which are formulated as follow:

1. To determine the visual differences between the news presentation of the Indonesian online media and international media to discover the actual causes behind the differences, including how media treats active public participation;
2. To gain insight into the meanings of curation journalism in the field of journalism studies and practices in an Indonesian context;
3. To investigate the use of traditional journalistic principles within the practice of curation journalism in Indonesia, particularly regarding the perspective of Indonesian national culture towards public participation; and
4. To contribute to the study of journalism by clarifying the major definitions of curation journalism in the specific context of Indonesia and its context in journalism theories.

In order to achieve these research objectives, this study needs to be viewed from specific frameworks, namely journalistic principles and cultural issues. The research examines how these frameworks cover the use of social media technology in the curation journalism. Subsequently, the study uses qualitative data from informants as primary sources.

### **3.3 Methodology**

#### **3.3.1 Case Study as a Methodology in Curation Journalism Framing**

This study is designed around the argument that the use of social media by journalists in Indonesia is a result of social construction. This construction has occurred within

news organisations as a response to the presence of new communication technology. This argument justifies the choice of applying a qualitative study under the social constructionist paradigm rather than conducting a content analysis research with a quantitative perspective. Furthermore, it should also be emphasised that the primary objective is not only to interpret the journalists' perceptions of technology within their journalistic practice, but also to describe other influential factors around the practice. As Schwandt (2000) argues, the social constructionists view that “all knowledge claims and their evaluation take place within a conceptual framework through which the world is described and explained” (pp. 191-197). The reality involved in this study is something that has been socially constructed in a particular context (Silverman, 2010, p. 108; Willis, 2007, p. 54). The argument matches the research’s primary purpose, which is to bring the fore the experiences and interpretations of Indonesian journalists about curation journalism from their own perspectives.

In accordance with this argument, this study aims to determine how Indonesian journalists in the online media industry construct the meaning of social media in their work and the frame of using social media contents as news materials. The construction of this study is expected to answer inquiries about the actual implementation of curation journalism in Indonesia, which makes it different from the practice in other countries around the world.

Because of the relationships in the social constructionist paradigm, media content policy, and cultural aspects, this study may be considered framing research. Baldwin van Gorp (2007), who cites communication scholars and sociologists such as Entman and Goffman, points out that framing is a common phenomenon in media practices (pp. 60-62). Frames can be found in various locations of media communication elements, including in the minds of the news writers and the readers or embedded in the contents, and are always a component of cultural phenomena. Therefore, an event could be seen from many perspectives. Consequently, when a journalist writes a story, he or she would base the writing on a specific frame to place the object of the writing in a certain context among a number of potential perspectives. The readers, on the other hand, also read the story with their own frame of thinking based on their own experiences.

Individuals cannot modify cultural phenomena that have been shared in the collective memory of a society. As a consequence, individuals apply the phenomena to their daily activities. This tendency also happens to media practitioners would utilise and expand the phenomena within their content (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, pp. 59–99).

The basic understanding of framing research aligns with the objectives of this study, particularly in how it is related to the representation of culture in media work. However, as mentioned by Entman (1993) framing research is specifically used to describe the influence of text (p. 51). In other words, the main purpose of this approach is to break down constructed frames presented through textual products. This objective is not the main purpose of this study. Instead of studying textual framing, this research delivers the discussion of media policy in framing curation as a professional culture, a method of gathering news materials, and a means of presenting stories. This particular object may be referred to as curation journalism framing.

Therefore, this research requires a more relevant methodological approach. The approach should be able to accommodate a comparative study, as well as observations and interviews, in order to identify differences between the practice of international networks and Indonesian media. The approach should also involve at least one case as the instrument to compare variations of the news-making process between media companies.

Based on this argument, the most appropriate approach is an instrumental case study. As argued by Creswell (2013), many scholars have objected to considering a case study research as a methodology because it is closer to the decision-making process when selecting a research object. However, a case study is a methodology because it is also a strategy of research. Creswell concludes the case study as “a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study, as well as a product of the inquiry” (p. 97). The closest description of the instrumental case study to the objective of this research comes from Stake, who categorises it alongside intrinsic and multiple/collective case studies (Stake, 2005, p. 447; Creswell, 2013, pp. 99-100).

The intrinsic case study is an effort to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a particular case. This process is usually initiated with cases that have been clearly identified, and its primary purpose is to investigate the case as its primary object.

On the other hand, the instrumental case study is used with the primary purpose of creating an understanding of an issue or concept. A particular case taken in this type of study acts as supporting material rather than the main object of research. The case was taken with the consideration that it may facilitate researchers to gain an understanding of a broader phenomenon outside of the case itself. If the intrinsic case study uses a case clearly identified beforehand, the instrumental case study will use a particular case after the study has formally begun. Therefore, in this type of case study, the most accurate understanding of a phenomenon depends on the selection of appropriate cases (Patton, 1990; Vaughan, 1992; Yin, 1989, cited in Stake, 2005, p. 450).

The third type of case study brings a possibility of studying a number of cases together in order to investigate one phenomenon. Stake (2005) refers to this method collective or multiple case studies. This type of case study is the same as the instrumental case study. However, with this method, the researcher uses more than one case. The cases that have been chosen aid in constructing a more comprehensive understanding of the concept or issue being investigated (Stake, 2005, p. 448, Creswell, 2013, p. 100).

This classification emphasises the relevance of the instrumental case study as the methodological approach in this research. The case that I have chosen as the instrument is news coverage in ‘Jakarta Bombings’, a crisis in Jakarta, Indonesia, that happened on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016. This research uses this particular event because it is an example of new reported nationally and internationally. This event is not designated as the primary research object but was used in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of curation journalism in Indonesian media industry. The employment of comparative study is what I previously defined as curation journalism framing.

### **3.3.2 Research Methods**

As a research strategy, a qualitative case study is often associated with ethnography. This association may occur because both strategies can be employed with the same methods, which are using cases, applying participant observation, and conducting interviews. However, the focus of ethnography is centred on defining how the culture works rather than using a case to explore an understanding of an issue (Creswell, 2015, p. 97).

Willis (2007) highlights five characteristics of qualitative case studies, which can determine which methods are appropriate achieve the research objectives (pp. 238-239). Firstly, case studies are *particularistic*, which means that their focus is on a specific context, such as a person, an event, a group, or company. Secondly, case studies are *naturalistic*, dealing with real objects in real environments. Thirdly, case studies deal with *a large amount of descriptive data*, which can be obtained from participant and non-participant observation, interviews, historical archives, documents, and quantitative data sources. Forth, case studies are *inductive*. As stated by Merriam (1988, cited in Willis, 2007), case studies generally rely on inductive rationalisation (p. 239). Therefore, all results – including generalisation and conceptual conclusions of the study, emerge from data analysis. Finally, case studies are heuristic, which means that they are able to bring new meaning or discoveries and encompass experiences because the studies can illuminate existing knowledge.

Following the nature of qualitative case studies, this study is split into two phases of research. The first stage is a comparative study employing a specific case as the instrument. This type of study requires a method such as observation to obtain descriptive data. The second phase is field research, which is conducted to confirm findings in the first phase and explore more qualitative explanations. This phase requires qualitative data exploration methods, which include participant observation and interviews. The foundation of the use of comparative study and other research methods is explored in the following alongside a description of the actual research activities.

#### *a. Comparative Study*

A comparative study, which is also described as comparative research or comparative analysis, is mostly considered as a fundamental study for all science, including social sciences. In sociology, as stated by Mills, van de Bunt, and de Bruijn (2006), it is a wide-ranging term that relates to both quantitative and qualitative studies in discovering social entities (p. 621). The entities can be looked at as geographical or political lines, such as for cross-national comparisons, or also in terms of social groups. Similarly, Goodrick (2014), who underlies the concept of the comparative case studies, mentions that the comparison involves the analysis and synthesis of “the

similarities, differences, and patterns across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal” (p. 1).

Because it is able to deal with social entities across geographical boundaries, a comparative study has often been used in discussions of culture. Hanitzsch (2008) underlines that new communication technologies have brought research to global networks, which has since increased consideration of cross-cultural comparison methods (p. 93). This progress has also happened in journalism studies; however, before the 1990s, research was limited to nations recognised and accessed by the researchers.

Arguably, the observation towards cross-cultural phenomena is also the nature of the phase of a comparative study of this thesis. The comparison made here is on the practice of curation journalism in different countries that have specific cultures in order to identify the international differences. In this phase, the research compared news presentations produced by international networks based in the US and the UK such as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* and three selected Indonesian media, namely *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*. It is evident that the differences, as well as the similarities, should be analysed using a culture studies approach. However, as is discussed in the findings chapters, what occurs in the international media can be assumed to be a global trend rather than a Western style of reporting. According to this study’s informants, a similar form can also be found in Asian news outlets, such as in Malaysia. Therefore, this international news presentation format is not restricted to Western culture. This evidence is used to justify this study, which focuses only on the Indonesian culture characteristics found in the news reporting style at the three media outlets.

Furthermore, there is a significant challenge in conducting cross-cultural comparative studies of setting the standard of equivalence amongst the cases used in the comparison. Because the ultimate goal of the study is to compare similarities and differences, the same measurements should be used. If equivalence is ignored, the researcher opens the study to the possibility of bias. Hanitzsch (2008) argues that the ideal comparative study must manage at least one of three equivalence issues in the

cross-cultural comparative studies: equivalence of concepts; methods and administration; and language and meaning (pp. 98-101).

The researcher must also ensure that the constructs, such as the unit of analysis or sample categories, are identical across all cultures involved in the study. However, Hanitzsch (2008) argues that, in journalism studies, this equivalence tends to be ignored because journalism may have diverse normative functions from one culture to another.

For this thesis, this conceptual problem was not significant because quantitative constructions did not acquire the data obtained. The only effort to keep the conceptual equivalence was to ensure that the comparison was about the same case, which is the news presentation of 'Jakarta Bombings', 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The other concept was the selection of the media as comparison subjects. *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* were chosen as representatives of popular international media with a typical presentation format. As this study observed, these media platforms used curation journalism and the substantial involvement of public voices on social media. The same measurement was applied to Indonesian media. As this chapter describes in greater detail, *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* were recognised as the most popular online media platforms in Indonesia with significant engagement with social media communication.

At the level of methods and administration, the researcher has to ensure that the method of data collection is the same across all cultures. The measurement must be performed with the same set of scientific methods. However, Hanitzsch (2008) points out that there is still the possibility of varied responses or behaviours because of the differences in cultural background.

The equivalence of the methods and administration was also not a crucial problem for this research. This study used an observation of news presentations published and displayed on the research subjects' websites in order to obtain qualitative data. The observation technique used is the marginal-participant observation (Robson, 2002, p. 318), also known as the complete observer technique (Nørskov and Rask, 2011, para. 19-20). Theoretically, this observation technique maintains contact between the observer and the object at a minimum level. This technique is the most appropriate method for a careful observation because it eliminates any action that might affect the

activity of the object being observed. This kind of observation is the ideal technique for observing objects through the Internet, which is required by this research. However, as discussed in the following, this observation method should be accompanied by in-depth investigation to interpret the object's intention.

Finally, at the level of language and meaning, the researcher needs to set all research instruments to guarantee equivalence. The most common strategy is to perform a language back-translation procedure or cultural decentring, which eliminates the difficult-to-translate words, phrases, and concepts.

The translation strategy is the most significant component of this study because the case was presented differently in international and Indonesian media. It would be easier for me as an Indonesian researcher to absorb the context of the news presentation from Indonesian websites because the news was in Indonesian. Moreover, the incident also occurred in Indonesia, which contributed more relevant cultural context to me as the observer. On the other hand, the stories on international websites were in English from a global perspective. Therefore, in order to ensure equivalence, cultural decentring was used for the Indonesian version. This decentring was done because there were some insignificant words or idioms, as well as cultural contexts difficult to translate in English, such as expressions, local idioms, and some local humour used in descriptions. These items could be eliminated without distracting the context of the comparison.

#### ***b. Field Research: Participant Observation and Interviews***

In the second phase, field research was conducted to confirm, clarify, and further explain the findings of the comparative study in the first phase of the research. This field research took place in the newsrooms of Kompas.com, Tempo.co, and Viva.co.id, which are all located in Jakarta, between April and May 2016.

Two research methods were employed in order to obtain more qualitative data from the perspective of Indonesian journalists. The first method was participant observation. Unlike the observation in the comparative study, this phase of field research employed used the "the observer-participant" technique (Robson, 2002, p. 316) or "the observer-as-participant" (Nørskov and Rask, 2011, para 17-18). This observation technique allows the researcher to have social interaction with the



informants in their environment, though the level of participation in the environment's activities is limited. In other words, different from "the participant-as-observer" technique, which places the observer as a member of the environment, this technique does not require the researcher to act or pretend as member. The relationship between the observer and the observed party is strictly research-related.

In the field research, I was granted access to visit the newsroom and be present in journalists' operations. However, I was not involved in news production or editorial meetings. My position in the newsroom was that of a visitor who had been given open access to observe all parts of the process. To gain respect from the newsroom members, my identity was clearly stated, and the entire media team acknowledged my presence as a researcher. I believe that this recognition was important for the smooth running of my research because it helped alleviate any suspicion about my presence, which may have otherwise resulted in limited access to information. In addition, per my position as researcher external to the production process, I ensured that my presence did not interfere with, influence, or change activities that take place in the newsroom.

The second method employed was interviews. In theory, there are many terms to explain the interview technique that I used during my visit to the newsroom. Robson (2002), for example, presents the theory of a fully structured interview, a semi-structured interview, and an unstructured interview (p. 270). Structured interviews are also considered fixed interviews, in which the questions are prearranged with fixed statements. This type of interview was not employed in this research. Instead, this research applied two techniques of interview, namely the semi-structured interview and the unstructured one. The semi-structured interview usually has prearranged questions, though the practice can be flexible. The order and content of the question can be modified depending on the situation, the response of the interviewee, or any other circumstances. On the other hand, unstructured interviews are the most flexible technique of interview and can be completely informal. Although the interviewer has a general idea about the topic, questions are usually developed in conversation.

During the interview in each media outlet, the semi-structured interview was the first technique. This technique was employed because my initial visit to the newsroom was

formal. I was welcomed in a specific room, and the conversation started systematically based the list of questions that I prepared, such as about the media's understanding of the term *curation*, the media's policy against public participation, and the reasons for which their visual composition differs from what usually occurs in international media networks. These questions were prepared to determine the media's qualitative perspective on the implementation of curation journalism. As the conversation developed, the formal interview changed to a more informal interview.

Meanwhile, the unstructured interview was conducted simultaneously with the observation and was conducted mainly as a response to what I had observed when I could directly ask questions related to the object of observation. This kind of interview was informal.

Furthermore, in terms of the question format, the interviews could be categorised as narrative interviews. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explain that this method is the most flexible means of conducting interviews, where the wording of questions is arranged to attract the interviewees to tell a story (pp. 183-184). The role of the interviewer is that of "a listener, abstaining from interruptions, occasionally posing questions for clarification, and assisting the interviewee in continuing to tell his story" (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, p. 184). This role positioning happened mostly in the interviews that I conducted during the field research because the primary objective was to gain informants' explanation to the largest extent possible regarding the practice of curation journalism from their perspectives.

Technological developments have been rapid in recent years, which means that journalistic practices have changed easily over time. What is occurring this year may be different next year. Therefore, it is important to set a timeframe within this research to avoid ambiguity the relationship between the research and the ongoing reality. For this research, the data observed and investigated are from between October 2015 and September 2016. This timeframe was set based on the time that I started the observation, the duration of the field study, and the time required to finish data comparison.

Consequently, this thesis requires a second phase of study of the case taken as an object in a comparative study from 2016. Therefore, interviews and re-observations

were conducted at the end of 2019 with the same three media outlets with the same informants or those who replaced the person in the same position.

In order to confirm the practice, the interviews were conducted with editors, reporters, and representatives from certain divisions who dealt with social media interaction. The interview process was designed to be conducted with as many media members as possible. However, to make the process of field research efficient, only a few of the members of the media companies were interviewed. Those interviewed were mostly people with authority as a decision maker within their own capacity, as seen in Table 3.1. To gain access, the initial interviewee was the person with the most credible position in the newsroom of each media company. The person then directed me to meet subordinates; this procedure was the most efficient strategy because the person with authority for decision making would know who could most accurately respond to questions.

Table 3.1 Informants at Indonesian Online Media

Name of Media Company	Informant Code	Position and Time of Interview
<i>Kompas.com</i>	Informant #1	Editor, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #2	Editor, interviewed in 2016 and 2019
	Informant #3	Strategic partner development staff, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #4	Editor/journalist, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #5	Editor/journalist, interviewed in 2016
<i>Tempo.co</i>	Informant #1	Editor, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #2	Social media staff, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #3	Social media staff, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #4	Journalist/Indonesian editor, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #5	Editor who replaced Informant #1, interviewed in 2019
	Informant #6	Editor/journalist/chief of Eye Witness Program, interviewed in 2019
<i>Viva.co.id</i>	Informant #1	Editor, interviewed in 2016 and 2019
	Informant #2	Editor, interviewed in 2016
	Informant #3	Social media staff, interviewed in 2016

To avoid violating research ethics, this thesis maintains the anonymity of the informants. These individuals' presence in the research is represented by a numbering system according to the order in which they appear in the discussion of research results.

It is also crucial to select more than one media outlet as research subjects within specific categories in order to see the generalisation of the interpretations because the meanings of curation journalism may not be identical from one media company to another. Section 3.4 describes the subjects in detail, as well as the categories that have been established for this research to justify the selection of the media companies.

### **3.4 Research Subjects**

This study established specific categories in order to determine adequate research subjects amongst various news media companies in Indonesia. Firstly, the media company must offer online services for publishing news and not be dedicated to social network communication. Secondly, the media company must belong to a specific large, convergent media group that has other formats of news services in order to highlight the systemic policy making of the corporation. Thirdly, it is important to verify that the media company has a history as publishers of traditional media format before moving online. These categories have been established in order to conduct a comprehensive discussion of the impact of curation journalism on journalists and their business in Indonesia, the shift of their practice from traditional to more social methods, and the connection between the practice and the technological aspects of this contemporary media era.

Based on these rationalisations, the research was conducted with three Indonesian online media outlets. These outlets were considered popular from 2015-2016, and each of them is run by a different group of convergent media corporations. The outlets were *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*.



Figure 3.1 Sample of Visitor Pageviews Statistics  
(Source: Alexa, 2016)

Based on the pre-research observations, these companies were on the top list of widely accessible media to the public. The statistical results from Alexa.com show that the three chosen research subjects were amongst the most popular news websites in Indonesia. Table 2.3 presents 2016's ranking position of the chosen online media outlets amongst other popular websites in Indonesia.

Table 3.2 Website Rank Metric in September 2016

Website	Metric			
	Rank in Indonesia	Global Rank	Global Reach	Global Pageviews
google.co.id	1	71	0.95%	0.14%
google.com	2	1	42.56%	10.47%
youtube.com	3	2	38.15%	7.05%
facebook.com	4	3	34.55%	4.74%
yahoo.com	5	5	10.76%	1.05%
tribunnews.com	6	237	0.05%	0.00%
detik.com	7	213	0.12%	0.01%
kompas.com	10	348	0.08%	0.01%
tempo.co	32	1288	0.02%	0.00%
viva.co.id	69	3917	0.03%	0.00%

(Source: www.alexacom)

Though the three media outlets is not at the top of the figure, as shown in Table 3.2, many of the higher-ranking platforms do not meet the inclusion criteria of this research.

*Kompas.com*'s is ranked lower than *Tribunnews.com* and *detik.com*, in addition to other websites dedicated to social network communication, such as *Google*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *Yahoo*. However, *Tribunnews.com*, which is in the sixth position, is a member of the same group as *Kompas*, namely *Kompas Gramedia Group*, and *Kompas.com* reporters feed most of the news that it publishes. Furthermore, *detik.com*, which is in the seventh position, the pioneer of the online media industry in Indonesia, was not chosen as subject of this research because this media group does not meet the category of this research has different nature with the categories. This website is not a member of a larger media group and has been dedicated to becoming a provider of online news since the beginning. The status of *detik.com* is dissimilar to that of *Kompas*, *Tempo*, and *Viva* that originated from traditional print media before joining the digital era.

*Tempo.co* ranks below *Kompas.com*. Same as *Viva.co.id* that ranks below *Tempo.co*. However, the gap between *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, as well as that between *Tempo.co* and *Viva.co.id*, is filled by independent online media that are not related to any traditional media or media group. The ranking also includes non-news websites in the gap, including those for online trade. Therefore, these three media sites can be considered as the highest-ranking media companies on the list.

It is necessary to present general information on the chosen media organisations for further discussion. Therefore, Section 3.4.1 provides brief historical profiles of the companies.

#### **3.4.1 *Kompas.com***

*Kompas.com* was chosen as one of the research subjects because of its popularity amongst Indonesians as a member of a big media group, namely *Kompas Gramedia Group*. This media company has a historical connection to traditional print media. Furthermore, this selection was also based on the assumption that *Kompas.com* should have adequate infrastructures and financial support to develop the newest communication technologies relevant to the media industry considering its position as a member of a wealthy business group. With this kind of support, as well as its influence on the public as a popular media, it is expected that *Kompas.com* must be

familiar with contemporary journalistic practice and willing to implement new formats within in journalism.

Historically, *Kompas.com* was a supporting division for the *Kompas* daily newspaper, as the primary product of *Kompas Gramedia Group*. This group, which is based in Jakarta, was initiated as a small circulated magazine named *Intisari*. This magazine was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1963 by Petrus Kanisius, Ojong and Jakob Oetama and assisted by Adisubrata and Irawati SH. Three years later, on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1965, the creators launched *Kompas* newspaper. This publication was initially created as a political tool to fight against communism. The name *Kompas* was decided by Ir. Soekarno, the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, which was intended to show directions (compass).

The company began to grow into a multi-media industry in the early 1970s. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1970, the company started to expand into a publishing company and imported book seller. The company built the first Gramedia Book Shop to support the distribution, which was a 25-metre shop on Gajah Mada Street, Central Jakarta. As of 2016, the company has over 100 stores across Indonesia.

The founders decided to build their own printing company and started to produce magazines, children's books, and fiction novels. At the same time, the company also launched *Sonora FM*, its first radio station. In 1976, the group expanded into film production by launching *Gramedia Film*, the core business of which was to create documentaries. However, the company also competed to produce fiction films, and one of them successfully achieved Citra, the highest award for film production in Indonesia. Unfortunately, the success of this business was short-term.

In the 1980s, more publications were launched under *Kompas Gramedia Group*. The company launched *Bola* (sports tabloid), *Tribun* (a group of local newspapers), *Kontan* (a special newspaper for business and finance), and *Warta Kota* (special newspaper for the information on Jakarta).

In 1995, *Kompas* aimed to maintain its existence by creating an online version, which was then called *Kompas Online*. This version was only scanned newspaper pages published on the company's website. As the penetration of the Internet in Indonesia

grew, *Kompas Online* was taken over by *Kompas Cyber Media (KCM)*, a new division outside of newspaper management allowed to produce its news publication.

In 2008, *KCM* decided to collaborate with the other media in *Kompas Gramedia Group* and turn *Kompas.com* into a mega-portal news site. The company dedicated this portal to dealing with a variety of multimedia formats (text and video) and digital platforms (desktop and mobile site from a variety of mobile operating systems). This collaboration was supported by *Kompas Gramedia Group*, who made it possible to fully penetrate new media technology.



Figure 3.2 The editorial section in the newsroom of Kompas.com  
(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of Kompas.com)

*Kompas.com* has become a part of *Kompas Gramedia Digital Group* together with other online divisions such as *Kompasiana.com*, *Otomania.com*, *Juara.net*, *Nextren.com*, *Kompaskarier.com*, and *Gramedia.com*. Therefore, *Kompas.com* should be able to create sophisticated news format and embrace the practice of curation journalism in the same way as international media networks.





Figure 3.3 Mega-portal *Kompas.com* logo after merger of *KCM* and *Kompas* media  
(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of *Kompas.com*)

### 3.4.2 Tempo.co

Similar to *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co* was created carrying the legacy of popularity of one a legendary media enterprise in Indonesia, namely the *Tempo News Magazine*. The newspaper's tagline, *Enak dibaca dan perlu* (Easy to read and necessary), has not been changed since the publication of the first edition of the magazine in 1971. Moreover, this tagline has been used as the slogan for all media under *PT. Tempo Inti Media Tbk. (Tempo Media Group)*.



Figure 3.4 *Tempo Newspaper* display with the classic slogan in the lobby of the integrated newsroom.

(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of *Tempo.co*)

The company started its business when *PT. Grafiti Pers*, as publisher, launched the first *Tempo* weekly magazine on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1971 in Jakarta. Goenawan Muhammad, the founder of the magazine, was so inspired by *Time* magazine, particularly during

his study at Harvard University, that he decided to build the same kind of magazine when he returned to Indonesia. The name *Tempo* was chosen as a synonym of the word 'time'. With its logo, cover colour, and layout, *Tempo* was recognisable as the Indonesian version of American's *Time* magazine, despite there being no connection between the two companies. The similarities even created dispute between *Time* magazine and *Tempo* in 1973. However, this dispute was solved amicably (Khairuddin, 2015). Outside of the physical similarities, it was admitted that *Tempo* is following *Time*'s spirit in using investigative journalism.

This spirit led *Tempo* to another dispute as a result of the repressive government, which decided to ban *Tempo* along with two other magazines on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1994. *Tempo* was considered to have violated the code of ethics by publishing subjective news related to government policy at that time. *Tempo* was allowed to continue its business with some conditions, including the rule of ownership, in that it must include people from the government in order to control the news feed. *Tempo* refused the conditions and chose not to operate anymore.

However, some former *Tempo* journalists decided to launch a digital version of *Tempo*. In 1996, *Tempo Interaktif*, the first digital magazine in Indonesia, was created with domain *www.tempo.co.id*. This channel became more effective in spreading news and views about politics and government policies because this online media platform was unreachable by press law at that time (Khairuddin, 2015).

The prohibition lasted for four years until the regime of the repressive government fell in 1998. The new president reverted the prohibition; almost immediately afterwards, former *Tempo* journalists gathered to determine the new format of *Tempo* magazine. As a result, through *PT Arsa Raya Perdana*, the first edition of *Tempo* magazine after the ban was published on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1998. At the same time, *Tempo Interaktif* was still in operation. The popularity was rapidly increasing, at an even faster rate than competitors at that time. Because of the positive ratings, management decided to publish the English version of the magazine, which was launched in September 2000. In the following year, the company went public. *PT Arsa Raya Perdana* changed its name to *PT. Tempo Inti Media Tbk.* to make it more recognisable to the public.

The information business under *PT. Tempo Inti Media Tbk.* was developing to a larger extent after the formation of other media products. In the same year, with the establishment of the public company, *Tempo* launched its daily newspaper, *Koran Tempo*. This newspaper was created to compete in the field of daily publication. Following the launch, *Tempo* also launched *Travelounge* and *TempoTV*. The company also established a data centre, which was the *Pusat Data dan Analisa Tempo (PDAT)* (*Tempo Centre of Data and Analysis*), providing resources for textual data, photos, infographics, and videos as a supporting data bank for the media group and for public use. Because of the significant development of information distribution, *Tempo* management created an integrated convergent environment by applying the concept of convergent newsroom management, including integrating its journalistic activities with social media. This management was then referred to as *Tempo Newsroom (TNR)*. With this concept, a journalist would be able to create newsfeeds of any format.



Figure 3.5 *Tempo* integrated newsroom. All editors for any news product work in the same building and can exchange information feeds within the integrated system.

(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of *Tempo.co*)

The development of *Tempo Interaktif* after the rebirth of *Tempo* magazine was continued and even became more popular. In 2008, *Tempo Interaktif* was given a chance to be more independent in providing news by using the new interface and more effective news reporting. In 2009 and 2010, along with the increase in the number of

visitors, *Tempo Interaktif* reached 3,000 news publication in one day. According to Google Analytics, there was a 190% increase in the number of unique visitors in 2009, with an average of 3.5 million visitors per month. In 2010, *Tempo Interaktif*'s advertisement revenue also increased by 26%. The management made the site more accessible by developing mobile applications, which can be accessed through smartphones such as BlackBerry, iPhone, iPad, and Android devices. As a result, the number of visitors increased by more than 500%.

Because of the developments and positive public response, *Tempo* management agreed to change the name of *Tempo Interaktif* to *Tempo.co*. The channel was not just a digital magazine anymore, but also a mega-portal to develop media convergence that allows *Tempo* to combine all media formats in its journalistic activities. The unique domain became a centre to access all products of *Tempo Media Group* in digital formats, such as the online version of *Tempo* magazine, *Tempo* magazine English edition, *Travelounge*, *TempoTV* streaming, as well as *Tempo.co*'s newsfeed. The public can also access or buy data from *PDAT* through this portal.

The mobile application was also enhanced and integrated into the new portal. As a result, *Tempo.co* applications received the Silver Award for 'The Best Mobile Media 2011' from the Asia Digital Media Award 2011. Recently, *Tempo.co* also won the world competition of Hackathon media held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016 by the Global Editors Network Association in Austria.

### **3.4.3 Viva.co.id**

This online news portal is a member of a leading Indonesian media convergent company, *PT. Visi Media Asia, Tbk.*, together with two news television stations, namely *ANTV* and *tvOne*. This media platform is one of the most popular and active news websites in Indonesia, actively sharing its main stories through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and news aggregators such as *Google News* and *Yahoo! News*. The audience can see how *Viva* uses the most recent technology through high-tech presentation, particularly when they watch convergent coverage from *Viva.co.id*, *tvOne*, and *ANTV*.

The development of *Viva* media is related to *Tempo* magazine's history. During the time after the government banned *Tempo*, its members were spread across the country to work in other areas of media and journalism. This situation also happened to four of *Tempo*'s most famous journalists, namely Karaniya Dharmasaputra, M.Teguh, Nezar Patria and Wenseslaus Manggut, who launched a news portal corporation on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008 so-called *PT. Viva Media Baru* under the management of *PT Viva Media Asia, Tbk.* Because of these journalists' experience in media and journalism business, this new portal, which was known as *Vivanews.com*, grew quickly, only needing three years to be recognised as equal to two other leading online media at the time, namely *detik.com* and *Kompas.com*.



Figure 3.6 *Viva.co.id* newsroom, where online media journalists retrieve information from two other platforms, *ANTV* and *tvOne*  
(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of *Viva.co.id*)

The high competition of the online media industry has meant that *Vivanews.com* needed to create a broader scope of coverage. For this reason, *Vivanews.com* decided to rebrand as a mega-portal. This mega-portal was built in order to meet readers' needs as segmented audiences who required not only big news in politics or business, as *Vivanews.com* usually provided, but also other general topics such as lifestyle, special sports, or local community issues.



To rebrand *Viva* as a media platform that covers everything, *Vivanews.com* needed to change its online identity, including its domain. Because management wanted the platform to be recognised as a portal made by Indonesians and because another international company has used the domain *Viva.com*, *Vivanews.com* changed its unique portal address into *Viva.co.id*. This mega-portal was officially launched in July 2012.

In April 2013, *Viva.co.id* was awarded the ISO 9001:2008 Certificate in the scope of Online Media and Portal Management System. This certification means that *Viva* has fulfilled the requirements needed to manage a large portal. However, following the launch of *Vivamews.com*, the significant change in the portal affected the company negatively in terms of ratings and popularity. The audience did not quickly recognise the new brand name since the previous one has been so popular. In the first three months after the portal changed its name, *Viva's* ratings level dropped significantly. Before the major migration, *Vivanews.com's* page views in June 2012 were 129,880,612, with 38,287,815 unique visitors. In July 2012, the views went down to 79,567,752 with only 31,480,519 unique visitors. The platform needed a one-year rebranding programme before recovering the same number of view. *Viva.co.id* finally revived its popularity with 150,089,099 page views and 58,488,355 unique visitors at the end of November 2013.



Figure 3.7 *Viva.co.id* lobby, redesigned after the formation of the mega-portal  
(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of *Viva.co.id*)

The mega-portal *Viva.co.id* is currently managing the following portals:

- a. *Vivanews* (news.viva.co.id), the original version of the news portal, providing national and international news on politics, economy and business, sports, technology, automotive, exclusive interviews, and special topics;
- b. *Vivabola* (bola.viva.co.id), a unique portal for football information including match reports and live scores, both international and national;
- c. *Vivalife* (life.viva.co.id), a portal that focuses on lifestyle and celebrities' lives, including health and travel information;
- d. *Vivalog* (log.viva.co.id), providing a place for the audience to share their own blogs as well as publishing popular ones;
- e. *Vivaforum* (forum.viva.co.id), a community portal with a discussion forum platform; and
- f. *Vivasocio* (socio.viva.co.id), a community portal with a social media platform for news and commerce.



Figure 3.8 Some of *Viva.co.id*'s portal desks  
(Source: Researcher's documentation courtesy of *Viva.co.id*)

### 3.5 Conclusions

This research design is designed to achieve the research objectives, which aimed to reach an understanding of curation journalism in Indonesia and break down the causes of the differences between Indonesian media practice and Western methods regarding

the implementation of social media in journalism. These objectives are feasible to be investigated using the qualitative paradigm.

Although this objective appears to be relevant to the textual inquiries, this research did not employ framing research. Instead, this research used a case study because it does not aim to merely examine textual messages of the media, but also investigate the practical context of framing itself through curation. Therefore, to achieve the research objectives, this study used observation, comparative studies, and interviews in addition to a textual analysis. These techniques are applicable in the frame of an intrinsic case study.

The data collection in the form of interviews and observations was considered effective to achieve the research objectives. Through these methods, this study was able to obtain in-depth information about media policies concerning the practice of curation journalism, the method of retrieving news material, and how the media presented their news. In order to justify the differences in journalistic culture between Indonesian and Western media, the research also employed comparative studies by using the case of the 'Jakarta Bombings' between Indonesian online media and what so-called international media. This comparison was useful to determine differences in media policies on the use of social media content as news materials.

The implementation of the interview process conducted in three Indonesian media outlets was also effective. In addition to the fact that the research subjects had implemented a convergence in the newsroom, the interviews were also supported by the closeness of the researcher and journalists across all three media outlets. The closeness was achieved through professional meetings that had happened before the research process. Furthermore, the closeness was also due to the researcher's personal experience as a media reader of the media. This condition has benefited the research process because it created a familiar atmosphere during interviews and made it easier to obtain information.

The operation of this research design offered a number of key findings, one of which was that there were similarities in media policies and journalistic cultural conditions across the three research subjects. The case study method supplemented by interviews obtained data not seen during observations. This information was useful material for



analysing and describing media policies as the base of the practice of curation and the use of social media content in Indonesian journalism.

As described in the following chapter, the information obtained from this case study is used in discussing in greater detail the facts of curation journalism implementation in Indonesia. The discussion begins in Chapter Four with a comparative analysis of the news visual displays based on the ‘Jakarta Bombings’ event. The chapter then proceeds with the discussion and analysis of the findings of observations and interviews on the use of social media in news production. Afterwards, the discussion is continued on the subject of the current circumstances of Indonesian media, which is based on the findings in the second phase of research in 2019.

# Chapter Four

## Comparative Study of the ‘Jakarta Bombings’ News Coverage in 2016: Differences in the Visual Display of the News

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### 4.1 Introduction

This study was based on the results of preliminary observations of the visual displays on online news and conducted by examining the structure of news in visual composition, presented on both international and Indonesian online media. The observations showed that Indonesian news publishers, visually, have different methods of curation compared to Western or international news networks. Consequently, this study involves a comparison between practices conducted by the Indonesian media and international platforms covering the same issue. As discussed in Chapter One and Three, the comparison requires a specific case to demonstrate the actual situation related to the implementation of curation journalism in the field. Therefore, this thesis used a case study as a method of analysis because it not only discusses practical curation in the theoretical framework or conceptual aspects, but also considers what journalists do in connection with these aspects.

On the basis of this requirement, the case chosen to is the coverage of an event so-called ‘Jakarta Bombings’ (or ‘Jakarta Attacks’) on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016. This case, as explained in the Introduction, has been because of the international coverage and national attention. This comparison of coverage of this case highlights how news companies, both national and international, provided details about the event and the sources that they used to support the stories. This inquiry also identifies, in turn, the role of the public's participation through social media, which has been defined as a significant factor in the development of curation journalism.

As stated in Chapter One, the practice of curation journalism can be processed in at least four phases: searching; selecting; sense making; and sharing (Bradshaw, 2013; Guerrini, 2013; M. Knight and Cook, 2013; Guallar and Leiva-Aguilera, 2013, cited in Guallar, 2014; Guallar and Codina, 2018). This thesis argues that these four phases may be identified in two ways. The first of these ways is by reading the news that is visually perceptible on the relevant media outlets page. In many cases, particularly in international online media, the news structure that appears on media pages illustrates the practice of curation; the news clearly displays links and images compiled from material scattered online. The reader would be able to easily identify curated material taken from someone's statement on Twitter or a video blog from *YouTube*. This first method is discussed further in this chapter.

However, not all curators in journalism use this method. This study found many online stories, particularly on Indonesian online media, written in a traditional structure. In a sense, the stories were written in a way that is frequently seen in conventional newspapers or magazines rather than combining news texts with hyperlinks from social media. However, it is possible that the journalist who wrote the news actually implemented curation techniques in the process of gathering information, even though it was not visually shown in the published news. For this case, this thesis has developed a second method of identifying curation practices, i.e. by investigating data collection methods. Curation deals with the process of gathering information from a number of online sources. In other words, traditional methods such as direct interviews or paper trails are not part of the practice of curation journalism.

Identifying curation by using this second method cannot be achieved by observing empirical evidence. Consequently, interviews with journalists and editors must be carried out to gain insight into how they collect material and the extent of online sources involved in the process. The discussion of this second method of identification is presented in Chapter Six.

In terms of identification, this chapter presents clear instances of online news presentation. The discussion includes screenshots of examples of the news from select media companies to illustrate the findings. This discussion begins with outlines of the results of observations on news presentations in web pages of *CNN*, *The Guardian*,

and *The Telegraph*. As explained in Chapter Three, these three online media outlets are used as examples of international media outlets with similar visual news presentation formats that represent audience participation in news production.

Illustrations show the similarities among these three media outlets in terms of news presentation and the data collection method. The pattern emphasises that there was a trend in storytelling structure, where journalists used social media content to tell a story. Furthermore, the three outlets did not hesitate to provide direct links to the original sources, which indicated a high level of trust of public voices. The involvement of audiences in the role of news producer was also shown by embedding social media comments within the story. Furthermore, the examples demonstrate that these news companies have the same method of presentation, namely displaying a chronological report updated minute-by-minute. This method makes the news' length longer progressively as a consequence of adding new comments or statements from the public.

The next part of the description provides screenshots of news presentation of three samples of Indonesian news media. The observation of *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* identified different ways of curating publicly generated content within the body of the stories. Based on the observation, the three news companies shared a similar pattern of presentation, which is different from what can be seen in the news presentations *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*. This result confirms what was argued in Chapter Two that, according to the visual display, Indonesian media outlets have not placed public participation in the same position as it is in international news media. Arguably, these examples of the Indonesian media are closer to the methods used in traditional journalism.

The discussion in this chapter emphasises the need to identify the practice of curation journalism through analysing visual display of the news. Bradshaw (2013), Guerrini (2013), and Guallar and Levia-Aguilera (2013, cited in Guallar, 2014) indicate that the process of curation journalism includes sharing the curated material in published news stories. The thesis argues that this first method identification is an attempt to determine the characteristics of curation journalism from the available evidence. The findings may become the first clues of whether the media has applied curation or not,

which can be used as basic information to conduct the second method of identification. For the comparison in this chapter, the visual display of the news structure shows the clearest differences between international media and Indonesian platforms, not only in the way that the media includes public voices, but also the way in which they arrange the length of the stories. It appears that the Indonesian media prefers to publish many short-length stories to deliver in-depth reports from various perspectives instead of continuous or chronological long-format news. The long-format news, on the contrary, is common in international media as a presentation style.

A number of examples are presented here to describe this pattern. However, the findings do not imply that these differences are a sign of the absence of curation journalism in Indonesia. Instead, these differences may represent a unique curation method and means of treating public voices, which is discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

The discussion in this chapter is concluded by pointing out the differences to generalise what was found in the comparative study. Based on the findings, the study argues that these different patterns of applying curation journalism can be generalised into a big picture of cultural differences, particularly especially between global news media, which is arguably close to the Western perspective of journalism, and that of a specific nation, namely Indonesia.

## **4.2 News Visual Display Differentiations: Western vs Indonesian**

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the capital of Indonesia, Jakarta, was hit by a terrorist attack. Several bombs were detonated in the centre of crowds. Numerous media outlets, including international news networks, covered this event. One of these networks was *CNN*, a popular news network based in the US. This news corporation presented its reports with a chronological article, which also embedded public statements in social media in its online publication. Those hypotheses would allow readers to be able to follow the original postings by clicking on each of them. An example can be seen in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1 Jakarta bombings coverage by CNN and a screenshot of embedded public's statement on *Twitter*.  
(Source: Gulano, McKirdy and Payne, 2016)

As observed from the news presentation format, *CNN* built the story using curation journalism. There are multimedia materials in the news presentation, including videos and photographs, taken both by the company's own reporters and from eyewitness postings on social media. Figure 4.2 shows the variety of curated contents in the body of the article.



Figure 4.2 Jakarta bombings coverage by CNN with series of photos and videos from various sources including social media accounts.  
(Source: Qulano, McKirdy and Payne, 2016)

This method allows *CNN* to create a chronological story of the event with statements from people on site or in the surrounding area. The opinions and comments on social media have made it easier for journalists to collect people's voices without the necessity to conduct *vox-pop* interviews in the field as used in traditional journalism. Furthermore, the multimedia format has offered greater advantages because journalists have been able to gather real-time footage. As a consequence, *CNN* was able to update the story every minute, which would expand the length of the article. Unlike the traditional media that has limited space for a story, a page on an online version of said story can be of unlimited length. Based on the observation, it is common for *CNN* to develop a story in a long-page format, particularly in the case of continuous news about a crisis.

The same curating structure in long-page format, minute-to-minute updates, and embedded social media statements also can be found when searching for the same



topic in other media such as *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. The illustrations from these two media outlets are shown in Figures 4.3 and 4.4.

The screenshot shows the Guardian's article page for the Jakarta attacks. The main headline is "Jakarta attacks: Islamic State militants claim responsibility - as it happened". Below the headline, there is a list of bullet points summarizing the event: "Six explosions reported in Indonesian capital", "Isi says its 'crusader alliance' was behind the attack", "Five attackers confirmed dead", and "A Canadian and an Indonesian also killed". A video player is embedded in the article, showing a scene of the attack. To the right of the article, there is a sidebar with a tweet from Charlie Winter (@charliewinter) reporting on the attacks. Below the article, there is a section titled "What we know so far" which provides a summary of the event. A red arrow points from a text box at the bottom left to the "What we know so far" section. The text box contains the text: "Chronological story with Public's statement on Twitter was embedded in the story structure".

Figure 4.3 Format of an updated story in *The Guardian* that includes a series of people's statements explaining the events on social media accounts (Source: Safi and Weaver, 2016)

In Figure 4.3 is *The Guardian*'s attempt to develop a chronological story by embedding public statements from Twitter. The comments were inserted between the article's paragraphs, as can be seen in traditional news format when journalists quote



statements from interviews. This figure shows that the social media contents were used as significant components of the story.



Figure 4.4 The same news format of *The Guardian*, displaying photos and statements from social media, including comments from public figures  
(Source: (Rothwell and Graham, 2016))

Figure 4.4 shows *The Telegraph*'s effort to present a multi-perspective story. With the same chronological structure as *CNN* and *The Guardian*, this media company delivered stories outside the main event that also included contributions from the public.

By looking at these two visual displays, as well as the example of the *CNN* report, the practice is close to what is described by M. Knight and Cook (2013) and Guerrini (2013). These authors define curation as gathering materials from scattered sources and compiling them into one structured story to emphasise that the role of the journalist in this curation technique is more than just *Austellungsmacher* or exhibition maker (Obrist and Raza, 2015).

Arguably, these media companies have optimised their role as gatekeepers by selecting materials from the public (through social media content) to enrich readers' knowledge. The variation of the selected information, which was different for each media companies, supports the argument of Shoemaker, Vos, and Reese (2009), which emphasises that different channels have different attitudes towards information they absorb. The differences occurred because every media company has its own policy and contextual frame, which determine the facts that it intends the audiences to know. This process is what Guerrini (2013), Knight and Cook (2013), as well as Guallar and Leiva-Aguilera (2013 in Guallar, 2014) mean by contextualizing or filtering information and adding proper and balanced analysis, or as Thorson and Wells (2015) state, an attempt to 'search out content and engage in reframing and remixing' (p. 37). As described in the literature review, this definition is a fundamental understanding of curation journalism, as well as the proper gatekeeping process or gatewatching (Bruns, 2018)

Indonesian online media outlets, on the other hand, have raced to become the first to publish a complete, sensational story about the bombing. For example, *Tempo.co* was one of the first news companies that published initial report, though it was only one paragraph stating that a blast was just heard in the area of the *Sarinah* supermarket. The report did not offer details, but the writer mentioned a promise to bring more information as soon as possible.

Based on the observation, the existence of social media is crucial in being the first to publish a story because it has become the initial sources of the fastest material. Before the official news was published with more detailed information, people at the scene had filled social media space with updates, comments, videos, and photographs. Some of these items were taken as supporting material in Indonesian media reports. However, although the similar process of curating social media sources could be seen

throughout the news, Indonesian online media developed a different style of news formatting.

From the observations of three Indonesian online media outlets, it may be concluded that there were at least two differences between Indonesian online media and international news networks regarding storytelling style in visual displays. The first difference perceived was that the Indonesian media did not directly embed the public's social media accounts within their news story, except for photographs and videos. If there was information or statement from social media content, the news author would rewrite it without a direct link to the source and treat the quote as if it was taken from traditional interviews.

Figure 4.5 below presents the storytelling style of *Kompas.com* by using statements from social media. The figure shows a screenshot from *Kompas.com* that published a statement from the General Crime Investigator of the Jakarta Police Department, Khrisna Mukti. This article discusses Mukti's answer on his Facebook account towards the accusation that Indonesian police has made up the terrorist attack. However, instead of directly embedding the original post into the story, *Kompas.com* only used the Facebook page as an image and rewrote the content as an indirect quote. This format is unlikely to appear on international news websites such as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* because readers who are willing to explore more information by clicking the hyperlinks cannot do anything with a still image.



Figure 4.5 Statement of the General Crime Investigator of Jakarta Police Department, Khrisna Mukti, which was taken from *Facebook*, was only copied as an image and the content was rewritten without a direct link to the original posting.  
(Source: (Kompas.com, 2016a))

Another example of the use of voices from the public can be observed on *Tempo.co*, published a chronological article by using eyewitness statements. As Figure 4.6 shows, *Tempo.co* attempted to involve the public via mobile chat application, namely WhatsApp.

INDONESIA ENGLISH

TEMPO.CO  
nasional

JUMAT, 17 JUNI 2016 MAJLIS TEMPO TEMPO ENGLISH KORAN TEMPO KOMUNIKASI TEMPO STORE INVESTIGASI FOKUS EDISI KHUSUS INDONESIA BUSINESS UPDATE

NASIONAL BISNIS METRO DUNIA BOLA GAYA SELEB CANTIK TEKNO OTOMOTIF TRAVEL FOTO VIDEO GRAFIS

HOME NASIONAL POLITIK

## Terpopuler

- 1 Banjir di Padang, Ribuan Rumah Terendam, Satu Orang Tewas
- 2 Mapol Gugat Presiden Turjut Tito Karnavian Sebagai Kapotif
- 3 Telusuri Dana ke Teman Ahok, Ketua KPK Ini Kasus Besar
- 4 Skandal Rp 30 Miliar, Bisakah Teman Ahok Dijerat Pidana?
- 5 Polisi Memperkosa Gadis yang Ditaksir
- 6 THR Harus Dibayar Selambatnya Tujuh Hari Sebelum Lebaran
- 7 Salpui Jamil Jual Rumah untuk Suap Panitera?
- 8 Ini Rahasia Sukses Inggris Kalahkan Wales
- 9 Dugaan Rp 30 Miliar ke Teman Ahok Bisa Jadi Suap Jika...
- 10 Sebut Jokowi Ganteng, Warga Brebes Dapat Amplop

## UPDATE Terakhir Bom Sarinah

KAMIS, 14 JANUARI 2016 | 12:17 WIB



Bejumlah petugas kepolisian berbaris saat terjadinya baku tembak setelah bom bunuh diri di depan pos polisi Sarinah, Jakarta, 14 Januari 2016. REUTERS/Beasiharta

Kirimkan foto/video/kesaksian seputar Ledakan Bom Sarinah ke nomor WhatsApp Redaksi Tempo 0811936687

### Update Terakhir Bom Sarinah

14.00 -- Jumlah korban yang luka menurut polisi mencapai 20 orang

13.47 -- Kronologi Ledakan Bom Sarinah

09.30 — Bom pertama meledak di depan gerai Starbucks kawasan Sarinah  
 10.00 — Terjadi ledakan bom kedua di Pos Polisi  
 10.15 — Terjadi ledakan 3 di mobil hitam di Jalan Thamrin  
 10.30 — Mulai terjadi baku tembak antara pelaku bom dan polisi. Pelaku bom ada di sekitar gedung Jakarta Theatre menembaki polisi yang ada di Jalan Thamrin. Pelaku kemudian meninggal akibat ledakan di dekat mobil

13.10 -- Presiden Joko Widodo dari Cirebon Mengomentari Insiden Bom Sarinah

**TEMPO CHANNEL**



"Jangan Meminjam Alat Negara untuk Memukul Minoritas"

The editor asked people to send materials through their *WhatsApp* channel then rewrote them

Figure 4.6 *Tempo.co* published a crowdsourcing attempt by asking the audience to send their materials related to the bombing and then rewrote them.

(Source: Tempo, 2016b, now can only be seen on the link for mobile version <https://m.tempo.co/read/news/2016/01/14/078735978/update-terakhir-bom-sarinah>)

In Figure 4.6, the presentation was similar to what *The Guardian* has published. The difference is that, on *Tempo.co*'s version, there was no live to hyperlink to the source, which is understandable because the data was taken from a chat application and not public social media. However, by observing this example, it may be argued that



*Tempo.co* prefers not use the public's real voices to appear in its article. Even though the editor told the readers that the site retrieved the chronological information from public contributions, the actual publication did not include the original post. Instead, the data was rewritten as if it was the site's own work.

The closest to what international news networks use is available on *Viva.co.id*'s website. Unlike *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, *Viva.co.id* is more open to including the public's voice on social media and providing direct links to the original posting. These links are inserted into the body of some articles. The structure is similar to that of CNN and *The Telegraph*, which embedded the quoted social media contents among the article's paragraphs and made them parts of the story structure.

However, as shown in Figure 4.7, the article was not chronological; the structure was not established in the long-format news that could be expanded every minute. Social media content was treated as news materials from traditional interviews. Instead of collecting facts to build a complete story, the sources were cited as *vox-pop* interviews to show how people reacted to the event. Consequently, the selected quotes in this version of the *vox-pop* article were actually not significant in building the news package because they did not add facts or development that would enrich the story of the bombing.

The only social media content chosen to present information on the event's progress was from the authorities' official accounts, such as the Police Department's Twitter account. Based on this finding, it may be assumed that, although *Viva.co.id* has made an effort to use embedding technology to reveal the original links of the social media contents, this condition has become a symptom of not respecting ordinary people's voices in developing the news. This finding is similar to what is happening with *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*.

BERITA

BOLA

LIFE

BLOG

FORUM

OTOMOTIF

NASIONAL

Bom Sarinah Diawali di Kafe Amerika Starbucks

Ledakan terjadi lebih dari lima kali.

Oleh: Harry Siswoyo

Kamis, 14 Januari 2016 | 11:20 WIB

Situasi pasca bom bunuh diri di Sarinah, Kamis 14 Januari 2016. (Twitter @DapurIvan)

80

00

Tweet

0

Print

share

Like

+

VIVA.co.id - Sebuah ledakan diduga bom terjadi di ruas jalan MH Thamrin Jakarta Pusat, Kamis 14 Januari 2016.

Kesaksian sejumlah orang, ledakan kuat terjadi lebih dari lima kali dan dilaporkan menghancurkan sebuah pusat belanja Starbucks dan pos polisi yang berada tepat di tengah Jalan MH Thamrin.

Tak cuma itu, ledakan ini disertai dengan suara tembakan. Sedikitnya tiga orang dilaporkan meninggal dunia akibat kejadian ini.

"Awalnya ada suara ledakan, tembakan. Orang berlarian dari starbuck, tiba-tiba ada suara ledakan, disitu jalan langsung dikosongkan," kata seorang saksi mata Irian.

Official statement from the police and civilian comments on the event

BERITA

BOLA

LIFE

BLOG

FORUM

OTOMOTIF

Kepolisian juga melakukan proses sterilisasi jalur lintasan.

TMC Polda Metro Jaya

@TMCPoldaMetro

Follow

11:13 Pasca Ledakan Depan sarinah , lalu lintas sekitar di lakukan sterilisasi. @TioXeniaclub

4:14 AM - 14 Jan 2016

443 84

Sejumlah netizen, pun ikut menyuarakan keprihatinannya terkait ledakan ini. Akun bernama Akmal Sjaifil [redacted] menuliskan,

[redacted]

Follow

Ya Allah, beredat foto2 mengenai korban bom di Sarinah. Innalillaah... Allaahummaghfirahum...

4:16 AM - 14 Jan 2016

14 1

Lalu akun bernama [redacted] menulis,

[redacted]

Follow

ya Allah perempaan sarinah ada bom 🙏🙏🙏

4:16 AM - 14 Jan 2016

1

Figure 4.7 Screenshot from *Viva.co.id* showing the initial news about the Jakarta bombing, which included the public's reactions on social media and an official statement from authorities (Source: Siswoyo, 2016)

Using the authorities' statement in the news is relatively common because the media aims to provide information from trustworthy, credible sources. Moreover, the choice of source becomes crucial when journalists decide to take materials from social media to accompany information from traditional "real" informants. As discussed in Chapter One, social media content is considered to enhance the inquiries conducted by a

journalist. In a network environment where journalists closely with the network, they may become more dependent on network members' contributions (M. Knight and Cook, 2013). This argument occurs both in international news media and Indonesian media. However, there is a difference in terms of the media's trust of network members. Seemingly, international media has already accepted the significance of ordinary people's comments, whereas Indonesian media is still reluctant to rely too much on these materials. This hesitation may be why the Indonesian media prefers the authorities' statements over ordinary people's comments.

The second difference between international news networks' style and the Indonesian media's style regarding the implementation of curation journalism is in the story format. Instead of publishing a long-format story with one main headline to show minute-by-minute updates, as can be seen on CNN, *The Telegraph*, and *The Guardian*, it has been observed that Indonesian online media tended to prefer short stories (no more than three or four paragraphs) that describe facts from different angles. These stories were then collected in one group of selected news, such as *Topik Pilihan* (Selected Topics), a special group of news in *Kompas.com*, or *Liputan Khusus* (Special Report) as seen on *Tempo.co*.

An example from *Kompas.com* is seen in Figure 4.8. The compilation of short-format news about the 'Jakarta Bombings' event could be accessed by typing recognisable keywords into the search box. In this case, readers could use keywords such as *Teror Sarinah* or *Bom Sarinah* since the event was close to the *Sarinah Shopping Centre*. The selected stories about the bombing event would then appear under the title *Teror di Kawasan Sarinah* (Terror in Sarinah Area) in the *Topik Pilihan* section.



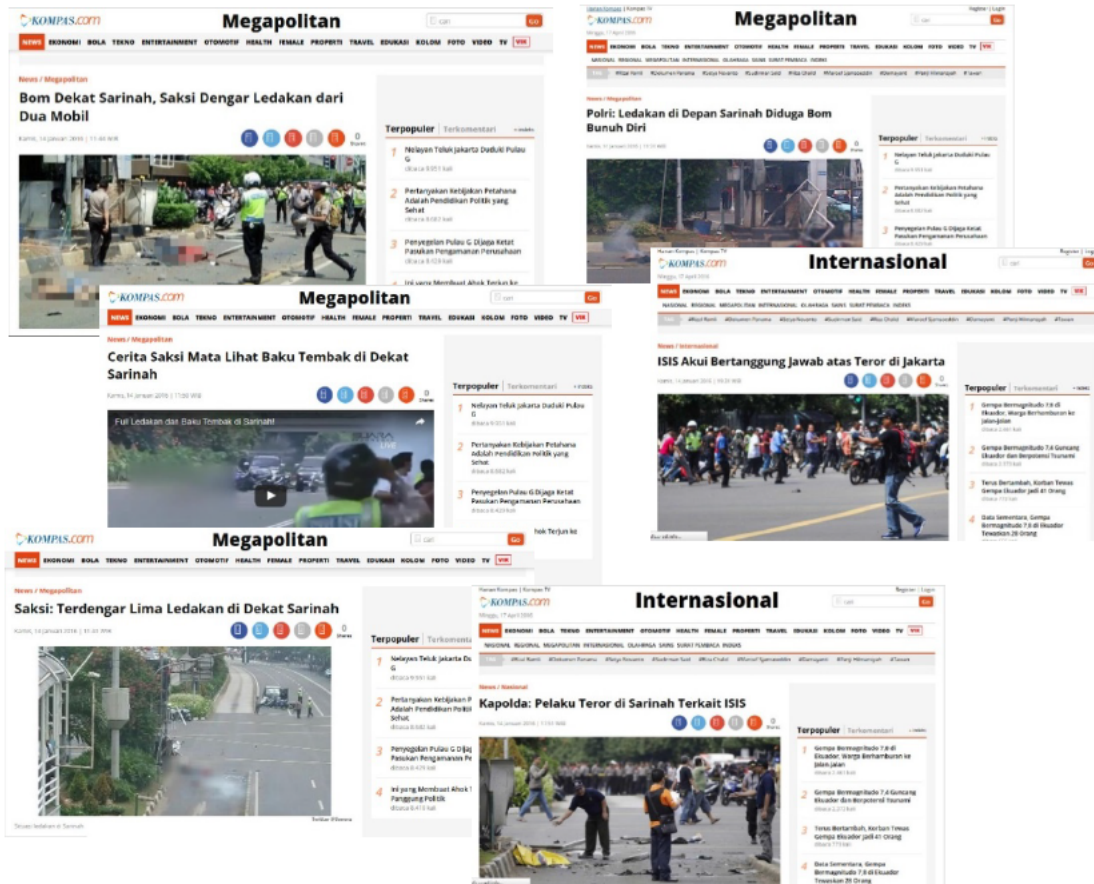


Figure 4.8 Group of short stories about the Jakarta Bombing on *Kompas.com* collected in one special section called *Topik Pilihan: Teror di Kawasan Sarinah* (Selected Topics: Terror at Sarinah Area). (Source: Kompas.com, 2016b)

By accessing this section, readers were able to read various stories from different perspectives. These stories described the development of the event, from the first announcement without detailed information to the latest development when ISIS claimed to be responsible for the bombings. There was even one special short article about an official statement from the police regarding the ISIS claim.

Figure 4.9 shows another example taken from *Tempo.co*, which also published updates in the form of many short articles rather than one long story. Similar to *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co* also has a compilation of related news in a section called *Topik* (Topics), which could be accessed through the use of specific keywords. In the case of Jakarta Bombings, readers can use keywords such as Jakarta bombing, *bom* Jakarta, *bom*

Sarinah, or relevant terms to find relevant news under the title of *Teror Bom di Thamrin* (The Bomb Terror at Thamrin) in *Topik*. Thamrin is the name of the main street where the *Sarinah Shopping Centre* is located.

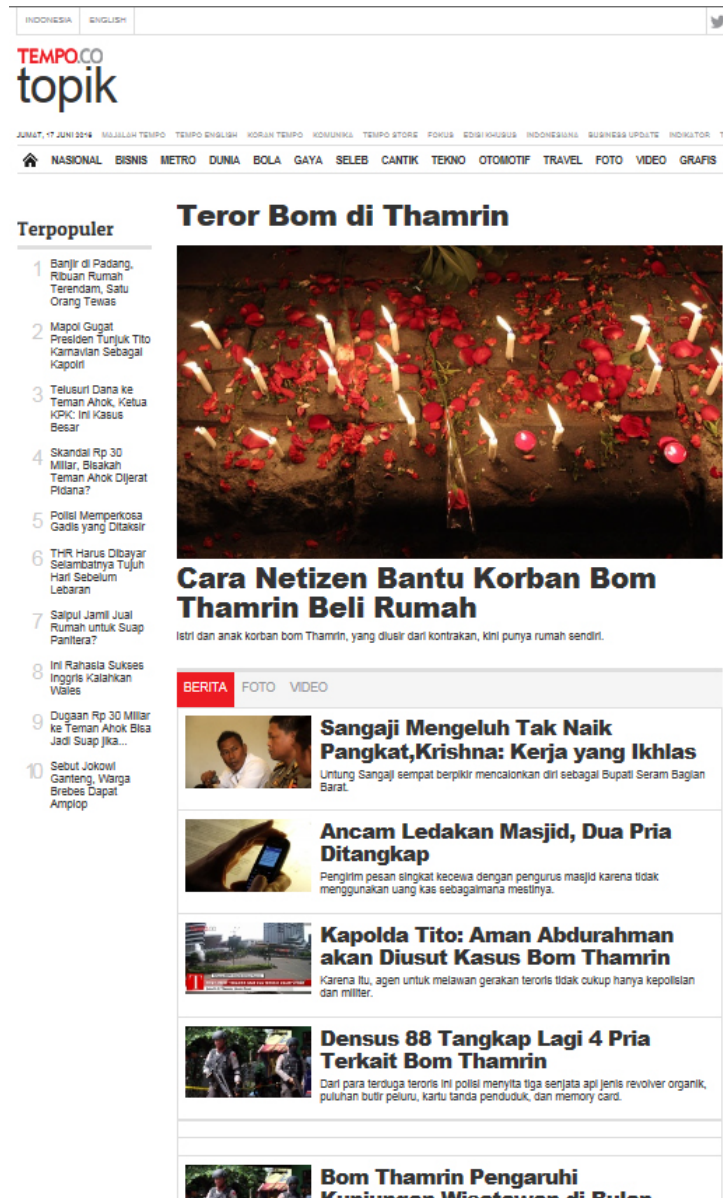


Figure 4.9 A part of the *Topik* section of Tempo.co, a special compilation of all news – mostly short stories – in any format about one event. This particular event was *Teror Bom di Thamrin* (Bomb Terror at Thamrin Street).  
(Source: Tempo, 2016a)

In each story, unlike international media, *Tempo.co* did not combine reporters' investigation with social media curation as a storytelling style. The stories were more

often presented in the traditional format of news. *Tempo.co* did not appear to conduct much curation in Jakarta Bombing report, except for one chronological article that involved the public through WhatsApp.

A similar pattern can be seen on *Viva.co.id*. Although this online news provider is flexible in using social media content and online resources for news production, the format of its news still differs from what can be seen on *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*. Similar to the other two Indonesian media platforms, *Viva.co.id* also prefers publishing numerous short news rather than one long-format story. However, in contrast to *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, there is no special section dedicated to news compilations. Instead, around the time of the actual event, the media provides a ‘hot issue’ banner on the top of its homepage to direct readers who want to follow the updated news. The banner is then taken down after a few days, after which readers are still able to follow the stories by using the hashtag.

The readers could also type hashtags in the search box, which would allow them to make their own compilations. As shown in Figure 4.10, in compiling relevant news on the ‘Jakarta Bombings’ the readers could use the same keywords as those used on *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*. The list of relevant news would appear under *#Bom dan ledakan di Sarinah* (Bomb and explosion at Sarinah). An example related to ‘Jakarta Bombings’ can be seen in Figure 4.10.



Figure 4.10 A selection of *Viva.co.id*'s short news under hashtag for keywords *Bom dan ledakan di Sarinah* (Bomb and explosion at Sarinah)  
 (Source: Viva, 2016)

Based on the observations from this comparative study, this research emphasises that *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* shared a similar pattern of news presentation and curation techniques, whereas *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* also had implemented a comparable method of writing and presenting stories. This situation justifies the two groups of news presentation that, since the beginning of this chapter, have been named as an international news network's presentation and Indonesian

media's presentation. There must be reasons behind the differences between these two groups because this study was conducted on the same case. The reasons are likely to be based on special conditions, which are discussed in the following chapters.

### 4.3 Conclusions

This comparative study on 'Jakarta Bombings' coverage has separated the research subjects into two groups of news networks. These groups were initially distinguished on the basis of their business scope, which are both international and national. The differentiation was then justified by the similar patterns that the members of each group use in presenting stories that involve social media contents. It was observed that *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*, as representatives of international news networks group, shared the same method of curating content from social media. *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*, which were selected to represent Indonesian online media, employ similar methods of curating and presenting stories with social media content, though the platforms employ different methods. This difference emphasises the research's hypothesis that Indonesia has a unique curation method in comparison to the global practice of journalism in this era of social media.

Based on these observations, there are at least two key differences between the news formats in the international networks group's presentation and the Indonesian media's presentation, specifically in terms of building a story with social media content. The first one difference is how they treat public participation in the body of the news. Unlike international networks, the Indonesian media is reluctant to quote original public statements on social media. Arguably, Indonesian online editors are more likely to use traditional journalism, though some materials might be taken by curating posts on social media.

The second and more apparent difference is that the Indonesian media prefers to implement the result of curation journalism in many short stories instead of creating a long story with live-update reports as commonly occurs in international networks. Consequently, the involvement of the public in contributing to the development of the event cannot be detected. This system is different to what happens in international networks, where public comments on social media cause the story to expand

constantly, providing latest developments on the event to the readers directly from those in the field.

Considering these two differences, it may be argued that international news networks may have dealt with more sophisticated technologies and more democratic environment. Indonesia, on the other hand, has not been left behind in terms of technological development. As discussed in Chapter Three, social media communication is particularly popular in this democratic nation. Therefore, arguably, there are other factors, such as cultural aspects, as well as the specific perspective of Indonesians towards public participation in journalism, that may cause differences. This conclusion does not imply that Indonesian media have abandoned the practice of curation journalism. On the contrary, the findings show that Indonesian media, arguably, has a unique curation method that leads to differences in the visual display of the news seen on the Internet. These arguments led this research to conduct more in-depth inquiries, considering that they came from a comparative study of two groups from similar circumstances.

A number of specific questions then arose regarding these conditions. Firstly, why is Indonesian media so reluctant to include the voice of the public in news production? Secondly, why do Indonesian companies use short-format news, whereas international companies use long-format news to provide a space for contributions from the public? Finally, are there any ethical concerns to consider when involving public participation, and are those concerns part of why the Indonesian media prefer traditional journalism methods to the open environment of the social media era? As an attempt to answer these questions, this study used observations and interviews, the results of which are discussed in the following three chapters. These findings reflect the perspective of Indonesian media towards the development of curation journalism, disclose how Indonesian media actually uses public participation, and determine the actual use of social media in journalists' existing daily practices.





# Chapter Five

## News Visual Display Policy and Economic Values in Indonesia

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### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how media companies implement the practice of curation journalism based on what is presented in a news visual display. As Chapter Four stated, the visual composition of online news websites indicates that international news networks and Indonesian online news media display curation journalism in different ways.

Chapter Four argued that curation practices that have been used internationally, particularly in Western countries or those that follow a Western journalism style, have been open to the possibility of incorporating contributions from non-journalists into the structure of the news body. The storytelling style of reporting that has become popular in international news media has added flexibility to the structure, making it easy to update by adding materials from public voices, particularly from social media. As a consequence, the length of a news story is no longer fixed, as is often the case in traditional media. On the contrary, a story can be lengthened in line with the progress of events on the field.

As seen on the news on the sites of *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*, it is common to find similar news trends, particularly when tracking the timeline of events that continue after the news has broken. New additions are usually dominated by public voices on social media who post comments on the incident or give testimonies directly from the scene. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, this technique is not often employed. Media outlets in Indonesia tend to use a different method for news updates. If public involvement in flexible long-format news is an indication of the implementation of curation journalism, Indonesian journalism does not use this format.



This chapter discusses the methods used by Indonesian journalists in packaging curation results in news presentations displayed online. This review is based on the results of interviews with journalists who work at subjects of this study, namely *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*. As discussed in Chapter Four, all three media outlets use similar techniques in describing the progress of an event. Instead of extending stories by adding material to the news structure as in the same way as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*, these three news companies prefer to publish numerous short stories. In other words, the events that occur in the aftermath of an incident are reported in several different stories from a variety of perspectives.

Based on the results of the interviews and observations, this study found that one other factor influenced this policy outside of readers' habits and Indonesian culture. That factor is economic issues, in that policy brings certain financial benefits for the company. All the influencing factors are discussed later in this chapter.

The chapter first describes the findings from the three media companies in separate sections to outline the different context of each outlet. The sections are followed by an analysis and discussion that will provide a general picture of presentation policy in Indonesia. The study suggests that there may be a specific working culture in Indonesia since the three media outlets, as Indonesian media representatives in this research, provided similar responses as to how they published stories.

Section 5.2.4 discusses three factors that may explain this unique method of presentation. The first of these factors is Indonesians' reading habits, the second is the working culture of online media, and the third is the page views ratings that determine the economic values through advertisements. In general, the media's policy to write short stories rather than long ones is an effort to adjust their presentation to Indonesian audiences' reading habits, which in turn, creates a significant economic return. A number of aspects of Indonesian culture are also key in shaping editors' decisions.

Indeed, this study only uses findings from three Indonesian media outlets. However, the findings that these three outlets have the same preference for presenting the results of their curation, which may emphasise the general characteristics of Indonesian online media practice.

## 5.2 News Presentation Formats on Indonesian Online Media

### 5.2.1 Compilation of Short Articles from *Kompas.com*

One noticeable difference between international news networks and *Kompas.com* is that this Indonesian online media outlet does not publish long-format chronological news to show updates of one event. In the case of the ‘Jakarta Bombings’, the editors preferred to publish many short articles with different titles and angles rather than one headline with an extendable length. Furthermore, the editors of *Kompas.com* argued that the differences are part of a typical Indonesian style, claiming that the style influences the general format of the news presentation, not only at *Kompas.com*, but also at almost every online media corporation in Indonesia:

This is actually just about the news presentation format. I don’t think that any Indonesian online media outlet presents news updates using a chronological style (long-format news display). In Indonesia, news updates are shown in separate articles, each with a title. These short articles are then compiled in one particular section. The chronology itself could be seen from the development of those separated titles. I do not know who started this trend, but it seems that the format is prevalent across the country.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

According to *Kompas.com* informants, this unique style of the Indonesian online media is caused by a number of factors, the first of which is related to the culture of the media industry:

In Indonesia, industrially, online media is fettered by “page views”. Apparently, for almost all Indonesian online, media including *Kompas.com*, page views are related to the number of articles. Therefore, the more articles we produce, the higher the possibility of the article being read and shared by many people. This is a bit different in foreign online media or wires; they only provided one news link, which is kept updated. Therefore, a key difference is news presentation.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Editors at *Kompas.com* define page views as the number of readers who not only clicked on the relevant link but also read the whole article from beginning to the end. *Kompas.com*’s IT and marketing division usually count one-page views as when a reader reads a story until the end of the page. Therefore, if a reader does not reach the end of the page, the page view is not counted.

In this sense, arguably, publishing many short stories instead of one long article also has economic benefits. Though a long-format story would contribute cohesiveness to the story in terms of gaining an in-depth understanding of one event, the story would only be counted as one view, which is not ideal for attracting potential advertisers in Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesian media outlets tend to publish short stories; furthermore, as readers do not need to scroll down to the end of the page to finish the story and can quickly move on, ideally to another article.

The second reason for this structure is related to technical difficulties; *Kompas.com* is still facing challenges in implementing technology to embed social media codes compatible with all platforms, including mobile applications. Therefore, the outlet is still reluctant to write long articles with direct quotes from social media sources:

We are still trying out our interactive mode because we still have obstacles in creating coding script that compatible with online, mobile, and desktop. It is difficult to find a script that can be used for all formats.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Similarly, *Kompas.com*'s Managing Editor mentioned that, though it is not something impossible for the IT department, it may pose a challenge:

When we produced information similar to what *The Telegraph* did with embedded codes, the data would not appear on some mobile applications, either IOS or Android. Even now, when we embed codes, we have to sacrifice our readers who read the news from mobile applications.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

The third reason for which *Kompas.com* uses a format that differs from the globally popular style and is specific to Indonesian media consumption habits; the editors recognise that Indonesian people lack critical reading skills. Therefore, the Indonesian public is less likely to read long stores and are often deceived by the article's title without determining its relevance to actual content. From the perspective of social media communication, the specific division of *Kompas.com* that deals with social networking admits that creative headlines are necessary for online publications, especially when the story is published on social media.

We cannot talk in just narrative; we need to be more bombastic. Therefore, especially on social media, we usually need to rewrite titles to attract readers to click on the news link. We have to assume that many of our readers just read the title and the lead (without reading the whole story).

(*Kompas.com* Informant #3 from the Strategic Partner Development Division, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Although this reluctance to read the entire story might be a common characteristic of the global millennial audience, a preference for short articles is a specific characteristic of Indonesian audiences. *Kompas.com* determine that this characteristic was specific to the country after communicating with foreign journalists:

When the title is singular and remains unchanged, the readers will assume that there is nothing new to report. Therefore, we have to follow the updates by creating a new article from a new angle. This is unlike what happens with *CNN*, which usually publishes a new article about one event more slowly; maybe an hour from the first title, we would find a new one. However, when we read this single article, the content is varied and profound. For competition across the Indonesian online media industry, I think that we still need to create minute-by-minute updates in separate articles. This is only happening in Indonesia, because, even in Malaysia (which has a similar culture), the news-updating format is similar to what we find on international networks' news.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

The informant from *Kompas.com* stated that there are benefits from short stories outside of those for advertising. Short stories also allow reporters and editors to create news from many different angles. Consequently, this method is useful in building an in-depth story but requires further effort in writing. Furthermore, the editors at *Kompas.com* stated that this method did not bring difficulties because it has become a habit from the long history of *Kompas*' standard operational procedures. Reporters and journalists at *Kompas.com* are used to writing articles from many angles:

Processing many news materials for an editor is basically the same, either for updating one article only or many. It is true that writing many stories might take longer because we need to think about the completeness of news elements, the 5Ws 1H and quotations, for each angle of the news. On the other hand, it is much quicker to write one article because we add sentences or new facts.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

The method of using long-format news has been considered by *Kompas.com*, especially because it would be useful in saving time. However, the informants admitted that the newsroom needs more courage to break the habit because the journalists have already been too familiar with the existing pattern. Arguably, it is not

only the audience's habits that created the characteristics of *Kompas.com* news format, but also the habits and culture of the company too.

### 5.2.2 Compilation of Short Articles from *Tempo.co*

Similar to *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co* usually publishes updates in the form of many short articles rather than one long story; this story presentation method is closer to the traditional format of news. *Tempo.co*'s editors stated that the newsroom does not have the policy to publish an updated story in the same way as international networks do because *Tempo.co* needs to be careful about the news format that it creates. The reasons for this need to be careful are related to technological factors, the audience's preferences, and the media industry culture, which were also mentioned by *Kompas.com* informants.

Regarding long-format articles, the editors claimed that *Tempo* journalists were used to developing long, comprehensive pieces because they have been doing it for *Tempo* magazine and newspaper for many years. Therefore, *Tempo.co* journalists are comfortable with long stories such as those presented in the international news websites. However, there are some restrictions in practice, which makes *Tempo.co* journalists currently reluctant to do so for the online version.

The first restriction is technical issues; *Tempo.co* admitted that the company has not been able to develop the most efficient technology to do what international media has done, particularly in combining narrative and embedding codes that can be applied to any platform. *Tempo.co* has not found an adequate application that meets its needs

The format found on international news ideal, but applying it is not easy. What I imagined was involving people who are verified and responsible, but even that, we have not been able to do because the application is not ready. At the moment, all public relations officers in every institution can produce their own online news release, and we can also grab them, but we have not done so because of technological shortcomings.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

As well as technology, *Tempo.co* editors also stated that they have a lack of human resources, which relates to *Tempo.co*'s policy of publishing many short articles rather than one long and updated one:

Creating the (long-format) news like that is not easy, we need one skilful editor who has time to stand by and update it all the time. On the other hand, for short stories, we can use alternate editors. This is a more technical problem that causes *Tempo* to still use short-format news.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

According to editors from *Tempo.co*, the integrated newsroom of *Tempo Media* now allows journalists to work for any media format. Therefore, *Tempo.co*'s writers and editors may be needed to contribute articles for *Tempo Daily Newspaper* or to update the story for *Tempo Magazine*. These two media formats are still considered *Tempo*'s leading products because they generate the most revenue for the company. Therefore, many human resources at *Tempo Media* today are used to help the magazine and newspaper. Only a small number of people with limited skills concentrate on developing the online media, which means that *Tempo.co* does not have the ability to improve innovations.

For me, the content of our online media will be developed (into its ideal form) in the future. If we have not done this yet, it is only because of lacking human resources and opportunities; this is more about our people's capabilities to create that kind of news style.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Another issue is centred on Indonesian audiences' habit to consume information from the mass media, which was also true for *Kompas.com*. The Indonesian online audience, especially young readers, prefer to read short stories rather than long-format news, which has become a dilemma for *Tempo.co*. On one hand, *Tempo*'s reporters prefer to create long, in-depth investigative reports. On the other hand, the dominant *Tempo.co* audience now is in the range of 24-35 years old. Within this age range, people are considered young and technology-minded and retrieve 80% information from a mobile device, which also means that they prefer to read short articles.

In Indonesia, it depends on the audience we want to target and in what range. If we're going to focus on young people, we do not write long stories. It is okay to write an investigative report in a long format for the older audience, but for young readers, it would not be effective. This indeed is a dilemma. As a publisher, we cannot determine who our main target audience is. If we set the net as too broad, it would not gain optimal result because they have different behaviour, though it would attract high traffic. Moreover, with too broad a segmentation, it would be difficult to curate materials.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #2 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

However, because of its strong tradition of in-depth reporting, *Tempo.co* editors are still keen on writing investigative reports for online consumption.

I actually like *The Guardian's* or *BBC's* style. When following football match report, for example, we just need one link and refresh it for more updates. For some people, it is easier to follow the news with this structure.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

The social media division also sees this tradition as a selling point, as well as an attempt to retain *Tempo's* goal to educate the public:

The uniqueness of *Tempo* lies in its in-depth stories. There's no problem if other media publishes many short stories, whereas we create one long article. This could educate the audience too (to read more). The readers could have short stories from anywhere, but an in-depth report would only be available at *Tempo.co*. We are actually educating our readers, like what happens at *The Washington Post* or *The Guardian*, but it is only in the investigative report section for now.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

To provide easier access to long-format articles, *Tempo.co* has been using the Instant Article service on Facebook. This collaboration with Facebook contains specific risks for *Tempo.co*. Because of this easy access, *Tempo.co's* audience might move to Facebook to read articles without the necessity to visit the original site. This tendency may that *Tempo.co's* engagement with the public as well as the database that has been built over the years will cease. There will also be consequences from a media business perspective since advertisements on *Tempo.co's* website could not penetrate the Facebook page. To prevent more severe consequences, *Tempo.co* made an agreement with Facebook to limit the number of articles that can be published on Instant Article, though the collaboration is ongoing because *Tempo.co* obtains technical benefits:

They use a long format, which is published for the readers' comfort when accessing long articles. Next, we will try to put our long investigative reports that also contain videos and photos. The Instant Article format fits that purpose because articles will load more easily and automatically connect to multimedia.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #2 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

However, the effort of publishing long-format articles is made by the social media department and not by the news division. For the consumption of the *Tempo.co* news

section, the newsroom generally publishes short-format news. In the same way as *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co* also updates its coverage about one issue in many articles rather than just under one headline. Occasionally, *Tempo.co* publishes some long-format news, in which the length is limited for some business reasons:

The long-format articles we have written never exceed two pages long. The first reason is to guarantee the readers' comfort, and the second one is for page views.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

The significance of page views has always been one of the most important reasons for creating many articles. Again, this issue is similar to what *Kompas.com* editors suggested previously. Editors at *Tempo.co* admitted that, currently, publishing many articles for one event is still more useful for the industry. The more published articles, the more readers visit the web, the higher page views will be. Therefore, in writing many articles, *Tempo.co* would be able to attract more advertisements:

For me, it is just about using the most comfortable style. *Tempo.co*, until now, has preferred to use the short-news pattern. The other reasons are about page views and adjusting to the reading habits. For Indonesian people and page views, many short articles are more beneficial than a single long article.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

It is clear that *Tempo.co* values the practice of curation with long-format stories as the international networks do as an ideal news format. In the future, *Tempo.co* is eager to use this format within its online news presentation. However, currently, it may be argued that *Tempo.co* is still confident about the style that tends to be close to traditional journalistic practice because it allows *Tempo.co* to maintain its experience and reputation in gathering and presenting in-depth reports. Moreover, *Tempo.co* editors feel that what the international networks are doing today is the something that they have already done; they do not just quote certain contents, they do a cross check and replace incorrect contents with more reliable sources, a basic journalistic principle. Thus, the international networks' practices are still the same as what *Tempo.co* does; only the presentation is different.



### 5.2.3 Compilation of Short Articles from *Viva.co.id*

As revealed in the comparative study in Chapter Four, *Viva.co.id* tends to use the same methods as *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, regardless of their advancement in technology. Even though this media outlet is technically able to use the same format with *CNN*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Guardian*, the editors prefer to publish as many short stories as they can instead of one single headline with the long-format news.

As also arose in the previous section's discussion, the reading habit appears as one of the reasons. Similar with what *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co* found, *Viva.co.id* observed that Indonesian readers, in general, prefer shorter articles; with longer articles, readers come to feel uninterested, stop reading, and move on to new material.

For this reason, the long-format article is not popular; we avoid it. Instead, we break our running news into a number of articles. We also need to make sure that the presentation style is attractive. We know that people usually get bored when reading more than eight paragraphs, so we try to deal with it by creating another article from different news angle.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

Regarding updating the news, it is possible for *Viva.co.id* to use a similar chronological format seen in international media. However, the editors decided not to publish the story within that format of presentation; instead, the updates were presented in different articles under different titles and simple presentation. It was rare to find one long report with all of the content. *Viva.co.id* concedes, apart from the consideration of page views mentioned by *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, there are still limitations to creating complex articles in the same way as international news outlets. The restrictions are both technical and non-technical. The primary technical problem is the existing broadband for the Internet application that *Viva.co.id* uses; it is not wide enough to make the combination of content easy to access.

When the broadband is increased, we may be able to add videos to our articles. Until now, we publish videos separately from the text. We will be able to present a multimedia presentation in the future.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

Meanwhile, the non-technical factor is the journalists' states of mind. The editors considered that their reporters and writers do not have the proper skillset and knowledge to write a chronological story:

The drawbacks are not only from the audience's side, but also from our states of mind and capabilities for creating a more interactive presentation. In curation journalism, we do not just present straightforward news. We need to directly embed people's statements, infographics, etc. We need technology and creativity to do that. We are not there yet, but we will be.

(*Viva.co.id* informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

Based on this discussion, it can be seen that *Viva.co.id* anticipates having the same news format as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*. The platform has already opened for public participation and made its contents into attractive multimedia. The primary obstacle, however, is the current public and infrastructure, which are still inadequate. Consequently, the achievement of what editors call the ideal standard of journalism is not yet possible.

Nonetheless, editors from *Viva.co.id* are still confident about the outlet's future in curation journalism practice, which reflects that *Viva.co.id* optimistically sees the development of public participation and curating method within journalistic practice. Similar to *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, who are close to technological developments, particularly in terms of technology, *Viva.co.id* has expressed an eagerness to reach the online journalism format as seen on international news networks.

#### **5.2.4 Analysis and Discussion**

This chapter has focused on the length of the news and how each media outlet presents the structure of the story because of its relation to the media's behaviour in treating social media content. Because curation journalism relies on updated information from social media users, it is understandable if the news, particularly the chronological report, is expanded and becoming longer every minute to provide new updates from the public. This lengthened story is a common thing that can be found on international online news platforms. However, the case is different in Indonesia, making the consideration of the news format significant for this research. If the Indonesian media follows the international trend of curation journalism, the format should be similar. Even in Malaysia, as Indonesia's closest neighbour in South East Asia with a similar social culture, the media has been applying the same strategies as *CNN*, *The Guardian*, or *The Telegraph*, according to the editor of *Kompas.com*. This unique characteristic

is an indication that the media in Indonesia is using a distinctive method of curation in terms of physical or visual displays of the news story.

The findings from the three media outlets are similar. Regardless of their competition in the media industry, a generalisation about these outlets' practices in embracing curation methods implemented in their news presentation may be discussed. Seemingly, as seen across all three media outlets, economic factors are the main background of the policy.

The first similar finding is how they find that Indonesian reading habits would make the readers reluctant to read a long-format news article. The interviews revealed that the three media outlets' editors were aware that Indonesian people do not like reading long stories. As a consequence, the media needs to build a story in many short articles, allowing readers to choose their preferred headlines from different perspectives. There are links provided as guidance for readers to follow other stories with the same theme, which tend to use sensationalist phrasing in order to attract the readers' attention.

This view opens a discussion of the issues in Indonesian culture, as explained in Chapter Two. Arguably, the Indonesian tendency to avoid reading long documents or looking for details of a problem may be due to cultural factors. These problems may be related to Hall's ideas of high-context culture (Jandt, 1995) and a culture of collectivism (Hofstede; 2011, Sihombing and Pongtuluran, 2011). Moreover, this problem could also be a consequence of the orality of Indonesian society (Ong, 2002; Mulyana, 2017, cited in Rudi, 2017).

As stated in Chapter Two, humans who live in high-context cultures are not accustomed to talking directly about an issue; they are more accustomed to using metaphors and convoluted speech to avoid disputes because of becoming offended. As a result, humans familiar with this context are not accustomed to providing or receiving information that contains explicit data and prefer information disguised by other messages.

A high-context culture is also similar to the characteristics of a collectivist society. In a collectivist culture, maintaining harmony becomes a key component of communication. Therefore, in human relationships, people will try to avoid things that

cause debate. As a consequence, many truths are then not revealed, and people only discuss subjects that are non-controversial.

Based on Hall's theory, as well as the concept of collectivism, it makes sense that Indonesians who have lived all of their lives in this kind of culture prefer not to read long articles or examine accurate data, which may lead to further debate; they prefer to read short articles that have an implicit message.

The cultural distinction means that Indonesians have a significant consideration in operating non-verbal messages and allowing the points of context evolve along with the communication process. This characteristic is the cause of the 'laziness' of Indonesian people in reading long and detailed articles.

Moreover, as detected by Mulyana (2017, cited in Rudi, 2017), most Indonesians live in what Ong (2002) refers to as an oral culture, a condition with a minimum experience of a literary tradition. There is not just only a lack of willingness to find documented details of evidence, but also an avoidance of the reading of lengthy materials. Providing short stories with varied headlines is considered more useful in attracting people's attention. Reading will be more dynamic than scrutinising one unexciting article, which will make the readers stay on their websites and, in turn, maintain their loyalty to the media outlet.

The finding on the impact of culture on news production supports the idea that technical obstacle is not the primary issue in the media industry; the uniqueness of the culture is. This factor differentiates how a nation interprets the effectiveness of using the media (Supriadi, 2016, 2017). Following this argument, the study found that, from the editors' perspective on the current conditions of Indonesian culture and reading habits, it would be more useful to focus on attracting as many readers as possible rather than enhancing the quality of the writing. Moreover, this cultural factor of Indonesian journalism also affects journalists in trusting statements from general audiences, which also affects the policy of newsrooms on the use of social media content. A further discussion of cultural aspects of Indonesian communities and social media involvement are presented in the following chapter.

I found that this method is a pragmatic solution of the media in dealing with the current circumstances but not making Indonesian society more civilised. Instead, Indonesians' reading habits and collectivism, which influence the news presentation format, might make people less critical. Although the media has succeeded in attracting many readers with sensationalist headlines, they have not changed the quality of people's lives to become more critically literate. Arguably, the habit of reading and spreading unreliable information remains across all levels of society. Consequently, particularly in this era of social media, Indonesia will potentially become one of the most significant sources of false accounts and hoax news. This tendency for fraud is not likely to occur in a democratic nation, which relies on the transparency of information.

Moreover, there will also be a threat to journalists' ability to maintain professionalism. As argued by McQuail (2013), professional journalists should be able to promote morality to avoid harmful attitudes among the public, which includes ensuring the quality of their work. In this case, instead of giving the public adequate morality, these three Indonesian media outlets seem to let the audience drag them into the inappropriate habit of consuming information. This behaviour is forced by the nature of Indonesian culture, which has not yet achieved a critical reading habit, which is crucial in democracy.

The second finding is on the work culture of the media itself. Based on the observations of the newsroom and the findings of the interviews, the study found that the work culture when these media outlets, particularly *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, focused their business on print media still significantly influenced their practice in the online media business. This influence has supported the policy to publish short stories instead of long ones. *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co* both have a history of leading news companies in print media and used to employ many reporters to contribute to articles from various angles. Therefore, editors are already familiar with the policy of creating many stories and do not consider it a difficult task, though greater effort is required to oversee multiple articles. At *Viva.co.id*, although the editors come from broadcast media instead of print, the existing culture also sustains the policy. *Viva.co.id* named this culture a 'a set of minds', which refers to the both audience's and newsroom's preference in choosing the format of the news presentation.

Because Indonesian culture in journalistic practice is close to what occurs in traditional journalism, it is understandable the unique development of curation journalism in Indonesia. Regardless of audiences with an oral culture and collectivism, the media itself is still in the shadow of its past golden age. I argue that media outlets are aware of the presence of what so-called ‘the public sphere’ in this era of social media and, on some levels, are actively involved in it. However, the public sphere has not embedded totally in their work culture as journalists in the newsroom. Somehow, the rise of public authority to legitimate the public opinion by its own, as Habermas alludes to, has not affected news production. These three media companies prefer to deal with the public sphere outside of the news department in a way that is more relevant to marketing strategy. Furthermore, Richard Sambrook from the BBC mentions the fall of media gatekeepers (Allan, 2010), which does not seem to be applicable to these three Indonesian media outlets’ newsrooms. The environment of the newsroom, despite having been practiced in the convergent-multimedia circumstances, is still close to traditional journalism.

However, based on the interviews, the editors, as individuals, have considered the development of the practice seen in the international media’s publications as their future. Therefore, these people have not considered the current condition of curation journalism as ideal. There is an impression that, arguably, editors see the Western culture of journalism, as shown by mostly international news networks, as the most effect reporting method for the current era. However, as business companies, editors should abandon idealism and deliver more marketable stories.

The third finding relevant to all three media is the importance of page views. The connection to ratings is a unique characteristic of Indonesian media in comparison to other countries. Although this rating is universally applicable in the world of business marketing and advertising, the way in which media companies in Indonesia, as well as the stakeholders, respond to it is unique. Generally, potential advertisers define page views ratings by the number of pages that the audience accessed. The more pages that the audience reads, the higher the market value of the media. This hypothetical argument is simple, but the implication of the format of the news is significant.

In Chapter One, there was a brief discussion of how online material online will develop by itself, not because the contents are intentionally added by the authors, but because the material will increase and be spread widely through the hands of readers (Nasrullah, 2015, cited in Supriadi and Agustin, 2018). Therefore, the article does not have to be of a particular length because the most important factor is that the writing is able to attract the reader to read the article then continue reading other related articles, which is attractive to Indonesian advertisers. Therefore, the more news that is published, the more that readers will get involved, offering benefits to all parties involved.

This thesis concludes that the business factors surrounding the online media industry in Indonesia are the most significant factors in influencing editorial policy. The factors determine the format of the news presentation, as well as the way in which the media places the voice of the public in the news. As long as this kind of economic force remains, it will be difficult for Indonesian media outlets to follow what the international news networks do. The media will need to continue publishing short stories and sensational headlines and halt efforts to explore the more sophisticated presentation methods, which also means that they must limit public participation in news presentation for marketing reasons.

The current conditions in Indonesia seem not to be beneficial to the development of curation journalism. Furthermore, the limitations on discussing public participation in the news may affect the democratisation of the society. However, from other perspectives, these limitations could also be considered benefits because they demonstrate the unique character of Indonesian online journalism, which reflects the cultural aspects of Indonesia.

Moreover, publishing multiple articles from many perspectives allows journalists to cover an event from as many angles as possible. Therefore, it is possible to implement many news values on one event and attract more readers because of the provided angles. As expressed by Weaver *et al.* (2007, cited in Harcup and O'Neill, 2017), news values resonate with what the audience needs to know and reflect economic factors related to publishing information to the public.

Economic factors may be why the media tends to publish articles with sensationalist titles rather than more general headlines. Firstly, this method provides options for the readers to choose the news that they prefer to read. Second, as argued by Sigurd Allern (2002, cited in Harcup and O'Neill, 2017), sensational stories always attract a larger audience. However, sensationalist headlines will not help society to become more literate, which is crucial in the era of open information and social network communication.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The purpose of this chapter was to explore further news visual displays discussed in Chapter Four. Discussing the news presentation displayed on the platform's website is the most appropriate method for identifying curation practices used by relevant media outlets, specifically three Indonesian media outlets.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Indonesian online media, which are represented by the three outlets in this study, have developed a different style of news presentation from what tends to appear on international news networks. The main differences are the length of the news and the policy used to write articles with various headlines, which also limits the space available for direct public participation. Arguably, these characteristics are evidence of the unique nature of curation journalism in Indonesia because it reflects the tendency of the media and the audience to see the results of the practice.

Based on observations and interviews, the study obtained three main findings that generalise the reasons behind the unique visual display format of the news presentation across these three online news publishers. The first finding is that the Indonesian audience's reading habits are related to the oral culture, which brings reluctance in terms of consuming long texts. Because of this habit, editors prefer to deliver their news over many short articles rather than just one article that is expanded every minute to facilitate updates. The second finding is that the work culture in the newsroom is still influenced by the media's history in traditional journalism era. The editors admit that writing articles from various perspectives is preferable because the journalists and the editors have the traditional experience to write in-depth reports. The final finding



is the involvement of the page view rating system in Indonesia. This particular system counts the number of pages that the audience read and affects the market value of the media outlet. Naturally, publishing many articles will increase a page's value, whereas one long article will only be counted as one page regardless of the depth of the content. In other words, multiple short articles are of a greater economic value to the company than one long article.

The three findings represent the Indonesian use of curation journalism in terms of presentation. It may be argued that the marketing and economic factors have contributed to a specific culture of news presentation that might not be able to provide an ideal method publishing curated materials from the public. This presentation method may hinder public participation in the journalistic process. From a business perspective, the position of public participation in the news department has not yet become a priority.

Moreover, it has been argued that the three media outlets seem to take for granted the current conditions of Indonesians who live following the norms of oral culture. This situation does not support the idea of promoting a critically literate society because journalists are only following people's preference without trying to develop an informed readership. However, the oral culture is considered significant in terms of marketing and maintaining the loyalty of the audience. Arguably, this situation may be considered pragmatic, where following what people want is advantageous for business.

This pragmatic condition may be a disadvantage of the development of curation journalism in Indonesia, particularly if examining the practice from the perspective of Western culture in global journalism studies. However, this condition is not necessarily a negative development. As argued in Section 5.1, this situation may be demonstrating that Indonesian journalism has a specific style of curation journalism. This style may be the most appropriate way to deal with the cultural characteristics of Indonesia. Furthermore, this presentation method has the potential benefit of providing essential news values to a broad audience. However, this thesis argues this method is not the best most effective means of bringing Indonesian culture to a more literate society.

The media's responsibility in building a more informed society is a key component of professionalism. Furthermore, there are ethical considerations that protect the public from the harmful effect of journalistic activities. Arguably, these three media outlets have ethical considerations that lead them to use curation journalism and reformulate the way in which they treat the public's voices in news production. Chapter Six presents this theme at further length, closing the discussion research findings and discussions.



# Chapter Six

## The Use of Social Media Content as a Curation Technique Behind the News Visual Display

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### 6.1 Introduction

Related to the findings of Chapter Four on news visual displays, there are specific aspects that need to be discussed at greater length. As seen in online news presentations, media outlets in Indonesia have not been eager to use voices from social media in their news stories. Furthermore, almost all of the material in the displayed news reports is the result of the work of the reporters themselves. This lack of inclusion of social media content raises the question of how the newsroom actually addresses the potential presence of social media in journalism curation in Indonesia.

This thesis argues that what is seen in visual displays does not necessarily suggest that Indonesian media does not implement curation journalism. As mentioned in the opening chapters of this thesis, curation might still be practiced, not as something revealed in visual display of the news, but instead as a technique of production. This chapter discusses a second way of identifying curation implementation, which is to investigate the process of gathering the information.

This thesis is based on the assumption that the implementation of curation journalism can be seen in terms of to what extent the media includes public voices on social media. The development of curation journalism practice coincides with changes in the behaviour of audiences, who have become more active in participating in the news production process due to the development of social media technology. The fundamental principle of curation journalism is to take materials from social media to be used as supporting information in building a story. These materials could include photos, videos, or even comments from people on a specific event. On this basis, it is essential to look at how the media treats social media in their news production process.

Based on the field research at *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*, this chapter uses qualitative data to discuss the background of Indonesian editors' attitudes toward social media content, also aiming to determine whether Indonesian media, represented by these three outlets, use curation journalism. The method of using social media content, however, may reflect the preference of these Indonesian media companies in implementing curation journalism within their professional culture. Media outlets in Indonesia seem to have their own perspective on using social media content that differs from that seen on global news.

As discussed in Chapter Five, the discussion of this paper large uses the results retrieved from interviews with selected informants from research subjects, as described in Chapter Three. The objectives of the interviews are to identify the details of media preferences in including public participation and the reasons for which it differs from the global practice of curation journalism as seen in international media. Based on these objectives, the interviews were directed primarily with key decision makers, such as the managing editor or the editor in chief. As part of the research process, these informants recommended other people considered capable of answering more specific questions. The process was acceptable in terms of achieving the research's objective, which was to gain information on every division in the newsroom and which outlet has the most positive relationship with social media content.

Similar to Chapter Five, this chapter describes the interview findings in three separate sections based on the research location that take into account the uniqueness of the practices in each newsroom outlet studied. The descriptions are followed by a discussion section that analyses them in a theoretical frame to generalise the results. In the same way as Chapter Five, the structure of this discussion turns is beneficial in concluding the inquiry because similarities in the interviews' results beyond the unique characteristics of each media outlet.

This chapter is concluded by highlighting the general causes of the differences; it is determined that the unique media's attitude toward public participation in Indonesia is caused by three factors: the high-context culture in Indonesia; the credibility of Indonesian people as information sources; and the companies' work culture, which is influenced by their history as traditional media. These conditions were based on

similar answers from the three different media outlets, which may support the research hypothesis on the general conditions of Indonesian journalism. Arguably, the use of social media as in the global practice of journalism, which is often seen in Western research on journalism, is applied differently in an Indonesian context.

## **6.2 The Use of Social Media Content in News Production**

### **6.2.1 The Use of Social Media at *Kompas.com***

This thesis assumes that one of the indications of the curation implementation in news production is the inclusion of social media content from the general public. As seen from the international news examples in Chapter Four, the common practice to include social media content in a news story is by embedding links between paragraphs. This practice allows readers to see the original posts from the social media accounts.

The use of curation at *Kompas.com* is unique. According to the findings of the comparative study in Chapter Four, *Kompas.com* does not use embedding, except for photographs and videos. The public's comments, opinions, or textual reports about specific events are still used, which emphasises the fact that *Kompas.com* uses curation journalism, but not in its original form. Content is rewritten and treated as if it were from traditional interviews. However, this method does not imply an apathy towards what the public say; instead, the way in which *Kompas.com* treats the voices may be seen as the result of little respect for the public opinion, which is contradictory to democracy, a key condition of participatory and curation journalism.

Regardless of the use of this method, the research at *Kompas.com* found that social media content is considered one of the most important elements in news production. In many events, social media becomes the first source of information before the reporters go to the scene and conduct a further investigation of more comprehensive information. Social media content has been used at *Kompas.com* for a number of years:

In terms of news publication format, *Kompas* has not applied what is usually used by foreign networks such as *The Telegraph*, which has been practising curation from outsources and then using them in a running story. However, *Kompas* has been using social media materials for years, such as when the Indonesian Police started to publish on their Twitter account to give

information about metro events, such as traffic queues, accidents, or conflagration, about three years ago. That kind of information was beneficial for our journalists.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14th April 2016)

At the beginning of social media involvement, journalists were instructed not to automatically trust information until the editor had officially verified the account. In the case of using the Police's Twitter account, journalists were instructed to always verify content through the police contact centre or the Twitter account's admin. However, after a while, especially the relationship of reliance between *Kompas.com* and Police Information Centre had stabilised, verification was no longer required.

The relationship with the social accounts is to emphasise that *Kompas.com*, at the time, relied on social media contents from known and substantiated institutions, or from verified accounts such as politicians or celebrities. Social media content from ordinary people was still considered valuable input but not to be quoted. However, the information taken from a verified social media account was not always directly quoted as the main part of the story. According to editors at *Kompas.com*, there were two options at that time to process this content within a news story.

The first option is to rewrite the content into full new information, or the second option is to directly quote the post as supplemental information, not as primary data, after collecting the main facts from the field.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14th April 2016)

One of the reasons for which journalists have to rewrite stories is due to level of trust. The editors believed that the readers had greater confidence in the journalist than in social media content. It was considered that rewriting the posts provided further opportunities for the editor to verify the information by contacting the account owner. It may be argued that *Kompas.com* was comfortable with traditional journalism used for print newspapers. In other words, *Kompas.com* still prefers to control the objectivity of the story using conventional methods.

Another factor included technical limitations; when journalists started engaging with social media communication, *Kompas.com*'s computer system was still not compatible with social media content, meaning that the editor could not provide an embedded link. *Kompas.com* had once tried to present the original posts with a

screenshot and inserting the image into a story; however, this image was still and did not provide a live link to bring users to the original account.

However, the media outlet has been developing in terms of technology. Currently, within its technological developments, *Kompas.com* has been ready to publish embedded code that allows the media platform to directly quote social media content and offer a hyperlink to the source. Furthermore, the editors and the technical department have agreed to insert the embedded code of social media content within the body of the news, not only for supplemental information, but also as primary data. Editors attempted to use this method at the beginning of 2016, specifically for soft news or human-interest features, which is contradictory of current practice because – based on the observations in the preliminary research, as well as in the comparative study, it does not occur in the production of hard news or crisis reports.

The position of social media itself within news production is considered significant, particularly in sustaining the business and following communication trend among the audiences. Public voices on social media are regarded as an instrument to identify currently trending topics. Using this method, the editors can attract people's attention to follow the story since they provide what people want to read. However, *Kompas.com* had not considered social media content as a main news source:

We use social media content only to find trading topics as a reference. We develop our own issues that we find ourselves rather than what we find on social media; it is one of our source variants.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #4, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

*Kompas.com* editors admitted that following social media could compromise the independence of the newsroom since whatever topic discussed on social media usually become the editorial's top story. In this situation, the media outlet may be accused of taking a side. *Kompas.com* editors argued that the editors always try to be objective, though it is sometimes difficult to be neutral.

We have our framing, but we keep promoting the fact. When somebody is likely to become part of a story, it is likely because people are talking about this person or if his or her statements have been quoted by many people. Like it or not, the media is an industry. When there is a popular keyword searched for by many people, we will try to focus on it.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, interviewed for the second time on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016)



*Kompas.com* editors stated that the accusation of partiality, particularly in political debates, might be related to people's maturity in democratic society. In more developed countries with a long history of democracy, it is common for the media to explicitly state their support of one political party because taking a side is regarded as a part of democracy itself:

In America, for example, *Fox* supports the Republicans, whereas *The New York Times* supports the Democrats. In stories such as the general election, each news outlet states its political preferences. With this information, the readers will be aware of and understand that, when they read *Fox's* media, they are reading the news from a Republican perspective. The only strict rule is on how these media outlets present the fact and maintain their credibility.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> interviewed on 15th April 2016)

However, *Kompas.com* found that, in Indonesia, political alliances have not been made purely as a democratic effort by the media. There are too many political interests possessed by media owners, which make them fall into practical politics and using the media as their weapon:

Here, we can see that some political parties use certain media but not openly because the owners have started to become politicians. Therefore, whereas the American media can maintain its factuality, the media here just obeys the owners' wishes in many cases to beat their political opponents without caring about the real facts and data on the field.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #4, interviewed on 15th April 2016)

Based on how *Kompas.com* values the current needs of the public, it may be seen that the platform is still cautious in placing social media content as a primary source. Instead, the materials are treated as supplemental elements in news production. There is still hesitation to use the public as partners rather than just readers, even though *Kompas.com* has already admitted that the position of the public is more than just as audience since the emergence of social media:

When the editors decide to trust social media content as a reliable, responsible source, of course, there is an opportunity to place the user as a partner. We have built an inventory of verified, trustworthy social media accounts. What we do now is not to take the contents of social media. Instead, our reporters use social media to distribute information such as live reports. This is one of our efforts to allow the audience to receive information more quickly because we are online. So, before a reporter writes a full story for the website, he first sends basic information via Twitter to enrich the public's knowledge.

Therefore, when the reporter is still on location, the audience has already been able to update the news.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, interviewed for the second time on 15th April 2016)

Based on this response, it may be argued that the public's voices on social media are used to maintain the media's engagement with its audience. Therefore, *Kompas.com* uses social media more for marketing purposes rather than as main sources for a news story. This strategy is emphasised by the managerial structure at *Kompas.com*, where the Social Media Division is below the Marketing Director instead of the News Department, though the job descriptions are supplementary.

Until the end of 2015, our job was only to promote the news portal. We just delivered news to social media to gain return visits to the website. In 2016, we found that social media is no longer a place for sharing personal activities only, instead becoming a unique platform for distributing information. Therefore, we began to distribute content rather than just promote it. We distribute news content through any platform.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #3 from the Strategic Partner Development Division, interviewed on 15th April 2016)

In early 2016, to widen its role as content distributor, *Kompas.com* has changed its Social Media Division and created a new division that called 'Strategic Partner Development'. With this new name, the division is not only dealing with social media account traffic and relationship maintenance with the loyal audiences through social networking, but also finding and maintaining the possibility of creating a business partnership with social media providers, buzzers, and news aggregators, as well as monitoring the trends that appear in social media conversations.

This division clearly differentiates its work from what the news department does because it does not deal with editorial policy or news content. However, as a content distributor, it does use journalistic practices when it shares *Kompas.com*'s news content on social media; it needs to create teaser lines or 'clickbait' to attract people to follow the link to the website. Therefore, the management allows this division to write its own news leads for social media publication.

In many cases in the past, this division even meant that new titles were given to new articles on a story, which indicated if the number of readers was increasing. The lead and the new title, however, are still controlled by news editors to ensure the

consistency of the topic. Therefore, the job descriptions of this new division are still manageable between the Marketing and News Departments.

The increased workload of the division has enhanced *Kompas.com*'s focus on maintaining engagement with the public through social media, emphasising the media's point of view on the crucial position of social media platform in its business. In 2013, the existence of social media decreased the number of visits to the *Kompas* website. However, the number significantly increased after the division's change, where social media could be used to improve the website's traffic:

People could easily retrieve information from social media without the need to check specific news websites. Despite the public's awareness of existing news portal websites, they prefer to use social media because they find their role models there. In 2013, only 5% of *Kompas.com* readers entered our site after reading our social media posts. In 2015, this figure was almost 30% of *Kompas* readers who used the link in social media to enter the site. In 2016, after we changed our job to content distribution and not only promotion, the level of readability in our articles in social media can be measured as equal to the website version.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #3 from the Strategic Partner Development Division, interviewed on 15th April 2016)

The condition as pictured in the statistical data mentioned by the informant was interpreted based on the *Google Analytics* integrated with the *Kompas.com* marketing system. It has been helpful to maintain *Kompas.com*'s existing market because, according to their data, only adult readers go straight to the website to read the news. Readers below the age of 24 in general never intentionally open the *Kompas.com* website, preferring to use links provided in the shared news in social media to access the platform's original content.

To summarise, *Kompas.com* values the existence of social media as a substantial contribution to the online news. However, *Kompas.com* has not been willing to involve the public to a large extent in news production because there is too much unreliable content on social media. The unreliability of social media becomes a challenge since this communication network is able to quickly distribute information. Similarly, *Kompas.com* admits that effective curation journalism will be beneficial in selecting content. Therefore, the media will be able to embrace the advantages of social media technology.

### 6.2.2 The Use of Social Media at *Tempo.co*

*Tempo.co* has been looking at the important position of social media in producing news stories and ensuring business. However, the involvement of public voices in news production is not yet considered a primary element. This point is similar to the perspective of *Kompas.com*.

*Tempo.co* does not rely too heavily on social media content from ordinary people. The editors still allow some material to be directly quoted, but these materials are limited to the verified or public figures' accounts only. Moreover, these direct quotes or embedded content are only applicable to soft news such as entertainment or lifestyle news. It is uncommon for *Tempo.co* to directly use people's voices for hard news or stories such as crime or political news.

If it's just about some artists who show their fashion, it's fine (to directly quote or embed the social media content code). We can easily cross-check and verify the information if there are complaints about the contents, which often happens. However, when it comes to sensitive issues, such as corruption or serious allegation, there is no chance for us to quote people's voices directly. Even if the information comes from a public figure's social media accounts, we cannot take it as it appears. We need to find the main source. We try to apply journalistic principles as far as we can. Only social media contents about limited soft issues are allowed without strict verification.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

This information is verified with data from the comparative case study in Chapter Four, where *Tempo.co* did not use social media content from an eyewitness. The footage and photos were *Tempo*'s original property and taken by *Tempo* reporters. Only some initial documentation was taken from international news agencies and social media posts.

Indeed, as discussed in reference to examples from Chapter Five, *Tempo.co* has used public opinions on social media as additional elements, though they do not appear in their original format. The editor rewrites and presents the materials a small part of the story. Referring to what McAdams (2011) defines as crowdsourcing, this method is more like crisis mapping rather than curation since the editor asks the audience to send information through WhatsApp.

In many circumstances, *Tempo.co* is still comfortable with traditional journalism. *Tempo.co*'s policy states that the newsroom would never consider ordinary people's

statements as news material that can be quoted. Instead, social media content could be used as a starting point to familiarise readers with actual events. However, *Tempo.co* will always send its reporters to follow the hints, as what was done by traditional media, before actual news is written.

One of the reasons for the attitude of *Tempo.co* towards the involvement of social media content is the maturity or intellectual level of the Indonesian audience. *Tempo.co* still believes that the Indonesian public is not reliable enough to be treated as a reliable source. According to what *Tempo.co*'s editors have observed, it is not the matter of willingness to put controversial political ideas to the public, but more about the quality of critical thinking. Editors believe that Indonesians are less willing to use clever phrasing or statements than a Western audience. This evaluation is based on the quality of people's voices on social media. Even though Indonesian people are active on social media, they tend only to discuss insignificant issues. The information is unreliable because of the absence of responsible data and sources, and it is still difficult to collect accurate and reliable statements on social media because of the lack of responsibility when spreading false information.

In current Indonesia, which is significantly less literate than Western people, the public's involvement in news production is still tricky, particularly when allowing them to determine a news topic or angle. Involvement may follow the existing *Indonesiana* rubric, where we open access for the public to send us messages; they can send us news, information, etc.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

With this condition, *Tempo.co* does not wish to risk its reputation as the source of reliable news and in-depth reports, preferring to use its own reporters' exploration, as shown in the example of 'Jakarta Bombings' case. However, *Tempo.co* still considers social media usage in Indonesia. Editors understand the crucial consequences of the online media industry since the public's habits on and use of social network applications tend to estrange readers from accessing the site:

Currently, people no longer need to open a news portal; they only have to go to social media. It is quicker, there are more updates, and there are often solutions. In a matter of seconds, we can have access to a global network of users.

(*Tempo.co* informant #2 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Therefore, to anticipate the consequences, *Tempo.co* become part of social media trends; it currently follows all popular media outlets. *Tempo.co* understands that social media is also an industry, making it a key competitor. Using this concept, *Tempo.co* is trying to be careful and not only be driven by trends.

We follow social media developments, but the social media developers are also doing business. Therefore, we need to consider integration but still gain benefits. If we only follow the trends, it will have negative consequences for the business.

(*Tempo.co* informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

As shown in the 'Jakarta Bombings' case, social media content played a small role in the curation that *Tempo.co* conducted for the event. Instead, *Tempo.co* uses social media as an alternative channel for distributing its products. It has been proven statistically that *Tempo's* involvement in social media communication has helped it to maintain engagement with its readers and make its news materials more accessible.

This engagement is also enhanced by the use of a blogging service. *Indonesiana* is one of *Tempo.co's* sections that are built in a blog-like format. This department was created as a public blog with *Tempo* as the moderator, with the objective of storing as and publishing contents uploaded by the users. *Indonesiana* users are part of the public who are given access to freely convey their ideas, opinions, reviews, as well as their own creations such as writing, photographs, audio, or videos. Users can also provide a link to their own blog.

However, it has been challenging for *Tempo.co* to find responsible authors among *Indonesiana* users because there are limited articles on the blog that talk seriously about a specific issue. *Tempo.co* sees that people seem to be more talkative on social media communication rather than on a blog format. This habit could be caused by the nature of social media, where people can say anything anonymously, making the information unreliable.

Twitter may be more accessible for sources because it can be anonymous. On the other hand, on a blog, people tend to build a positive image because it contains their names, their photos, allowing readers to explore who the writers are. This situation means that people cannot write something offensive on the blog because it is an environment more conducive to discussion than Twitter.

(*Tempo.co* informant #4 from *Indonesiana* section, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

According to *Tempo.co*, 60% of message contributors on *Twitter* in South East Asia are from Indonesia. Indeed, based on the data, Indonesia can be considered as the ‘most talkative’ country in the world.

People in Indonesia are talkative. Even in *Twitter's* origin country, there are not that many conversations. However, this shows that Indonesian people love to comment and like to deliver an opinion. It is a good thing actually, creating a good climate for discussion.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #4 from *Indonesiana* section, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

However, the positive climate alone has not convinced *Tempo.co* to trust people voices on social media. *Tempo.co* sees that the involvement of the public to contribute seriously to support news is limited. *Tempo's* position can be seen in the way in which people deliver their opinion in, for example, the comment section of a football match report in Indonesian online media compared to international networks such as the *BBC* or *The Guardian*:

When we read comments on football match report on the *BBC* or *The Guardian*, the opinion becomes clear; it could be the match pattern, or about the game policy. We could see how intelligent the readers are. Our people here are not like that yet. The comments are usually general or making fun of one another, not offering any useful knowledge or perspective, which is a key obstacle. However, we can still make progress in the future.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Another reason for which *Tempo.co* is less likely to involve public voices in news production is to maintain their credibility as a pioneer of investigative journalism. Editors want to be strict on journalistic principles because they have a reputation as a reliable news source. This attitude reflects that tradition still influences *Tempo.co*:

Traditionally, *Tempo* media has two news formats. The first format is of investigative reporting accompanied by a long-format article, in-depth writing, high accuracy, and *Tempo's* narrative style. This investigative format is the general style of *Tempo* magazine. The second format is that of daily reports, which is also written generally in the same style because we are already used to it. Even if we are writing an article for a newspaper, we produce it seriously with in-depth reporting elements. We use the same method for online media.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Based on this response, it may be assumed that using social media content in news production has not become a primary method for *Tempo.co*. The newsroom still requires traditional methods to ensure that comprehensive reports are published. Therefore, it may be understood, *Tempo.co* still believes in traditional journalism, where the journalist is considered able to control the information flow and become the primary news source for the public. The function of gatekeeping is still dominant when dealing with the public's voices.

We run some interactive programmes for daily issues, such as floods, traffic jam info, etc. But for serious issues, the system is still tricky. We still need to create our own lead, guide the readers, look for the best resources, and find materials to attract people.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

However, the editors had already seen the significance of public participation in the media and even consider it an inevitable phenomenon. *Tempo.co* should accept the power of public participation for the sustainability of the industry. Based on the editors' opinions, *Tempo.co* sees that it is important to develop public journalism; the use of this content it will simplify their job, though they have not clarified the consequences of these materials on the media. However, despite positive attitudes towards public participation, involving the public in news production is still problematic for *Tempo.co*'s news department because of their long history in traditional investigative journalism. Nevertheless, in general, editors assume that public participation is an important thing, as long as the media maintains control over journalistic rules, to ensure that materials from the public are from reliable sources.

Because of the hesitation in involving the public in the news production, the relationship is handled by a separated division, which is called the Social Media Division. One of the division's functions is to share *Tempo*'s key topics and additional information, to ensure its authority among the audience as a reliable and trustable news source. *Tempo* also uses social media to find trending topics among communities:

I am not sure what editorial policy will be in the future, but from the social media division perspective, it will be beneficial because the public is the most accurate source to find out about what is happening among them.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)



Practically, *Tempo.co* uses social media more for publishing their output rather than taking input from the public. Through its social media division, *Tempo.co* creates relationships by sharing interactive communication in its news products, often inviting public participation by sharing its internal discussion forums, where the audience can send live comments.

According to the social media division, the only real contribution from social media to the news department is through suggesting trending issues, which can be followed up by the reporters. The social media division puts one representative on the ‘superdesk’, a special section in the news department to collect and sort information from reporters and resources and distribute this information to other departments of *Tempo* across the magazine, newspaper, television channel, and online department. With the presence of social media staff on the desk, the public is actually involved in some parts of news production.

In my opinion, when we have social media representatives on the superdesk, it the public will be able to read more about the issue with which they are familiar and have discussed. Therefore, indirectly, the public tells us what to write about.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Based on these findings, this study found that *Tempo.co* does not consider social media sources as partners for producing stories. The existence of the *Indonesiana* section and the job delegation to the social media division in maintaining the relationship with the social media users demonstrates the priority of business sustainability and not on news production when using social media sources. This frame of significance is an indication that social media channels is more frequently used as a marketing tool rather than a journalistic utility.

### **6.2.3 The Use of Social Media at *Viva.co.id***

*Viva.co.id* respondents stated that the involvement of the public in the newsroom is inevitable, particularly due to development of social media. According to respondents from *Viva.co.id*, the primary challenge is to maintain the newsroom's authority and not to be driven to such a large extent public trend. However, social media content is

considered to hold a crucial position in determining the most interesting topics for the public.

Unlike *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, *Viva.co.id* appears to be more flexible in using social media contents in the news. In many cases, particularly in soft news or human-interest articles, *Viva.co.id* quotes social media content in the body of the story. However, similar to other media, the process of quoting social media contents is still limited to verified or well-known accounts; the media still send its reporters to the field to cross-check sources:

We use social media content from verified sources, particularly for something related to important statements. If the source is from a verified *Twitter* account, for example, we usually quote it straight away. But if it comes from crowdsourcing, like what happened in the Jakarta Bombings, we would try to mix and match the information with stronger, more reliable sources. We would try to verify the fact to see if it's true or not.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

The case of 'Jakarta Bombings' may categorise as a significant or hard event. For lighter events, such as fires, floods, or traffic jams, *Viva.co.id* uses social media feeds as initial sources, representing a clue for It can be a clue for further investigation or to determine what the public knows about an event:

We consider social media sources as our front-line source that need to be cross-checked, meaning that we use it as initial information. We also need to look at whether an account's holders are credible as trusted sources or not. However, for those whose credibility has already been verified, such as the police's TMC, which constantly informs on traffic condition, we do not do any further verification and can process the information immediately, both for text and photographs.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

As an initial information source, the first rule is that the account must be verified and confirmed. For well-known figures, like politicians, we usually clarify whether we are allowed to quote the statement or not, especially for sensitive issues.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

Different to *Tempo.co*, whose editors admitted the technical obstacle in embedding social media content codes, *Viva.co.id* editors claimed that the media has already acquired a compatible technology to embed posts directly from the source into the article's body, though this method was not used in chronological long-format news.

As pointed out in Chapter Four, it is clear that social media content is not placed as a significant component of the article. Unlike what could be read on *CNN*, *The Guardian* or *The Telegraph* stories, where people's voices are crucial in building story structure, the quoted statements on *Viva.co.id* only appear as supplemental elements. It appeared, from the case study, that the statements were only there to show the readers how the public felt about the incidents. Regardless of *Viva.co.id*'s ability to provide embedded codes, the quotes were not significant in building the story and did not contribute any new knowledge.

Using embedded codes is considered a crucial strategy in maintaining the originality of the posts. It is important to prevent the possibilities of being blamed in the future when the article creates disputes among the public. Moreover, these codes may be used to protect the outlet from copyright issues; by embedding the codes, the media platform cannot be accused of plagiarism.

Despite the ability to embed codes to provide direct links to the original contents' creator, *Viva.co.id* does not always quote directly. In many cases, editors are required to rewrite the content, which is largely for information that came from crowdsourcing.

Why do we have to rewrite? Because we have to provide context for the quote and maintain the quality because people who write on Twitter do not care about grammatical rules or proper language.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2016)

Despite the flexibility in using social media content, *Viva.co.id* has not yet considered social media as the main source of information for news production. However, the editors have made social media posts in deciding which subjects to cover. Again, this point is identical to the perspectives of editors from *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*. In many ways, social media has enriched *Viva.co.id*'s discourse and helped in selecting news angles:

The assumption is that, when people talk heavily about something, we will automatically look into the same issue. By looking at the various themes in their conversation, we have many options to set our news angle. There would always be an idea or concept for us to include in the discussion.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

The use of social media content may be an indication of public's intervention in the newsroom, something that has never happened in the history of traditional journalism, particularly in Indonesia.

*Viva.co.id* editors admitted that it is difficult to avoid the phenomenon because of technological developments and the significant improvements in the public's ability to share information online. This phenomenon has become an opportunity and a challenge to the media industry. Today, instead of educating audiences, the media actually receive input from them. According to editors from *Viva.co.id*, there exists a significant challenge of preventing the mass media from being driven by the public. The media has to be able to read the direction of the public's preference and establish its role as a reliable information source:

(The challenge to receive input from social media) is triggered by people's need to know. When social media is centred on a discussion of one issue, we are forced to explore the topic more in-depth. The difference is that there are a lot of opinions on social media; we, as the media, can cover both sides. We still follow journalistic processes. Therefore, we are able to help the crowd to determine what is true and what is false.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

*Viva.co.id* editors were also aware of the temptation to follow market trend and discuss trending topics because it will increase the website's traffic significantly. However, *Viva.co.id* decides not to ignore unpopular but important issues, which, according to the editorial board, will be beneficial to society:

Nonetheless, if we only follow what the market wants, what differentiates us from social media? One of the mainstream media functions is to process information into something more useful for the public.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2016)

According to informants from *Viva.co.id*, one of the obstacles to collecting useful content from social media about one issue is human resources. The newsroom only has two divisions to monitor people's conversations on social media, namely the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Social Media teams. The SEO team monitors trending issues on social media and gives inputs to the news content division and works together with the technical division, using *Viva's* algorithm and Google Analytics to monitor the web traffic and audience statistics. The Social Media team may also follow public issues but does not contribute directly to news content. The

main responsibility of this team is to maintain engagement with the public by promoting *Viva.co.id*'s published news and building a strong relationship through *Viva*'s public channels.

Based on the job descriptions, these two divisions do not specifically deal with curating social media content. Therefore, *Viva.co.id* can only rely on the conversation on social media accounts to understand what the readers think or say. This limitation is different from those of international networks or media in developed countries, which have a special utility to curate people's voices on social media:

As far as I know, foreign media has social media monitoring systems similar to those owned by Public Relations in some commercial companies. Therefore, if we enter a number of keywords, all social media content related to the words will appear, allowing editors to see trends. We do not have this device.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

Another obstacle to using public voices is the difficulty associated with validating the information. Although the newsroom is flexible in its use of social media content, the first condition is the reliability of the source. It is still challenging to find verified and reliable information from the public in general.

When we embedded one social media account, we quoted the owner's full post. Therefore, the account had to be verified as real and reliable. If we could not confirm the source, our field reporters would have to clarify the information.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

As can be seen in the case of the 'Jakarta Bombings' in Chapter Four's comparative study, *Viva.co.id* respondents could not find adequate statements to be quoted to explain the details of the incident. As a result, reporters had to take details from their own investigation and materials from official news sources such as international news agencies and the police. The public's comments were still published as additional information. Arguably, these comments were used to create closeness with the audience and maintain the relationship between the media and the public.

From this perspective, it may be argued that Indonesian people are not reliable enough for *Viva.co.id* to be used as their information source yet, regardless of their widespread use of social media. This position of public voices in the *Viva.co.id* newsroom is similar to what is occurring at *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*. The statements are not treated as crucial information that explains what happened at the event's location

because the facts could not be easily validated. *Viva.co.id* assumes that this system may be the result of people's reading habits being low in Indonesia because it means that people are not used to providing important contextual information:

We think the reading habits in Indonesia are lower than those in developed countries. Even writers here could not earn a living publishing books only; they have to speak in seminars for additional revenues because only a few people actually buy and read books. Therefore, we need to find a way to deliver information to people who are not eager to read.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

There is constant interaction between the *Viva.co.id* newsroom and the public on social media, which is concluded based on the number of reaction and comments on *Viva.co.id*'s social media accounts, as well how often the information is shared or retweeted. *Viva.co.id* informants were aware that not all of these people actually clicked on the news links and went to the website. However, the editorial board is satisfied with the fact that people engage in discussion on *Viva.co.id*'s public space:

Sometimes, the readers even help us with their comments. Some readers even gave us information that we did not know before they sent in comments. For example, time when we wrote news about an event involving someone unknown, one of the readers sent us a comment that told us the real identity of the person.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

The potential of using social media regarding business' sustainability has made *Viva.co.id* place it in a crucial position. Even though social media content has not been a primary source for news production purposes, *Viva.co.id* has been using social media mainly to attract the public's awareness about the web and print news:

On our Facebook fan page, we have more than 3.5 million likes. On Twitter, we have over three million followers. We also put almost all of *Viva.co.id*'s published news on our fan page.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

To support the use of social media, *Viva.co.id* collaborated with social media providers. Statistically, as was also true at *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, the collaboration succeeded in improving public engagement. According to respondents from *Viva.co.id*, with the existence of social media, journalists and the mass media can increase closeness with the public. Therefore, the mass media, as well as journalists, can offer further benefits to society.

#### 6.2.4 The Use of Social Media as a Marketing Tool

The most interesting finding of this study is the similarities found in responses retrieved from the observations and interviews. *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* mentioned the use of social media outside of the news department. Although representatives from the three media companies agreed that Indonesian people's statements on social media are not reliable enough to be included as primary sources in news production, and the existence of public participation has brought another opportunity for the media to maintain their position in the media.

After *Kompas.com* changed its Social Media Division into a Strategic Partner Development, the company appeared to increase its commitment to using social media for marketing purposes. The new division has been granted greater power to enhance social media account traffic and maintain the relationship with loyal audiences on social networks.

The newsroom has given flexibility to the new division to create teasers or headlines, attracting people to follow a link to the original article. Since the fundamental purpose of this post has been to gain as many readers as possible, this division was often encouraged to use false clickbait. This situation naturally created a dispute with the news department, which aims to maintain its credibility as a reliable information distributor. This argument was not only from the newsroom, but also from the audience, which can communicate easily with the network.

The feedback could come from a number of sources. Firstly, we need to ensure accountability, where the leads or teasers that we create must not diverge from the original article. We are allowed to develop provocative headlines but not to drag the influence the audience in any direction. The lead must match the content of the article. Secondly, we also have the responsibility to ensure that our audience trusts social media sources because the comments can be negative.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #3 from the Strategic Partner Development Division, interviewed on 15th April 2016)

This difference between a newsroom's standpoint and the social media division's perspective are understandable because the division consists of non-journalists. The background of these individuals' work is in marketing rather than journalism, which

can be idealistic. However, *Kompas.com* informants admitted that, apart from the dispute, what has been done by the Social Media Division has increased the company's revenues and retained loyal readers.

*Tempo.co* has seen a similar change. The different point of view meant that the Social Media Division have to work separately from the news department. According to social media staff, there are four main tasks for those in charge of social media for every mass media outlet, namely social listening, social influencing, social networking, and social selling. Ideally, a media company must be able to manage these four areas:

*Tempo.co*, as news publisher, ideally uses social listening and social influencing. However, we have, so far, been dominant in social influencing. Therefore, we are creating our influence among the public by continually sharing *Tempo*'s most influential news topics, such as the economy, social and political issues, as well as other additional information. We constantly share this information on our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus, and people will trust *Tempo* as the most reliable news media for that kind of topics, which is actually our strength.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Similar to *Kompas.com*, the primary objective of this strategy is to attract people to the main *Tempo.co* site besides building the database of users connected to its social media accounts.

Moreover, *Tempo.co* respondents also highlighted games or quizzes that include the public on social media to argue that *Tempo.co* has been using social media not just for gaining traffic to the website, but also building engagement with the public and offer a range of activities. Eventually, this effort will be significant in gaining prospective advertisements:

Generally, there are two primary jobs that we have on the social media team, namely internal services and external services. For internal services, we share *Tempo*'s news and make it viral. We also run online activities with the public. For external services, we collaborate with *Tempo*'s business partners to promote events on our social media accounts.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)



Through the Social Media Division, *Tempo.co* also has tried to share live streaming on Facebook Live and Twitter's Periscope, started in January 2016. However, *Tempo.co* could not yet rely on the engagement from the programme since the results were unstable. The programme once received 6,000 views when *Tempo.co* initiated the first live viewing, though in the following viewing, the number was much smaller. Additionally, this programme could not contribute significantly to *Tempo.co*'s website because the code for live streaming on Facebook Live cannot be embedded. However, interactions with the public on social media were established, and *Tempo.co* has tried to encourage participation through live tweeting, even though it is only for social media interaction and not for contributing to the news department. This system has been used on one of *Tempo*'s internal discussion forums, where the public was invited to be field reporters and send their live reports via Twitter. The forum then displayed the reports on a big screen and discussed them, which was considered journalistic work carried out by the public. However, these materials have not been used as an element in *Tempo.co* news publications because, in the same way as *Kompas.com*, public activity was only appeared on social media accounts.

A slightly different situation has occurred at *Viva.co.id*. This company has already included comments from the public in their news production. Although ordinary people's comments are still regarded as too unreliable to be the main source of the news, *Viva.co.id* does not object to the presence of them entirely.

This change has been caused by the company's perspective on the position of social media content. According to informants from *Viva.co.id*, social media usage is still a part of journalistic practice, primarily referring to what the social media team has done. The work supports journalism, either as distributing channel or as a utility for finding the right issue. As one *Viva.co.id* informant stated, the social media team has contributed significantly to the company:

The social media team helps to distribute what our news team has created, namely information for the public. On the other hand, the use of social media is also beneficial in determining the public's reaction, which is useful in deciding whether the issue requires follow-up action or not. Therefore, it has been an integral part of the current and future journalism.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

The social media team member also mentioned the benefits of social media as a supporting element in spreading the company's message.

Social media is actually a branch of investigation that we didn't know even 10 years ago. In the old days, social media sites such as Friendster were only used for chatting and sharing opinions. Thanks to technological advances, social media has come to be what it is today. When the journalists' job is to spread the news, social media can be an important channel.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 3rd May 2016)

For these reasons, at *Viva.co.id*, the social media team works in a more journalistic way rather than as a marketing team:

All news published on *Viva.co.id* is also published on our social media accounts. Under *Viva.co.id*, we have *VivaBola*, *VivaLife*, *VivaLog*, and *VivaForum*. For these four sections, we create one account name, namely *Viva.co.id*, on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The most frequently accessed account is on Twitter, though Facebook offers greater coverage.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 3rd May 2016)

One of the sections, *VivaLog*, is not only contributing information but also helping *Viva.co.id* to build a connection with 'citizen journalism'. Different from *Indonesiana* in *Tempo.co*, which is actually a blog that is to be filled in by the audience, *VivaLog* is a special section that facilitate the readers' own blogs. This section promotes people's blogs by providing embedded codes connected to the original blog pages. After they register their blog to *VivaLog*, people are allowed to write anything, either information or opinions, which do not violate Viva's code of ethics.

By doing this, we are not only maintaining our content on social media, but also preserving our relationship with the public while facilitating their own blogs. Currently, there are more than 9,000 blog accounts registered ... It is more like citizen journalism, and we help the public by promoting their blogs.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3rd May 2016)

Alternatively, *Viva.co.id* also provides a special section for people who do not have a blog called *Cerita Anda* (Your Story), where Viva readers can contribute reports or

opinions on one issue. This blog's function is closer to *Tempo.co*'s *Indonesiana*. The section *Cerita Anda* also has its own account on social media, which allows *Viva.co.id* to share the content at a faster rate. The social media team will verify the contents before publishing it on the web and social media to ensure their originality and to assess the value of the information. Sometimes the team even needs to rewrite the content to preserve linguistic standards.

These efforts to sustain relationships with the public through social networks emphasise the significance of social media positioning for *Viva.co.id* because social media is an integral part of mass media. *Viva.co.id* respondents admitted that social media contents can be used as an information source but it is important to verify the facts because a media outlet cannot just absorb the information from any source. However, the interaction is valued as something positive, particularly when educating the public about freedom of speech and creating a democratic environment:

In the beginning, there were still ugly words, and people threatened each other. But now, I can see that the public is more mature. In political issues, for example, they can construct good arguments, and I think we have succeeded in creating a space to encourage dialogue.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3rd May 2016)

*Viva.co.id* regards activity involving social media communication as dynamic in journalism because journalism, as a profession in the mass media industry, will always involve relationships with the public. This social communication also adds more colour to journalism and makes it more than an elite profession. In the past, journalism may only have been a bridge between the authorities and the public, revealing facts and findings only appreciated by certain people. However, respondents from *Viva.co.id* also admitted that the main purpose of using social networking is to maintain relationships with the audience as art of marketing campaigns.

The marketing effort supported by a positive relationship with the audience is a result of the successful effort of the companies in providing a comfortable space for the audience. The comfortable spaces mean that the three outlets have created a familiar environment for the audience, particularly younger generations, to be involved on social network. In other words, companies have allowed the audience to interact through social media channels, which are generally accessed using UGC applications.

The efforts that the three companies have made through divisions that deal with social media have confirmed the influence of UGC applications, as observed by Nasrullah (2015) and Buffer (2018) as cited in Supriadi and Agustin (2018). The findings show that, by allowing the public to contribute to the media content through their UGC accounts, it has successfully strengthened the audience's connection with the company. By giving opportunities to the public to publish their opinions or information on the outlets connected to social channels, they have made the public as part of the media content even though they have only appeared on the companies' social media accounts. Therefore, this method is not curation journalism because the purpose is to retain the companies' market and not to share important information or contribute to the news.

The study reveals that the media effort to involve the public and social media can also increase the frequency of visits to the companies' website. Moreover, the target is not only the existing audience, but also potential readers. As observed in the study, the three companies applied a similar strategy by opening a public forum in blog format, as well as in social media accounts. This activity can increase the number of new audience members by opening new registries. As admitted by the editors and social media staff at the three media outlets, this method aims to enhance the web metrics on systems such as *Google Analytic*. In the current online marketing world, *webmetric* is a valuable statistic that can be used to attract advertisers.

Aside from marketing efforts and public participation in enhancing media values, the study concludes that the three media companies have aimed to enhance their Public Relations. Using social media and involving UGC applications allow companies to create an image for stakeholders, which are their audience and the advertisers. Massey (2003, cited in Supriadi & Agustin, 2018) explains this attempt in the theory of organizational image management. This theory discusses creating a corporate branding image as something that has positive value from the perspective of the stakeholders. *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* are trying to develop their image as a modern media company that knows how to use technology and is willing to join the public space, support democracy, and be close to social media. These companies achieve these objectives by strengthening their relationships with the audience through social communication. As a result, these three companies will use their branded image

to retain their existence in the midst of media competition and ensure their audiences' loyalty to the media.

### **6.2.5 Analysis and Discussion**

Based on the findings of this study, these three Indonesian media outlets have a similar perspective on the use of social media in news production. This perspective was determined by the companies discussing a number of general conditions regarding social media content.

First of all, respondents from the three media companies stated that social media content has not been considered a primary source for hard news. The policy does not mean to express that the process of 'curation of flows', as proposed by Thorson and Wells (2015), is part of the gatekeeping process, was abandoned by these media companies. Indeed, these companies have undergone a process to select the correct content for social media and have demonstrated their use of social media by joining the network suggested by Thorson and Wells (2015). However, even though they have used curation in their journalistic practices, news production and presentation have not placed public participation in a significant position. The research found that these media companies are more likely to dominate production and place public voices only as supplemental materials.

These three media outlets presented similar arguments regarding this condition and stated that ordinary people are not reliable enough to become a source of news. The term 'ordinary' is used to distinguish general public from authorities, public figures, or famous politicians, whose voices are considered as carrying more credibility. A number of cultural factors may cause Indonesians to view the general public as unreliable. Editors stated that they were aware that Indonesian people have a typical communication behaviour related to the context of Indonesian culture. As discussed in Chapter Five, the most influential communication culture in Indonesian societies is the high-context culture, which allows them to operate nonverbal messages and lets the points of the context evolve along with the communication process (Jandt, 1995). Therefore, the editors cannot just take public comments as they come because there

are possibilities that the true messages is not seen; there is always context that must be understood.

Another cultural characteristic is that Indonesians tend to make group conversations about things that are insignificant to be quoted as serious news resources. This point of discussion emphasises the country's oral culture (Ong, 2002) and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001; 2011; Sihombing and Pongtuluran, 2011). As described in the six-dimensional model of national culture (Hofstede, 2011), it is likely that Indonesia is still largely collective, scoring low in individualist values. As a result, because Indonesians are more likely to have informal discussions, they often talk without presenting adequate data or evidence. These ideas explain the background of the condition, where Indonesians in general do not have a literary culture in terms of language.

The phenomenon of communication culture also contributes to the uniqueness of media audiences' characteristics in Indonesia. The real character of Indonesians is different from what they usually show in everyday activity on social media. The public's reluctance to speak out critical or honest thoughts within a public sphere reflects their concern with maintaining a harmonious life without friction. As a result, although Indonesians have the freedom to express their opinions after the political reform in 1998, the future of freedom of expression in Indonesia is still hindered by unwillingness (Supriadi, 2016, 2017).

On the basis of this unique cultural characteristic, I argue that these conditions have meant that most Indonesians are less used to critically explaining things. Being able to think critically is key in journalism, which makes the hesitation to use public voices as a news source understandable. Consequently, these three media companies have the same policy, which only allows social media content from verified accounts or public authorities to be quoted.

This cultural characteristic of Indonesia is different from many Western countries, or even from the other Asian nations that have strong relationships with Western culture such as Malaysia. As Allan argues, in Western countries, citizen voices can be useful in finding alternative truths (2010). Because of the characteristics of those already familiar with literary traditions and critical thinking, it may be argued that the

significance of participatory journalism has been appropriately acknowledged in Western culture. On the other hand, Allan's optimism about the possibility of citizen activity in journalism to reorganise communicative networks may not be applicable in Indonesian culture.

The second general characteristic is the inevitable presence of the social media within the existing media industry as experienced by the three Indonesian media outlets. As this study observes, the development of social media communication has influenced the way in which the three companies write stories. Therefore, the voice of the people is still considered necessary but is not to be taken as a key source for the news. These three news publishers use these materials as initial information, a clue for further inquiries, or to obtain a general picture of trending topics amongst the public. Indeed, this idea is close to what M. Knight and Cook (2013) refer to the function of social media in traditional sourcing methods. Social media carries its significance in how it supplements the research done by the journalist. As also discussed in the comparative study, the involvement of the journalist in a networked environment would affect their way of viewing specific issues related to everyday life. Instead of directly observing the public in real life, social media becomes a journalist's window to watch society.

However, different from the conditions in developed Western countries, the influence of social media communication has not affected journalists in Indonesia in terms of writing the news. At this point, I argue that what Tamara Witschge (2012) defines as the shift of power in processing the story from the journalists to the audience is not occurring in Indonesia. As researchers have seen in developed democratic countries, audience participation in the news process has been commonly considered a challenge to the traditional relationship between the journalist and readers. In Indonesia, the media is still trying to maintain the power held by the journalist rather than letting the audience take over the newsroom. However, this reluctance to include the public does not imply the Indonesian media's hesitation towards the freedom of expression and public rights, instead being based on the editors' impression of Indonesians' communication habits in general, according to which using public voices would endanger the credibility of the media as deliverer of reliable information.

The attempt to control information flow in news production is also seen when the editors occasionally decide to use direct quotes from social media; they seldom include the original link to the social media content and choose to rewrite it instead. There are some cases, though, in which media embedded the links into the story, as seen by *Viva.co.id* in the case of the ‘Jakarta Bombings’. However, using embedded links to original social media content seems to be not align with respecting the freedom of expression or providing a larger space for the public participation. Instead, links are embedded just to protect the originality of the text’s source to protect the media outlet’s own credibility and the possibility of blame in the future. Again, the media at this point still hold the dominant position in news production.

Regarding audience behaviour, it may be seen that these three media outlets are reluctant to fully implement public participation, despite having a positive perspective towards the practice of curation journalism. Because of these circumstances, these media outlets follow the model of Larson (cited in Quandt, 2011; McQuail, 2013), who believes that journalism requires unique skills and rules that cannot be handled by ordinary people. The activation of the audience is not yet a comparable replacement for professional journalism. In this sense, Indonesian journalists still rely on the classic definition and characteristics of professionalism presented in Chapter One.

The next general characteristic retrieved from these three media outlets is the marketing purpose for the use of social media communication. This research found that the use of social media in the news is mainly used as a marketing tool. Firstly, the channel is used as a distribution alternative to approach potential readers who may not be willing to access the main site. Secondly, social media communication is used to maintain the relationship between the media and existing readers by providing a space for the stories from readers. According to marketing statistical data for the three media companies, this effort has successfully maintained readers’ loyalty to the media, even when their stories are not used as significant materials by the news department.

In the same way, audiences tend to prefer using social media channels and smartphone applications when searching for information, which has caused a decline in the assessment of online media's credibility. Interestingly, information on social media is



often considered by Indonesians to be more trustworthy and original than the news on mainstream media (Saragih, Agustin and Supriadi 2017).

The potential for losing the audience is crucial for big media companies such as *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*. Therefore, companies should consider marketing strategies to maintain existing audiences, as well as capture new audiences from the current generation that uses social media to a larger extent. In addition to the marketing strategy, Public Relations efforts are also needed to maintain the news companies' brand image as a reliable source of information. The image branding attempt is essential since Indonesian audiences tend to consider that the mainstream media is no longer credible (Saragih, Agustin and Supriadi, 2017; Supriadi, 2018).

It has been discussed that the most effective strategy for facing business competition against social media is by using the competitor's channel. In this case, the three companies must become a part of the social media industry to be able to approach audiences because, in this era of new media, readers prefer more social networks to mainstream media websites.

The contribution of the use of social media to the audience's loyalty reflects the observation of Bradshaw and Rohumaa (2011), who observe that the interactivity in Internet technology has made it possible for anybody to bypass the information providers and share the information alone. The readers, who are used to being passive audiences, could now defy received news and publish their own version of the story. Supporting this development can maintain a positive environment amongst the readers and provide another use of the media. Therefore, the media company will be able to create a strong bond that makes their audience stay with them and even attract new potential readers from the interactive generation. This strategy is crucial in existing online media because the competition is not only with other media with the same core of the business. Moreover, mainstream media has to deal with the existence of social media that offers a more interactive method of communication. Another challenge to conquer is the behaviour of the millennial generation, who is now becoming more active in terms of treating the information. If corporations do not cope with the more social media industry, they will lose their audience.

In relation to this argument, *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* have proven that, as an attempt to build a positive brand image in this era of social media, they need to embrace social media channels as competitors instead of confronting them. Supriadi and Agustin (2018) call this change a positive endeavour in public relations in the online media industry because it allows media outlets to stop their readers from escaping to other channels. By providing a place for the public to express their opinions or share stories, the media outlets have created a positive image as companies aware of current technological development and trends.

It is inevitable for the mainstream media to avoid revenue sharing with social media providers in today's competitive environment. However, social media, to some extent, has become a means of reaching a broader audience and attracting people to access a website. Regardless of the risk of losing a number of advertising benefits, social media channels have become useful elements for marketing and corporate image creation (Supriadi, 2018; Supriadi and Agustin, 2018).

By working on their marketing strategy, these companies have shown their intention to retain their potential audience and build a positive image for stakeholders. This phenomenon, to some extent, has changed the relationship between the media and its audiences in traditional mass media practice because the change in social and technological structures have shifted the relationship between the media and their stakeholders to become more interactive (Lee-Wright, Phillips and Witschge, 2012). Therefore, although the editors prefer to use conventional journalism in collecting data and information in the same way as *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, they still need to change their paradigm because they are no longer facing traditional audiences; they need to be aware that, in the existing media industry and due to advances in communication technology, they are not merely the dominant provider of information.

Aside from the discussion of marketing and audience engagement, this chapter has emphasised that curation journalism is still implemented even when not visually displayed. One of the implementations of this method is through gatwatching, which is the continuous observation of material that reaches the newsroom from scattered sources, including social media (Bruns, 2018). Gatwatching is an indication that the media respects information and uses it for its benefit as part of the curation process.

## 6.3 Conclusions

This chapter's focus on *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* in terms of the use of social media content in journalistic products offered significant findings. Despite the differences in business history, background, visions and technological aspects, representatives from these three outlets gave similar responses and perspectives on public participation in the newsroom. These responses suggest that the Indonesian media's behaviour towards social media intervention could be generalised. However, based on the findings, this chapter found that the three media outlets similarly respected the development of curation journalism. In fact, all informants in this study admitted that curation journalism was a method to anticipate the development of public participation in journalism. Even though this method was not clearly seen in their news presentation, the involvement of the public at the heart of curation journalism development has been used to determine news values and trending topics.

On the basis of the findings from the field research, three general statements can be made for each media outlet. The first of these statements is that the three outlets had the editorial policy to not use social media content in hard news, political stories, or reports on crisis events. All informants agreed that Indonesians, in general, have not become important information sources. The justification for this belief came from media's awareness on the cultural aspects of society, as well as the lack of ability to provide reliable evidence and arguments, which can be difficult in journalism.

This statement emphasises the urgency need to verify information obtained from social media. Based on the statements from representatives from the three outlets, it may be concluded that they use the same verification method. Firstly, journalists have to make sure that the source is a verified, or official, social media account. Secondly, if the account is not verified, a media outlet will only use the social media content as an initial cue for pursuing more details from the field by sending reporters to the scene of event. In other words, the verification process reflects that these three Indonesian media outlets still use traditional journalism.

The second statement is on these outlets' respect for social media contribution as an initial source information and how to find out trending topics. Representatives from the three media outlets admitted that social media had become a window to watch

what is happening in society, which can be used, in turn, to provide information relevant to people's needs. However, this aspect would have affected the media outlets' independence. Therefore, there is a policy not to use social media content in hard news because these media outlets need to avoid the possibility of being driven by people's agendas and blurring the facts. However, the willingness of the media to pay attention to social media content and public voices reflects their attitude to implement curation journalism as an information gathering technique.

The final statement is on the business perspective on social media usage. Informants from the three media outlets stated that social media had succeeded in allowing the outlet to maintain relationships with readers. Furthermore, outlets have been enhancing because they have attracted more potential audiences because of their interactions with social media networks, which occurred because they considered the behaviour of those influenced by social media communications. This method is beneficial in terms of maintaining a competitive edge in the media industry. Therefore, instead of involving social media significantly in news production, the three outlets have concentrated on their treatment of social media content under the marketing department. Public participation has not become a crucial part of the news but has become a central element in terms of marketing and maintaining engagement with the public.

Based on these generalisations, this study concludes that these three Indonesian media outlets have already implemented curation journalism as a means of gathering information. However, the media outlets still prefer traditional journalism, where the journalists are still in a position of authority and control over information. In other words, the developments in social media communication that virtually creates an unlimited public sphere has not been used optimally in allowing the public a voice. On the contrary, it may be argued that social media has been treated only to strengthen the media's authority because the media is still hesitant to use the public as a partner in news production.



# Chapter Seven

## Professionalism and Ethical Issues in Curation Journalism in Indonesia

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### 7.1 Introduction

Another aspect of the distinctive practice of curation journalism in Indonesia is ethical considerations. Based on the comparative study presented in Chapter Four, it appears that *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* have applied certain ethical guidelines, which is reflected in how they have implemented curation and reacted to the existence of social media reports at the ‘Jakarta Bombings’ event. These considerations may be understood as how they prioritise professionalism in dealing with public participation and social media development in journalism.

This chapter presents a thorough discussion of the ethical aspects of curation journalism and the use of social media by presenting the results of interviews with editors and journalists from the three Indonesian media outlets. The chapter opens by discussing the media's understanding of the term *curation* and its implementation in the newsroom. Moreover, the chapter also describes how these three companies see the involvement of the public in news production through social media content. The implication on ethical aspects and journalistic professionalism from these individuals’ perspective are used to conclude the chapter.

Similar to previous chapters, this chapter initially places the discussion of research findings from each media outlet across three separate sections. The theoretical analysis and more reviews are then described in an individual section as a generalisation of the results. This chapter concludes the discussion by presenting significant issues of ethical consideration that reflect the general circumstances in Indonesia.

## 7.2 Editorial Policies on Professionalism and Ethical Issues

### 7.2.1 Professionalism and Ethical Consideration on Curation Journalism at *Kompas.com*

The research found that the term *curation journalism* is unfamiliar to many Indonesian journalists, including those in the *Kompas.com* newsroom. However, after journalists at *Kompas.com* had gained an understanding of the actual meaning of the term, they stated that they used this practice. According to respondents from *Kompas.com*, curation journalism is understood as a compilation of scattered information from a number of sources:

Information today is so widely dispersed that we cannot determine directly what is true and what is false. Because of this characteristic of information, media still works in the same way as before, collecting accurate, valuable information. Curation occurs when the media makes use of that dispersed information by obtaining and selecting parts of it and rebuilding them as one structured story. If we look at what online media have done, curation happened when journalists collected embed codes from selected social media contents and arranged them into one story.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14th April 2016)

*Kompas.com* argues that embedding codes is supplementary rather than a necessary task for curation journalism. Indeed, selecting and arranging information retrieved from spread sources is already curation, even without embedding social media data codes into the article. However, embedding code allows journalists to present the original content of the social media postings that they have selected, which is effective in demonstrating credibility.

Because of the potential benefits offered by the use of social media content, it may be argued that the practice of curation journalism makes journalists' job simpler in some ways because they can use social media users as information source from an actual event. However, as experienced by *Kompas.com* editors, this ease has created negative opinions and criticisms from senior journalists at the companies. Some perspectives consider journalists to be lazy or less accountable because they do not investigate themselves. Furthermore, journalistic work has shifted into just collecting existing information. According to respondents from *Kompas.com*, media critics have argued that journalists have now become no more than gatekeepers.

*Kompas.com* informants argued that curation is still a component of journalism because journalists are still doing their job in gathering facts and making sure that the information comes from reliable sources. However, one key difference between traditional methods and curation journalism is that the journalist does not need to visit the location of the incident. In using the Internet and social media technology, journalists can use their online networks to contact people on the site and verify that the sources are unreliable.

*Kompas.com* informants disagreed that, if the practice of curation is considered to compromise journalistic principles in finding the truth in the field. On the contrary, *Kompas.com* informants stated that this method allows journalism to be more updated. Technology has made information gathering simpler and faster, and it would be constructive for journalism as long as journalists can ensure reliable, robust networking. This process is not an example of gatekeeping because technology cannot replace journalistic skills. Journalists still need to go to the field, build strong networks with their sources, and develop their unique competencies. Without these skills, the story that these individuals create based on what they see on social media will be shallow.

Regarding the exclusiveness of news production, as occurs in traditional journalism, the newsroom has now become more open to the public through curation practices. However, *Kompas.com* informants refuse to be invaded by the public. What is happening today is a change in the newsroom's relationship with the audience, changing from traditional one-way into two-way communication. Using social technology does not mean that the media is driven by what people say in social media because the filtering process is still applicable:

Not all social media content can be used; it has to be tested by comparing it to information from other sources. What we usually take is the fact and not comments or opinions. For example, when we find a photo of an event that has been commented on, we take what we see in the photo. The comments might be considered after verifying the information shared. Before we have confirmation, we have to wait to publish them. However, we sometimes cannot verify quickly, and the event is too important to delay, which is an important challenge.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #5, interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)



Although it may be challenging to publish information taken from social media content before verifying the validity of said information, *Kompas.com* informants admitted that there is a standard operational procedure to preserve fact. Sometimes, journalists need to use traditional methods to seek evidence because unverified opinions cannot contaminate the news:

Social media content such a photographs and videos is treated as supplemental material. Real information about tan event would be taken from data directly gathered from the location. We are not allowed to report on an event based on people's comments on social media. The comments will be used after they are verified because there are too many deceivers out there who spread convincing false information, especially about controversial issues.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #5, interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Despite the challenge in verification, *Kompas.com* informants argued that the development of curation journalism is positive and helps journalistic practice to be more advanced and open to a range of information sources. With the assistance of the technology, the media is able to curate information more quickly than in the past, which is positive as long as it is based on the journalistic principles. The essence of journalism will not cease because the function of the process will remain the same. Curation is a method and a tool to embrace technological developments and the more active audience. *Kompas.com* journalists also argued that curation journalism can support democracy:

Amongst the characteristics of democracy are equality and openness. With more prominent public participation in media, people will play a more significant role. Every feature provided online has made this system possible. We can involve people in polling or discussion forums. All different opinions will be shared, and everyone can read all criticisms, very democratic.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #1, first interviewed on 14th April 2016)

From an ethical perspective, *Kompas.com* informants agreed that using people's opinion on social media as part of the story structure did not compromise any ethical principle, as long as the media used proper verification. On the other hand, using embedded codes is not violating copyright because it allows people to follow the link to the source:

When someone decides to own any digital property, either on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram, it means that the person has offered this content to the public. Moreover, social media applications have provided a blocking feature,

which can be used by account holders to prevent anyone who wants to use their content. When the account holder does not limit his or her materials, the person has given consent for the materials to be owned by the public.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #3 from the Strategic Partner Development Division, interviewed on 15th April 2016)

According to respondents from *Kompas.com*, the fairest treatment towards social media content is by quoting the essential parts of the source opinion and then accompanying it with a link to said source. Using this method, media companies allow readers to access the original source and minimise an inaccurate perspective. This method is also used to emphasise that the opinion, or the material, belongs to the writer, meaning that copyright is not violated.

It may be argued that *Kompas.com* considers that the curation process involving people's voices on social media does not compromise the code of ethics. Curation journalism could make the information-gathering process simpler and faster and contribute to the positive development of journalistic practice.

### **7.2.2 Professionalism and Ethical Considerations of Curation Journalism at *Tempo.co***

*Tempo.co* arguably still prefers to use traditional journalism rather than the new method involving social media technology. Based on the preference of the newsroom to maintain *Tempo*'s reputation of using in-depth reporting, editors are most likely to send their reporters to explore news sources traditionally rather than using scattered information on social media. Consequently, the application of curation journalism may not be physically obvious in the published stories. However, the observation revealed that social media content has some degree of influence, particularly in soft news. There was some information found from the public's voices, though *Tempo.co* was still careful to quote them within the story directly.

From a journalism perspective, *Tempo.co* informants admitted that the method of curation can be still categorised as journalistic practice. The practice is inevitable since journalists have to deal with dispersed information from the public within the current social communication situation in the media industry. However, *Tempo.co* believes that this information has to be gathered following journalistic principles, where the

journalists keep their role as the narrator, controller, and gatekeeper of the collected information. Journalists have to be able to verify the truth and add context to it:

Curation remains a journalistic practice if followed by crosscheck processes; it is indeed a branch of journalism with a new way of presentation. But if it this process is just collecting information without any effort to recheck, it is not journalism, it is creating social media clippings. People could read it directly on social media if it were just a clipping. Online media platforms still quote or embed the materials from social media, but they need to be accompanied by narration, explanation, context and verification. The publisher holds the responsibility to present the truth of the information. That is what we call journalism.

(*Tempo.co* informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

Based on this statement, it is clear that *Tempo.co* considers the practice of curating contents from social networks an issue with the ethical code. The primary concern is how the journalist maintains the journalistic principles to frame information responsibly. This responsibility includes verification and the obligation to cite sources:

If the information comes from a verified social media account, we can publish it immediately. We may even embed or quote the content but always mention the original author.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

*Tempo.co* informants rejected the idea of public invasion of the mainstream newsroom when using social media contents. *Tempo.co* still believed that the media outperforms social media in terms of originality and comprehensiveness:

It is not easy (to surpass mainstream media). There are platforms, there are contents, but there is brand authority. For example, the television is leading regarding information quality because it has original content. Social media platforms may have more visits, but TV still owns more content than social media.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

This response reflects the consideration that *Tempo.co* has about the development of curation journalism without the necessity to surrender its authority as information gatekeeper. Moreover, *Tempo.co* has used some data curation from many sources, including social media and published stories. However, the articles were published in the blog section or on *Tempo*'s social media accounts, not on the news.

This method may be the consequence of *Tempo.co*'s hesitation to use ordinary people's voices in the news. Therefore, most of the direct or embedded codes from social media content are more likely found in separate sections outside of the regular news. Again, it may be argued that *Tempo.co* used this method to preserve its reputation as an in-depth news publisher. As one of the editors admitted,

I have done it for the *Indonesiana* section. I wrote an article that was built by collecting and summarising content from all sources about an issue. I did not embed the codes but created links to the sources, so, it was like articles we could find on *Wikipedia*. It was easy to edit or change story; just add a new link to update the article.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #1, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

One representative from the Social Media Division also confirmed the separation of original links to social media content from the news section:

We tried it when we collaborated with Twitter to publish news from regional elections. We distributed our reporters to some regions, where they live tweeted from the election posts. We then sorted their tweets using Twitter's curator application, so their followers would be able to read the curated tweets. We did not publish some of the tweets. However, this only happens on Twitter; we did not embed the content on *Tempo.co*'s website.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

What *Tempo.co* did with the Twitter curation in the election season highlights that the editors trust their reporters to contribute information rather than ordinary people's voices. However, this trust does not reflect *Tempo.co*'s perspective on democratisation within the use of social media contents. *Tempo.co* informants argued that curation journalism and public participation in distributing information are part of building a functional democracy, although Indonesia is still considered a novice in terms of democracy:

It takes time to learn and absorb the change like this. The current differences between people's backgrounds and the social strata has made it more difficult to educate everyone to accept the use of tools such as social media.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #3 from the Social Media Division, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

*Tempo.co* states that the quality of freedom of speech has actually become stronger, and even a little overwhelming in some ways. Since Indonesia, which only became a

free democratic nation after the 1998 reform, has limited experience in accepting the freedom of expression, the open environment in the social media world often creates dispute and verbal abuse between conflicting groups. However, in many circumstances, this conflict is not the same as how these people act in real life

Freedom of expression is far more open and natural now. It is even sometimes too extreme, and many people freely throw verbal abuse at others. The openness also makes it easier to categorise the public because they usually create groups of interest. However, based on my experience, there are no consequences to people's actions. What happens in the cyber world is often unlike reality. For example, there was a movement on social media to make a rally. There were many responses, many shares, but no one came to the actual rally except the organisers. I do not know how to judge this phenomenon, but I think the vociferousness was there because social platforms allow people to express themselves freely.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #4 from the *Indonesiana* section, interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016)

This response may be another reason for which *Tempo.co* is reluctant to rely on social media contents, which leads to limited curating practices in the news department. Based on the interviews, this study sees that *Tempo.co*'s newsroom could not curate enough valuable information on social networks because, even though Indonesian people are active on social media world, they are mostly talking about soft issues that are not as important to the public.

However, the study found that *Tempo.co* has a favourable opinion about the practice because the editors do not intend to reject the use of social media contents entirely. Instead, the editors just need to postpone the practice as a new routine in the newsroom until the public is more mature and responsible in spreading information. Before the ideal condition is achieved, *Tempo.co* will continue its direct engagement with the public through social media communication and not within the regular news. Moreover, as informants from *Kompas.com* also suggested, curation journalism has always been part of *Tempo.co*'s method of gathering information, though it is often hidden from visual displays to protect their credibility.

### 7.2.3 Professionalism and Ethical Considerations in Curation Journalism at *Viva.co.id*

From the observation on the ‘Jakarta Bombings’ coverage as discussed in Chapter Four, the research concludes that *Viva.co.id* has been using the curation method within its reports. Though the format is different from what could be read on *CNN*, *The Guardian* or *The Telegraph*, there is involvement of scattered sources, including social media content, from ordinary people's accounts in some parts of the news.

*Viva.co.id* editors admitted that the practice was a valuable strategy, especially for running news such as bombing incident. The editors consider this method an essential element of ensuring better journalism, though they are aware that it has not reached the same quality standard as international networks:

For major events that require running news such as the Sarinah bombing, the comparison between curated contents from crowdsourcing and our materials could be 40-60, or even 50-50. It is exciting to do because the two kinds of materials can complement one another and furthermore boost our web traffic.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2016)

The number of social network materials within the news shows that *Viva.co.id* is more optimistic about the use of public as sources than the other two media outlets. This situation also means, arguably, that *Viva.co.id*'s trust of ordinary people's voice is higher than other Indonesian online media platforms such as *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*. The verification process is still significant, but it appears that *Viva.co.id* is confident about displaying direct quotes and the links to original posts than the others are.

The confidence might relate to the belief that including people's voices from social media could offer some advantages regarding public engagement. Effective content curation may also enhance the close relationship with the readers. *Viva.co.id* informants believed that curation journalism would be able to make higher-quality journalism, which, in turn, would enhance the readers' appreciation of the site.

It is the future and how we can create the better product from various sources by using curation to prosper. Furthermore, it would help us show the public how good we are at curating materials and improve readers' loyalty to the company.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

*Viva.co.id* has not used a particular application for curation because it has not found any local software that can curate local news. Alternatively, *Viva.co.id* uses worldwide aggregator engines. For local issues, *Viva.co.id* still uses these platforms by monitoring social media by the SEO team or Social Media team:

The worldwide aggregator we use is *Newsnow.co.uk* but there are others. For local issues, we have not found any.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

However, *Viva.co.id* has decided to keep using worldwide aggregators, even for local or national issues. The editors believed that they still could find news about Indonesia on those international sites because these international sites collect information from international media or English versions of Indonesian media. The aggregators' materials can be used to gauge foreigners' sentiments towards an issue in Indonesia. Selecting materials from aggregators may also be considered a kind of curation journalism because *the* practice requires editors to sort, retrieve, and rewrite the information within their own context.

Considering the ethics, *Viva.co.id* treats social media content and news materials spread online as information that could be used publicly. However, to prevent the dispute against copyright issues, *Viva.co.id* is careful in citing the source. This prevention will also the editor to embed the content's codes, which leads readers to the original owner of the content:

If something happens, we could state who the original author was, which is why we embed. This is also applicable when we take pictures or event photos created by someone that copyrights them. By using embedded codes linked to the original creator, it cannot be said that we were just copying and pasting materials into our article.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #2, interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016)

This response emphasises how *Viva.co.id* credits the original owner of material. Even if the original source is credited, *Viva.co.id*, as the publisher, still holds the responsibility to distribute correct information without causing conflict; it is the editorial decision to publish articles. Therefore, *Viva.co.id* must not hold the original creator responsible when the materials have already been released on its site. *Viva.co.id* seems to be aware of this responsibility because the editors stated that it is vital to be strict in ensuring journalistic principles within the process of curation.

Taking information from social media would indeed make editorial tasks easier and faster. However, not all data is reliable. The journalists need to be faster and accurate to preserve their credibility. Therefore, the discipline of verification becomes crucial within the practice of curation journalism.

In conclusion, it is clear that *Viva.co.id* respondents were optimistic about the development of curation journalism as a method and news format on some occasions. Social media content is considered a significant information source to be curated under specific circumstances. The eagerness to embrace this innovative practice of journalism appeared to be higher than in other Indonesian online news publishers such as *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, although the presentation format is relatively similar.

#### **7.2.4 Analysis and Discussion**

Based on the field research, there are few differences found among the three media companies. *Kompas.com* respondents appeared enthusiastic about the development of curation journalism but were doubtful about fully including the public in news production. Meanwhile, *Tempo.co* informants were less optimistic, tending to postpone the involvement of the curation of social media content in regular news and keeping the relationship with social media outside of the news department. Practically, *Tempo.co* editors are still comfortable with the traditional method of journalism when producing the news. *Viva.co.id* informants expressed greater flexibility and expressed a willingness to offer a broader space for the public to contribute to the news. The company has provided embedding technology that includes links to the original posts.

As discussed in Chapter One on the subject professionalism, it appears that *Tempo.co*, as well as *Kompas.com* on some levels, is amongst those who regard advances in social media technology and a more active public as supporting elements; respondents stated that news production should still largely be carried out by trained journalists. These two media outlets are among companies still hesitant to grant access to the news production to the public, particularly for hard news or crisis coverage, as found in Witschge (2012).

As found in the field research, *Kompas.com* respondents considered the value of User Generated Communication (UGC) and social media in having a significant impact on news production. Similar to what Witschge (2012) found, the only concern that causes



*Kompas.com*'s hesitation is integrating public contributions into the professional news process because the public itself cannot be a credible source. On the other hand, *Tempo.co* chooses to entirely separate public participation from the news department and uses more traditional practices to produce news. From this research, it may be seen that the newsroom has decided to use social media communication in marketing and audience engagement sections, having no professional responsibility as journalists.

To some extent, the behaviour of journalists at *Tempo.co* and *Kompas.com* to place public voices on social media at a distance from the regular news is understandable. Because of the significant historical background as reliable news providers, these two media outlets need to preserve their credibility professionally, which would be compromised with unreliable sources. Following the discussion in Chapter One, these two media outlets are attempted maintain three key pillars of journalistic practice, namely the discipline of verification to reveal the truth and uphold the accuracy, accountability to the public, and the protection of the public interests, as reflected in elements of journalism (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007). The limitations with quoting public voices directly in the body of the story could be understood as an effort to maintain journalistic professionalism, which should protect the public from harmful and inaccurate information. This method is also an attempt by editors to select material of particular value for the news, a concept that is still the main focus on newsroom activity (Allan, 2010; Brighton and Foy, 2007; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017).

From a different perspective, the responsibility to protect the public is not the same thing as isolating public voices from news production. The practice of curation journalism is actually preserving the duty by allowing a journalist to act as a curator, not only as a collector or aggregator. As expressed by M. Knight and Cook (2013), the principal points of this process are verification and contextualization to guarantee the accuracy of the information shared. Although the journalist is curating people's voices from social media, he or she has a responsibility to include his or her voice to explain the context and explain the quotes and their importance to the story. The journalist also must identify the original source of the social media content by presenting the statement's owner, which will ensure the accountability of journalism.

This process is what Shoemaker, Vos, and Reese (2009) refer to as gatekeeping, which emphasises that the role of media gatekeeper has not vanished from journalism.

This study found that *Tempo.co* and *Kompas.com* respondents exaggerated their level of cautiousness in involving the public to too large an extent in the newsroom. Based on the statements made during the interviews, it is possible for the study to assume that the hesitation is more likely to have been caused by the media's ability to take control of the information flow rather than the audience's characteristics. On the one hand, it is undeniable that Indonesian people have a number of cultural characteristics that make them unreliable as news sources. On the other hand, if the media practises the essence of curation journalism in filtering the information flow, the fear of the inaccuracy and unprofessional contamination in the newsroom could be reduced.

Compared to what has happened in these two companies, it is possible that *Viva.co.id* is closer to the correct form of curation journalism. The editors, journalists, and social media specialists in the company seem to be more enthusiastic to embrace public participation. Based on what could be learned during the interviews, it is clear that journalists are considering including social media and public participation in news production. Journalists' willingness to directly embed the original links to social media content is an indication that the newsroom is ready to use curation as advanced gatekeeping. Though the initial background of this policy was to transfer the excess information to the owner of the content, as discussed in Chapter Six, it may be perceived as an effort to ensure accountability and professionalism. The correct method would be just transferring the responsibility to the public because, as the publisher of the information, the media is sharer of the truth. The editors of *Viva.co.id* admitted the significance of this commitment and regarded the current audience as more mature than before. Therefore, the effort to open the public channel in news production has succeeded in changing people's behaviour, at least in *Viva's* point of view.

Regardless of the different attitudes towards social media content, the three media companies had the same positive response to the development of curation method in journalism. As discussed in previous chapters, the principal means of curating is actually the basis of journalism, namely gathering and selecting materials from

dispersed sources. In the era of social media, informants agreed that the influence of social media interaction on the process of consuming information is inevitable. Even representatives from *Tempo.co* considered social media a useful channel for finding materials for soft news and maintaining positive relationships with the audience.

In the discussion of ethics, representatives from the three media outlets agreed that using curation journalism to collect information from social media is acceptable. *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co* share the assumption that, once a social media account holder publishes information on a network, the material belongs to the public. Therefore, the use of the content is not copyrighted, except for materials such as artistic photographs or videos. However, journalists must always credit the original owner of the material.

In the same respect, *Viva.co.id* also assumes that social media content can be used publicly. Curating materials from social channels offers a means of finding information that enriches the information otherwise sourced by journalists. Furthermore, editors stated that publishing people's comments in the news will increase said audience's loyalty. As stated in the interviews, the audience responded positively to the use of social media content. However, the editors admitted that the contents of social media, in many cases, need to be rewritten or adjusted to journalistic ethical standards. This method is an attempt to maintain the quality of *Viva.co.id* news products and to ensure that the content does not violate the journalistic code of ethics.

Based on the interviews and observations, this study argues that embedding, as seen on *Viva.co.id*, is an appropriate means of protecting the ethics of using the opinions of others in the media. By providing an original link, *Viva.co.id* does not claim the possession of the information; the source is clearly displayed. Moreover, embedding the link in this way also shows a positive attitude to the presence of the public in regular news. On the other hand, the rewriting method seen on *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co* can also uphold the ethical standards of journalism as long as the journalist mentions the source of the quote. However, this method does not promote the freedom of expression and the openness of the public sphere, which is essential in a democracy.

Nevertheless, though *Viva.co.id* is more flexible in using public participation in the newsroom, the general attitudes of the three media companies show that journalists

still play a dominant role in controlling the flow of information. The dominance seems to be acceptable considering the quality of Indonesian people's comments on social media because media companies sustain their credibility as a trustworthy information source. The need to ensure trustworthiness may be why *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co* strictly separate the public voice from the news. However, unlike *Viva.co.id*, these two media outlets have greater potential to deny the freedom of expression, which is crucial for the democratisation of a society.

### 7.3 Conclusions

The professionalism associated with and ethical issues in using public participation on social media as a component of the curation process is the centre of discussion in this chapter. This thesis explores the ethical reasoning behind the behaviour of the media in treating public voices in news production.

Unlike the previous two chapters, the discussion in this chapter has illustrated differences among *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co* and *Viva.co.id*. The differences are apparent in the review of the professional attitudes of each media outlet in using public voices. Based on the findings, this study concludes that *Viva.co.id* has been the most flexible by offering greater freedom to the public in terms of news structure. Therefore, it may be assumed that *Viva.co.id* has a higher level of trust towards public statements published on social media compared to *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*. On the contrary, *Tempo.co* are pessimistic about involving the public in regular news publication. Instead of embracing a more social journalism, *Tempo.co* prefers to ensure professionalism by using traditional methods and using social media relationships as a marketing strategy. On the other hand, *Kompas.com* seems to be enthusiastic about the development of social networking in journalism, though the respondents did not express the same level of trust as those from *Viva.co.id*. As a result, *Kompas.com* behaves similarly to *Tempo.co*, which considers social media interaction more as a business marketing strategy rather than something to be used in the newsroom.

These differences, however, are based on the same effort to preserve journalistic professionalism. The attitudes expressed by representatives from *Kompas.com* and

*Tempo.co* can be understood as an attempt to ensure professionalism to protect news production from inaccurate, unreliable information from the public, which is understandable considering Indonesian cultural characteristics. The Indonesian population is an oral community regarded as unreliable in terms of distributing facts. However, this belief that the Indonesian public is not reliable hinders the process of democratisation. Freedom of expression seems to interfere with certain levels of censorship. Arguably, *Viva.co.id* is more supportive by providing embedding technology to include the public's original statements within the news. The editors even testified that this method has even improved public reliability.

Regardless of the differences in professional conduct, a general conclusion can be extracted from a discussion of the ethics. These three media companies shared the same ethical perception of the practice of curation journalism as involving people's voices in social media. It is assumed that using statements from the general public on social media in news production does not violate the journalistic code of ethics or copyright issues. Social media content is considered to be owned by the public. Consequently, it is legal to use this content as the materials in the news. However, to ensure the ethical aspects of information ownership, these three media companies have made it compulsory to credit the original owner of the information. This obligation is not a problem for *Viva.co.id* because it allows the editors to embed the original link of the social media content into the body of the news.

Perhaps the most important ethical consideration at the three companies is how they present those public voices in the structure of reliable news; they have to guarantee the social media contents included in the news does not have any element that may harm the audience, such as false information, insulting statements, racism, or other potentially abusive content. Journalists at the three outlets should be aware that this issue may be unpleasant for the general public. Because of this awareness, this study argues that, in the era of curation journalism, these three companies still showing their dominance in controlling information flow. It is needed to maintain the quality of journalism itself.

This fact brings the discussion back to the previous chapter on the use of social media content, where this study concluded the essential meaning of verifying facts in

traditional journalism used by these three media outlets. Verification by sending reporters to the field to manually investigate a certain event is still considered the most reliable method, which also maintains ethical considerations and the quality of journalism to protect the corporation's credibility as a reliable news publisher.

However, to entirely separate public participation from the regular news as *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co* do will potentially hinder democratisation in Indonesia. Arguably, the higher level of freedom provided by *Viva.co.id*'s editors will increase the public's ability to contribute more reliable, useful information. This difference also reveals the possibility that the Indonesian media's stance on democratisation and freedom of speech cannot be generalised.



# Chapter Eight

## The Current Situation of Curation Journalism in Indonesia: 2016 vs 2019

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### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter mainly discusses the comparison between the initial field research in 2016-2017 and the secondary round of empirical findings in 2019 regarding the same subjects. The discussion examines development updates on what the newsrooms have recently done or changed and in turn aims to generate an understanding of recent Indonesian curation practices.

The initial findings in this thesis were based on a study conducted in 2016-2017. At that time, the event of the “Jakarta Bombing” was still prominent in public conversation. Curation journalism and social media involvement in news production were also becoming popular, either as a gathering technique or news presentation style. As mentioned in earlier chapters, this thesis views the year 2016 as the moment when public participation became crucial in the world of journalism, especially in Western media or media influenced by Western values.

This thesis found that in 2016-2017, Indonesian online media, which in this study were represented by three leading news media companies, preferred to use a different style of news presentation compared with Western or international media outlets. Namely, the Indonesian companies were not as overt in their implementation of curation journalism; rather, the process of curation journalism was being applied by Indonesian journalists mainly in terms of gathering information from social media content and other online sources. One of the reasons for this difference is the culture of Indonesia, which affects not only the readers but also the journalists. Indonesia has strong customs that remain close to the country’s roots in oral communication. These customs have led to poor reading habits and low intention among the public to explore the accuracy of information. Another reason is the culture of Indonesian marketing, which



has driven journalists to break their information down into small articles in order to optimise their revenue.

Thus, in 2016-2017, Indonesian online media tended to present news in a short-format style, separating the details of any given event into multiple short articles. This study found this preference of news presentation to be different from the trend in international news media at that time, where the details were instead presented in one long-format articles under a single heading. Moreover, this study also found that Indonesian online media tended not to include statements from the general public made via social media because of the low level of trust as to the accuracy of the statements. This hesitancy also distinguishes the Indonesian outlets from the international media outlets.

The situation seemed to be deeply rooted in Indonesian culture. Therefore, it was assumed that what had been found in 2016 and 2017 would remain the same in 2019. However, the development of technology, as well as people's educational level, has increased rapidly. There was a possibility that the culture of Indonesian journalism had changed since.

To clarify this possibility, this chapter provides the result of the newest study in Indonesia towards the three media. This newest inquiry was conducted at the end of 2019. Generally, it has been found that these three media outlets have made some changes concerning their news presentation, their information columns on the web, as well as their policy towards general public voices. The results are presented in three separate sections, following the same structure as in previous chapters. These findings are analysed afterwards in the final section of this chapter.

## **8.2 Amendments to the Editorial Policies and Media Formats**

### **8.2.1 Situation at *Kompas.com* as of 2019**

The main thing specified by the editors of *Kompas.com* was that their policies regarding the use of social media content as well curating the sources are still the same. The only thing that has changed is the speed of gathering the information. The

*Kompas.com* editors noted that, compared to 2016, they are now able to gather information spread via social media more quickly.

Based on an interview with an informant who was also one of the editors interviewed during the first study in 2016, *Kompas.com* still keeps its distance from public voices. In other words, *Kompas.com* does not incorporate direct public participation into news production. However, the voices of the public are still considered as valuable inputs for the news.

It seems that there is no difference in viewing or dealing with public participation. It is still considered as feedback; then we will continue to verify in the field. Now the way we get feedback has gotten faster. We are getting increasingly faster with monitoring social media thanks to the facilities of *Google*, the various tools that we have, including our media monitoring apps like *Crowdtangle*. We are making an effort to seek feedback from the crowd.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #2, 3<sup>rd</sup> interview on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)

*Crowdtangle* is one of many media monitoring tools. This application is available online and works across social media platforms (especially *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *Reddit*) to track what topics are emerging within the crowd's conversation. By using this kind of application, *Kompas.com* can monitor information flow in social media more or less in real time. This application is part of why information gathering has become so much faster.

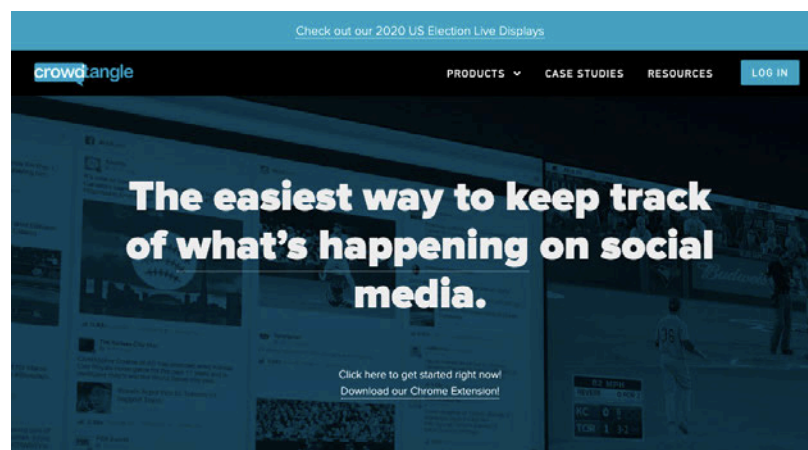


Figure 8.1 *Crowdtangle* App interface in web version. This App also available for smartphones.  
(Source: Crowdtangle, 2020)

To some extent, *Kompas.com* still believes in the classical theory of the press, so-called "Agenda Setting". According to this theory, the media agenda gains power by following the public agenda; the media should therefore retrieve information guided by the public, including what the public fears, is troubled by, or dreams of (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, cited in Ritonga, 2018, p. 33). The use of *Crowdtangle* does show that *Kompas.com* is still respecting the existence of public voices and scattered information on social media as a source that helps set its agenda.

Nevertheless, as revealed in an interview in 2016, *Kompas.com* remains resistant to using non-journalists as contributors for its news coverage. A 2019 interview with an editor found that *Kompas.com* does not intend to risk its reputation by using 'unskilled' journalists.

Journalistic facts must be verified per the principles of journalism. If citizens who do not have journalistic skills are left to verify the facts, it would be dangerous because hoaxes can trick them. Especially now, in the era of the hoax, where people can easily twist an issue for their benefit. Today if someone who does not have journalistic skills does so [within *Kompas*' work], we cannot be taking responsibility for what he claims.

(*Kompas.com* Informant #2, 3<sup>rd</sup> interview on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)

This finding implies that *Kompas.com* still prefers to use conventional, or even traditional, methods of journalism. Again, in this aspect as well, the situation of journalistic activity in *Kompas.com* is relatively the same as the case in 2016.

Despite the outlet's attitude towards the involvement of non-journalist citizens in news production, *Kompas Cyber Media* (KCM), as the mother group of *Kompas.com*, is implementing a special channel to value public participation. However, this channel only emphasises the efforts of *Kompas Group* to keep news production free from public contribution. The channel is called *Kompasiana*.



Figure 8.2 The logo of Kompasiana website, a portal for blogging  
(Source: Kompasiana, 2018)

*Kompasiana* is a specialised channel for what the company calls citizen journalism. The principal aim of this channel is to strengthen the company's engagement with communities. This channel is open for any form of writing, including political analyses, opinions, even poetry. In other words, this channel does not have strict rules about news production or journalistic values. It has its own website, which does not have management relation to *Kompas.com*. However, some selected contents from *Kompasiana*, which have certain news values and have been verified, are semi-regularly published in *Kompas.com*.

This latest interview result gives the impression that *Kompas.com* is now more sensitive about promoting verification of accuracy. The informant mentioned that *Kompas.com* is no longer prioritising the speed of publishing stories. Speed has become number two, while number one is now accuracy. As a result, *Kompas.com* is often seen to be too slow in publishing issues, compared to other online media that still participate in racing to be the first outlet distributing updates as events actually happen. *Kompas.com* knows it will lose this race, especially in the first minutes after an event has occurred. However, *Kompas.com* is aiming to improve its competitiveness in terms of speed by conducting faster verification.

The sensitivity to accuracy seems to be the main agenda of *Kompas.com*, especially after the last national election. Its prioritisation of accuracy is demonstrated not only within its newsroom policy but also by the company's active involvement in fact-checking committees, both national and international. In the national level, *Kompas.com* has joined *cekfakta.com*, a unique website for fact-checking that was created by a collaboration of about 30 news outlets in Indonesia. In the international scope, *Kompas.com* has become a member of the *International Fact Checking Network* (IFCN), a collaboration of news outlets from all over the world.

This involvement in fact-checking efforts helps explain why *Kompas.com* is still reluctant to curate information directly from the general public. The situation overall remains unchanged compared to that of 2016 since *Kompas.com* still considers its general audience to lack credibility as a primary source. Though the informant noted that *Kompas.com* has adopted the technology to embed curated social media contents

in their news stories, the outlet does not use that technology very often, especially not in hard news.

### 8.2.2 Different Policy on Public Involvement at *Tempo.co*

Unlike *Kompas.com*, which had seen little change since 2016-2017, informants in the last interview with *Tempo.co* reported several changes. A rotation of management at *Tempo* meant the previous informants were no longer in the relevant positions. The interview in 2019 was therefore done with two new informants, who are referred to as informants #5 and #6.

This interview indicated that *Tempo.co* is greatly concerned about curation and public participation. This concern is oriented around the citizen journalism movement emerging within communities. In November 2019, the company launched its newest program, an application called *Tempo Witness* directed at communities.

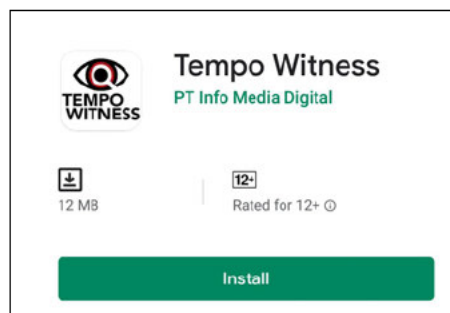


Figure 8.3 *Tempo Witness* application, available free to download in smartphone application stores  
(Source: PT. Info Media Digital, 2019)

The informants stated that *Tempo Witness* is not meant only for the communities themselves (as is the case with *Kompasiana*). Rather, this program is dedicated to select citizens who sincerely want to produce writing of journalistic value and quality. *Tempo.co* curates the writings shared via the application and includes those writings, or excerpts of them, in its formal publications. *Tempo Witness*, in other words, is a tool built to enable curation journalism. One informant even called *Tempo Witness* "a curated citizen journalism program."

However, *Tempo.co* had not necessarily opened its newsroom to all public voices. This program originated from the company's anxiety about the low credibility of the

people as newsmakers and the low quality of their reports. Therefore, the company felt a need to enhance the quality by training the public in the necessary journalistic skills.

The biggest problem with citizen journalism today is that people are not trained, and there are no filters. So what happens is the content varies, such as about noisy neighbours, about things that are not public interest [not significant]. Even though as a tool of journalism, citizen reporting is powerful, in my opinion, it is really the future of journalists as we create a conversation where everyone is involved; the media and the journalists are no longer gatekeepers but curators. So how can we combine the power of crowdsourcing ... this is the journalistic principle of curation.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #5, interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)

The concept of the program is to invite selected applicants to contribute to news production. *Tempo* will give these people free journalistic training. The trained citizen journalists will then create stories from the field, in the form of writing, video, or photos, which will be edited by *Tempo* editors before being published in *Tempo.co*. Within this program, *Tempo* targets specific audiences, namely those audiences who have received limited attention from the media. *Tempo* fills this target by inviting community groups of people who are considered marginalised by the media.

So far, the mass media only serve the middle class and above, which amounts to approximately 20% of the population more or less, namely people who possess purchasing power for the products advertised in the media. Consciously or unconsciously, the media chooses news values based on what is envisioned by our audience and also from people who have purchasing power over the companies that place advertisements there. That leaves the people who are at the bottom of the pyramid underserved. As a result, they are left out of the media function.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #5, interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)

As for the implementation, *Tempo Witness* relies on what they call community journalism. Within this concept, the members of the community are the ones who determines the news. They choose what is reported, what is important for the community, and what must be considered first. For identification, *Tempo* calls

them *information brokers* (IBs), namely people who can become mediators and use information as a tool in solving problems.

So indeed, this program is targeted at community groups who have problems and want to solve those problems. Before this, they might have done it on a practical level. For example, when there is a drought problem, usually what they think is "OK, we make irrigation". With the existence of *Tempo Witness*, they can make sure that the information about this problem is known to people.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #6, interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)



Figure 8.4 An example of an IB's report shared via the *Tempo Witness* application about a traffic jam in Cikampek-Jakarta Tollway. Contains photo and descriptions.

(Source: PT. Info Media Digital, 2019)

This method does not completely align with the definition of curation journalism, which usually deals with scattered data and information. Based on the informants' explanations, *Tempo* still strives to keep its reputation as one of the leading news publishers. However, *Tempo* is very conscious of the power of crowdsourcing and the

role of journalists as curators. Regarding the practice of curation journalism, arguably, the *Tempo Witness* program could be seen as a result of negotiation between the power of public voices and the strict principles of journalism.

Moreover, the decision of *Tempo* to not let the public be openly involved in news production is also based on concerns about public safety and protection. In Indonesia, citizen journalists such as IBs are not protected by press law and constitution.

The only law that includes them is the public information disclosure law. As a consequence, *Tempo Witness* does not allow its IBs to conduct interviews. IBs are only permitted to make a report about what they saw.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #6, interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)

As informant #6 explained, IBs only generate 4W reports of an event, not 5W+1H reports. These abbreviations stand for the classical terminology in journalism that refers to news content: What, Where, When, Who, Why and How. Regarding IBs' job description, they are not required to cover "Why" and "How" aspects, which need in-depth interviews.

Again, this policy also serves to protect the media's reputation because when IBs' reports are published, the only name that appears to the public is *Tempo's* name. Therefore, if a source were to issue a complaint because of a journalistic ethical code violation during an interview conducted by an IB, *Tempo* would have to take responsibility. In order to avoid such complaints and the unfortunate effect those complaints would have on the company, IBs are not allowed to conduct full investigations. As the name of the program suggests, IBs are only eyewitnesses.

The development of granting public participation a serious role in news production is nonetheless a significant breakthrough in *Tempo.co*. In 2016, the newsroom minimised the involvement of the public and tended to stick to tradition in making journalistic products. As discussed in Chapter Six, the only public contribution to news production by the public was what occurred on social media, and even then the contribution consisted only of finding hot topics and offering feedback and comments. The public's voice was not a primary source of the news.



In general, *Tempo.co* still prefers not to put people's social media comments directly in its news stories, unless the comments are from verified accounts or public figures. As was the case in 2016, *Tempo.co* rarely displays its curated information from citizens or non-journalists, even though in the process, the journalist is treating that information as news material. However, a slight difference occurred in 2019 in that *Tempo.co* seemed to have loosened their policy on embedding social media content inside the body of its news publications. In 2016, the editors did not have an editorial policy to embed codes inside stories. This lack of policy was due not only to their fear of hoaxes in social media content that could harm the reputation of *Tempo* but also, per the editors' claims, to the lack of the technology needed to do that. In contrast, in 2019, the editors appeared not to mind embedding codes to social media content within their story, as long as the source and the fact was verified.

Regarding the discipline of verification, *Tempo.co* shares the same eagerness as *Kompas.com*. Both have joined *cekfakta.com*, a group of fact-checkers, in order to contribute to the "anti-hoax" movement. As also revealed by the informant at *Kompas.com*, the involvement of *Tempo.co* in *cekfakta.com* started in the National Election period in 2018. The editors at *Tempo.co* felt they must learn from what has happened in other countries, where hoaxes or fake news have been used to manipulate information during an election. This is what motivated them to join the movement.

At first, we thought about what is so different between fact-checking and what we do every day. We are reporters whose job is checking the facts. Nevertheless, after we attended several fact checking meetings abroad, we learned the format is different. In fact-checking, what is taken is a specific claim, which has to be dismantled and examined for accuracy.

(*Tempo.co* Informant #5, interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019)

In short, the major issue in 2019 was verification of facts. The emergence of *Tempo Eye Witness*, the new policy to embed verified social media contents, and the movement to join a fact-checking organisation are indications that *Tempo.co* – similar to *Kompas.com* – is trying to protect its credibility as a trusted media outlet. Comments from citizens are still considered too unreliable to be the main source of the news, which is also related to the emphasis on the verification of accuracy. This

emphasis is not so different from the situation in 2016. However, the advancement of technology has made everything more flexible than before.

### 8.2.3 Changes of News Portals at *Viva.co.id*

The latest interview with *Viva.co.id* was conducted in December 2019. The source was one of the main informants that had been interviewed in 2016. In this thesis, the informant was identified as *Viva.co.id* informant #1. However, at the time of the most recent interview, this person now held a new position as a result of a major change within the media management of *Viva Group* in 2019. Namely, *Viva.co.id* and the channels in it had been broken down into separated domains under a mega portal called *Viva Networks*. The hard news and breaking news – things that became a focus in this thesis – were now done by *Vivanews.com*, a domain that had not been used for years. The old domain, *Viva.co.id*, remains. However, the content is different now. *Viva.co.id* is more concentrated on soft news and entertainment news, as well as sidelines of big stories that are published in *Vivanews.com*.



Figure 8.5 *Viva Networks* homepage, which contains all the domains' links to the networks.

(Source: The Viva Networks, 2019)

*Viva Networks* can be seen as a multi-hub network that facilitates specific topics. At its current stage of development, *Viva Networks* has 11 hubs or domains: *Vivanews*

(hard news, breaking news, and in-depth reports), *VPIX* (video streaming), *Viva.co.id* *newstainment* (soft news and entertainment), *Jago Dangdut* (everything about dangdut, a popular Indonesian music style), *100KPJ.com* (automotive information), *Sahijab* (Muslim fashion), *IntipSeleb.com* (information about celebrities, national and international), *Suara Merdeka* (hard news, online version of a newspaper), *TvOne* (news and sports, online version of a national television), *OnePride* (a specialised domain for One Pride Competition, an Indonesian Mixed-Martial Arts [MMA] Combat, organised by *Viva Group*), and *OnePrix* (a specialised domain for One Prix Competition, an Indonesian Motorprix Championship, organised by *Viva Group*). These topics appear in *Viva.co.id*, which serves as a mega-portal.

With the development of new features including blogs with video and multimedia, *Viva.co.id* is now even more developed, so it's like a super mall. Each topic of interest has its own pavilions, but with a broader name, *Viva Networks*. Inside are *Viva.co.id*, *Vivanews* and so on. We make it that way because advertisers prefer media that is more segmented, can sell more.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2019)

If we look at the history of *Viva.co.id* (see Chapter Three), *Vivanews.com* was actually the initial name with which the company was established in 2008. In 2012, the management decided to expand *Vivanews.com* into a mega portal with a new domain that indicates its Indonesian identity: *Viva.co.id*. However, the management of *Viva Group* decided to keep the *Vivanews.com*'s domain, even though it was only an idle site. In 2019, the management agreed to resurrect the domain and use it as a specific domain under *Viva Networks*.

As for engagement of its audience, especially via social media, the informant admitted that the name *Vivanews* lacks recognition after five years of idleness. People are used to seeing the name *Viva.co.id* in social media and have forgotten about *Vivanews*, which is in fact the outlet's original name. The opposite situation occurred in 2012, when *Viva.co.id* had just recently established itself as *Vivanews*.

There are a lot of fan bases on *Viva.co.id*, while the *Vivanews* account, because it is new, still has few followers. Therefore, we still need support from *Viva.co.id* accounts, such as through retweets. Meanwhile, we continue to educate our readers, making them aware that we are different even though we are in the same house.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2019)

Within the current situation, as *Vivanews* is still in the process of gaining popularity, *Viva.co.id* continues to function as an aggregator because the domain with this name has more readers. Thus, the aggregation of *Vivanews*' stories, or *100KPJ* news, is occurring under *Viva.co.id*.

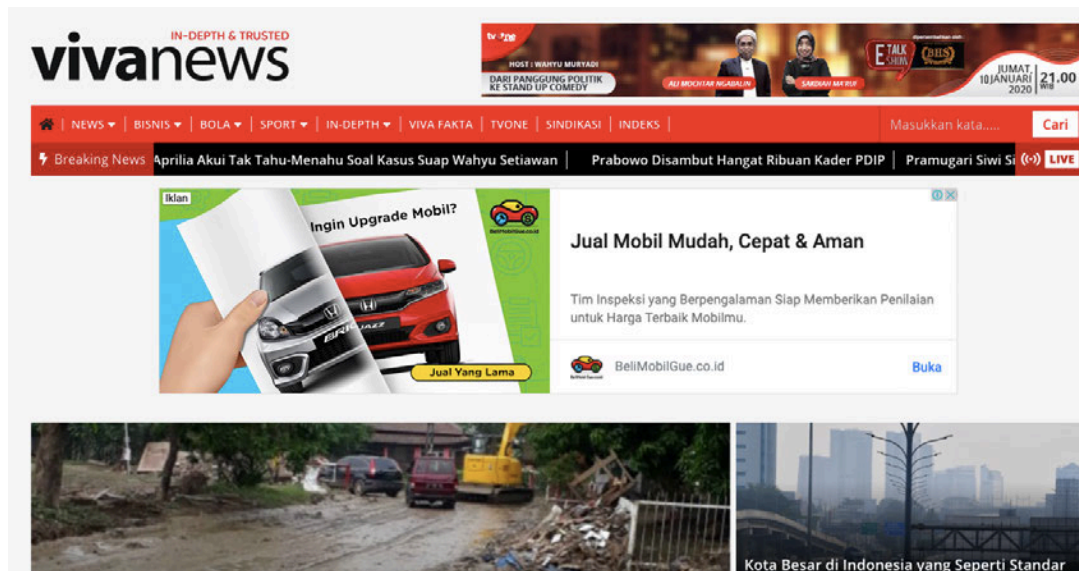


Figure 8.6 *Vivanews* interface appearance, with channels and sections as it appeared in the old *Viva.co.id* website.  
(Source: Vivanews, 2020)

As it is shown in Figure 8.6, *Vivanews* has news sections that used to be provided by *Viva.co.id* before the transition. *Vivanews* also has a unique tagline, as shown in red on the top-left side above the outlet name: "in-depth & trusted". The tagline reflects the vision of *Vivanews* as an outlet with serious news coverage. The informant mentioned in the interview that the contents of *Vivanews* are mature and heavy, such as political or economic issues. This is one of the reasons why *Vivanews* does not have a policy concerning contributions from non-journalists or a section dedicated to such content.

We don't have that at *Vivanews*. But we have a poll. Every week we gather opinions from readers about hot topics. The options are just "agree" or "disagree". For example: do you agree the president should be elected by the House of Representatives as before? So, easy questions like that. We also promote these questions on social media. The results are made into articles in the news column. We also accommodate good comments on social media.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019)

Somewhat more obvious relationships with the public can be seen at *Viva.co.id*. The website still maintains special sections for the audiences' contributions, such as *VStory* (or *Cerita Anda/Your Story* as appeared in 2016) and *V-Log* (or *VivaLog* in the 2016 version). As discussed in Chapter Six, these two special sections were provided for the public to create their own materials for publication online. Some of these materials were curated to be part of news articles on the main page. This practice is still implemented at the new *Viva.co.id*.

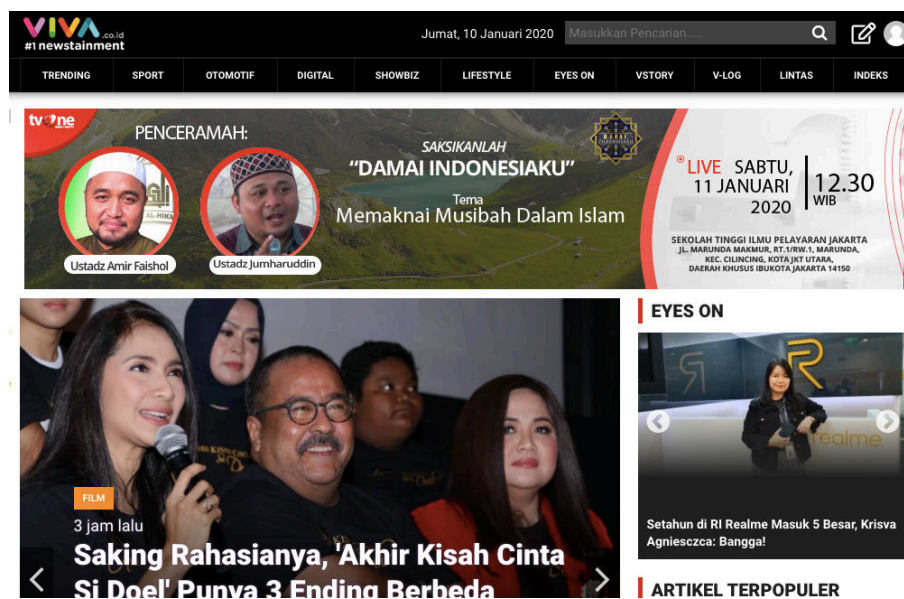


Figure 8.7 The new look of *Viva.co.id* with the new tagline “#1newstainment”, meaning number one in providing entertainment news.  
(Source: Viva.co.id, 2020)

Moreover, because the new *Viva.co.id* focuses more on soft news and entertainment, the practice of curation journalism there is more prominent. This prominence is understandable since curating information from scattered sources for soft news is relatively easier than doing so for heavier topics. Though a sensitivity to accuracy is always present in all journalistic products, the risk of taking information from citizens for soft news and entertainment is not as high for hard news or political issues.

However, the informant claimed that curation journalism is still practised in *Vivanews* as an information gathering method. The editors there do not close their eyes to social media content. They still use general public statements issued via social media to identify trending topics among communities, even though they do not

directly use the statements as part of their news articles. This approach emphasises that respect towards public voices has not changed much compared with 2016.

There is not much change [compared to 2016], in my opinion, just how we behave more dynamically when we see trends. We cannot focus on deepening only one issue and ignore trends or other information because of that. And that is also a function of social media; we can look for trends.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019)

Much as with *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, the reluctance to use people's comments or statements from social media directly in news articles is based on two major concerns. The first is their reputation. An editor of *Vivanews* claimed that they respect the existence of public voices shared via social media or citizen journalism but insisted they must maintain the discipline of verification in order to protect their reputation as a guardian of accuracy.

We are not cynical or distrustful of the public, not like that. Instead, we want to show the public that we, as the mainstream mass media, are still needed amid the rush of citizen journalism, where anyone can generate and spread news. Citizen journalists are not like us, as we have the ability and expertise to prove that the news released is not a hoax; there is evidence of accuracy.

(*Viva.co.id* Informant #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> interview on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019)

Second, the editor still prefers traditional journalism over depending on curating people's social media accounts. The traditional method is implemented by sending their own journalists into the field to recheck facts, rather than by just collecting people's comments. Many people may discuss a single given event on social media. However, *Vivanews* still feels that its reporters need to verify facts traditionally, looking for the truth to determine whether the information circulating in the community is true or not. Indeed, this labour is crucial because what is being debated in the community may not necessarily be true.

This reason is the background of why *Vivanews* has a special section called *Viva Fakta* (Viva Facts). This is the section where *Vivanews* provides information about the status of a viral issue, clarifying whether the claims about it are accurate and indicating if it is just a hoax. As at *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, verifying the facts has



remained a significant objective for *Vivanews*. This media has also joined the movement to avoid hoaxes and fake news; together with almost 30 outlets, *Vivanews* is a member of *cekfakta.com* as well.

#### **8.2.4 Analysis and Discussion**

As discussed in previous chapters, curation in journalism as a form of gathering materials and displaying them in a specific medium shares many parallels with the term as it applies in the arts industry. New technology has eliminated made the boundaries between many areas and led to conflict within previous ‘unanimities’ in traditional perspectives. Many scholars now believe that the characteristics of digital media have made it the best way to present or curate new media art or digital news (Kolodzy, 2013: 5-6; Graham and Cook, 2010: 2-4). In line with this growing belief, curation journalism in this digital era is emerging as well, both visually in news presentation as well as procedurally in news production.

However, this chapter shows that after three years, the situation in Indonesia is relatively unchanged. The more recent study revealed that the three Indonesian media outlets, the subjects of this research, still hold the same overall perspective towards scattered online information, especially information on social media. Unlike the news structure in the Western media, which may embed the codes of someone’s social media account as part of curating material to complete a story, Indonesian media rarely do that, even though they do now have access to the technology.

Indonesian media is aware of curation. The study found that all three Indonesian media keep a close and constant eye on social media conversations. This effort is part of their attempt to stay aware of trends among communities, to understand what people are saying about actual events, and to find feedback from the public. Observation of social media content and public voices is part of curation, or what the theory refers to as the process of gatekeeping or gatewatching. As Bruns (2018) states, gatewatching is the media’s continuous observation of factual information received by news outlets and other sources and the subsequent categorisation of material as either not worthy of or significant enough for publication (p. 27).

The editors of the three media explained that they still use materials from social media for their news to fill in missing pieces of their own investigation in the field. However, they have decided not to use the materials directly. The information is just useful for journalists' knowledge, to determine what to cover and what to follow. In other words, curation is still practised as a method to find facts.

The hesitance of the media to use public voices as part of their news story can be seen as a consequence of dealing with unreliable news sources. The more recent study found that all three media companies have given special attention to the problem of data verification, as evidenced by their activities in national fact-checking since 2018. In theory, the enthusiasm of news companies about verifying data for the benefit of the public has been listed among the elements of journalism (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007). The first element notes an obligation to the truth, and the second emphasises loyalty to the public. However, even though public voices are considered unreliable in conveying the facts, the three media outlets still take into consideration the importance of conducting community activities on social media. This consideration was demonstrated by the creation of special forums and platforms to accommodate these activities. The availability of such forums also shows that journalism activities in Indonesia are indeed in line with Kovach and Rosenstiel's (2007) journalism elements. As can be seen in Appendix 1, the tenth element implies that journalistic media must provide a forum for community activities.

In addition, the results of this latest study show that the news values discussed in Chapter One (Brighton and Foy, 2007; Allan, 2010; Harcup and O'Neill, 2017) are increasingly being considered rigorously by editors and companies. For example, the outlets had all decided to separate light coverage into a separate platform. *Kompas.com* developed a special *Kompasiana* channel; *Tempo.co* developed *Tempo Witness* alongside the *Indonesiana* channel, which now has its own website; and *Viva.co.id* changed its format into an entertainment channel for news with light news value, whereas the more serious news web is managed separately. It can thus also be seen that the process of curation is more lenient for channels that do not focus on high news values.



The editors' decision to create separate channels for the public as discussed above seems appropriate in Indonesia, where the audience has unique cultural characteristics. As discussed before, especially in Chapter Six, Indonesians tend not to pursue details and data in order to complete their understanding of the issues they hear or talk about. This situation is a result of Indonesia's cultural habits, which have stemmed from its history as a collectivist oral society. In 2016, the initial study suggested that Indonesians were still in this cultural situation. Apparently, the same situation persists in 2019.

Indonesia scores high in collectivism at the moment, far higher than in individualism. A current publication about world leadership in 2018, written by Ehrhardt *et al.*, mentions that Indonesia has a high score in power distance as well, higher than most European countries. In contrast, the score for individualism in Indonesia is much lower than in European countries. The publication concludes that Indonesia is a "relatively collective society, which means that they rather think in terms of 'we' instead of 'I'" (Ehrhardt *et al.*, 2018). That also means, arguably, Indonesians are still using the same communication style as before.

In short, after three years, the situation found in the 2016 study is still relevant to today's conditions in Indonesia. Even though technology is advancing in Indonesia, the practice of journalism remains almost identical to the traditional method that relies on human power. The perspective of the media regarding the public is also the same, even though the media are giving more space to citizen journalism.

### **8.3 Conclusions**

Change is inevitable, especially in terms of practices that involve communication technology. Technology develops constantly due to the innovations and growth of the communities who use it. The inquiry into the 2019's situation of the practice of curation journalism in Indonesia compared to the case in 2016 shows that change has also occurred at *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*. However, the inquiry found that the principle of using curation and the attitude towards public participation are relatively unchanged. The primary perspectives about the media's relationship with the audience remain the same.

The three news outlets showed improvement regarding media management as well as technical aspects. *Kompas.com* is now using more reliable tools to review trending topics within the communities. *Tempo.co* has initiated a new application to accommodate public participation. Finally, *Viva.co.id* has transformed into more segmented outlets, a move aimed at distinguishing soft news and entertainment news from hard news, which has been shifted to the re-invented *Vivanews*. The management has also created *Viva Networks* as a big multi-hub website to bind these segmented outlets together.

Apart from the changes in management and technical features, this chapter concludes that the attitudes of the three media outlets towards public participation remain about the same as in 2016. The rigid differentiation between the role of the journalist and that of the public has been sustained; the newsroom does not want the public to create journalistic products on its own. This policy is reflected both in the visual display of the news, where the general public contributions are not visually represented, and in the process of news making. These three outlets are similarly placing public voices in special separate platforms. They claim that these platforms do not follow journalistic principles, so the media holds no responsibility regarding the quality of the content.

A slight difference has arisen in the program of *Tempo Witness* at *Tempo.co*, where members of the public are being trained as citizen journalists with necessary journalistic skills. However, the reports created by these citizen journalists are still being reviewed by *Tempo* editors and published under *Tempo's* name, not the citizens' names. This program is therefore not really a platform for the public. It is still a platform for *Tempo's* journalistic products, just for ones that *Tempo* has curated from the reports of trained citizen journalists.

The reluctance to directly involve or curate citizens' voices in news production seems to be based on the editors' perception that Indonesian citizens are still unreliable when it comes to presenting facts. The public suffers from biases and tendencies to accept misleading information because Indonesians overall have poor reading habits and low capabilities in investigating the data behind the facts. The culture of collectivism is still active within Indonesian communities, which makes Indonesians' quality as credible sources just as low as in 2016.

However, Indonesian journalism is nonetheless slowly adopting aspects of the practice of curation. The new findings in this chapter emphasise the results of previous studies, which have shown that Indonesia has a unique way of practising curation journalism. The media in Indonesia have not been convinced by the quality of citizens' information, and that has left them reluctant to directly and visually present the public's contributions within the news; accordingly, Indonesian curation journalism aims to adjust the quality of public voices on social media.

In other words, the study found that curation is there, certainly applicable in Indonesia, but only as one of many information-gathering methods. Therefore, the journalistic process in making news in Indonesia is still closer to the traditional process than to modern participatory journalism.



# Conclusions

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The primary objective of this thesis was to understand the implementation of curation journalism in the industry of online media in Indonesia. Based on the preliminary observations and the comparison with statistical data, the study identified a unique situation in Indonesia regarding how the media deal with social media as the crucial element in the practice of curation journalism. In short, curation journalism in Indonesia differs from the practice in Western and international media.

This thesis defined curation journalism per the discussions of the practice by Witschge (2012) and McQuail (2013). In turn, to determine the position of curation journalism in the journalistic professionalism, the thesis drew on the theory of gatekeeping (Shoemaker, Vos, & Reese, 2009; Bruns, 2018); some revisions of Galtung and Ruge's news values by Brighton and Foy (2007), Allan (2010), and Harcup and O'Neill (2017); and traditional journalistic principles and ethics. Furthermore, to seek an in-depth comprehension of the Indonesian context, the study also employed cultural theories such as Hofstede's (2011) theory of collectivism in national culture, E. T. Hall's (1981) high-context culture, and the discussion of oral versus literary cultures as raised by Ong (2002) and Mulyana (2017).

The objective to identify Indonesian media's general behaviour in the context of curation journalism was approached by focusing on three popular media outlets in Indonesia. This focus means the results of this study were based on limited examples rather than general findings spanning all Indonesian news media. However, the high similarity of the findings among all three outlets, each of which has a different background and history, suggests to some degree that this study's results are nonetheless representative of Indonesian journalism overall.

The three online media companies selected to reflect the Indonesian version of curation journalism were *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*. All three were among the most popular news websites in Indonesia in 2016. To serve the comparison study aimed at identifying the differences between Indonesian curation journalism and Western curation journalism that appears in international news networks, the thesis focused on *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* as representatives of the

international online media outlets. Based on the observation, these six outlets have been practising curation journalism as well as eliciting the public's participation through social media within their news production for quite some time, especially after the Arab Spring reporting in 2011 by Andy Carvin (Carvin, 2012; M. Knight and Cook, 2013).

The comparison study revealed that the three different Indonesian companies had all practised a similar style of curation, adopting the same perspectives about the use of social media for journalism and the involvement of the public in the newsroom. Even though all three companies have equipped their newsrooms with relevant technologies, the study revealed that the Indonesian media have not considered the public's participation as a significant element in journalism. On the contrary, the research has discovered that in some ways, the Indonesian media still prefer to apply a traditional approach to journalism when gathering the main materials for the news.

These findings contradicted the thesis' initial assumption that Indonesian online media have embraced the involvement of the public through social media, considering the closeness of the people to the technology. However, the study also anticipated that Indonesia must have a different perspective of curation journalism and the use of social media, given the particular context of Indonesian culture. This hypothesis led to the primary research question: to what extent do online journalists in Indonesia implement the practice of curation journalism in the specific national culture situation? This question took into consideration the strong engagement of Indonesian people with social media.

In order to relate the findings to the main question, this conclusion chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents the results of the comparison study specifically regarding the news visual displays in an effort to confirm the implementation of curation journalism. The second section explains how the three online news outlets in Indonesia are representative of how Indonesian journalists view curation in the context of journalistic professionalism. The third section describes the relation between the practice of curation journalism and the traditional journalistic principles that remain influential in Indonesian journalism today. The last section closes the discussion by bringing to the fore the possible contributions of the present

thesis to future research in journalism and media studies, especially concerning the development of public participation and the more social journalistic practice developing through social media in Indonesia.

### **A) The Differences of the News Visual Displays between Indonesian Online Media and International Media Outlets**

Based on the 4Ss model from Guallar and Levia-Aguilerra (2013, cited in Guallar, 2014) and the definitions of curation retrieved from Bradshaw (2011; 2013), Guerrini (2013), M. Knight and Cook (2013), as well as McAdams (2008), visual display of the news is relevant in determining whether a news publisher is implementing curation journalism or not. Taking this argument as its foundation, this study offers two specific ways of identifying curation journalism. The first is to look at the physical format of the news, to see to what extent the news shows obvious evidence of data and information gathered from scattered sources on social media. The second is to investigate the information gathering procedure of the news, which might not be obviously presented in the news visual display.

Regarding the first of the above methods, the study found that visually, in both 2016 and 2019, international media (represented by *CNN*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph*) often curated posts from social media accounts and included those posts between the paragraphs of their news visual displays. It happened especially with news that needed chronological details. In contrast, Indonesian media outlets (represented by *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id*, i.e. *Viva Networks*) rarely presented the results of curation from social media in their original form in either year. All three Indonesian outlets chose to publish only their own materials and used social media contents only as complementary information (in re-written form) in order to present trending topics or feedback.

As mentioned in the findings, one reason why the Indonesian media outlets did not embrace curation journalism is that the three investigated outlets lacked the appropriate technology to fully embrace curation journalism and participatory journalism, especially in 2016. The situation was a little different in 2019, when the technology had become more widespread in Indonesia. However, even then, the policy

had not changed much. All three outlets still preferred to exclude original posts by the general public from their news stories.

Another reason is that the Indonesian media outlets have not been convinced that Indonesian citizens are a reliable source of information. It seemed from the study that Indonesian media were excessively influenced by their perspective of Indonesian people's communication culture and reading habits. The fact that Indonesian societies developed with the tradition of oral culture and collectivism has created hesitancy in the media to trust ordinary people as reliable news sources. It was regarded as a risk in journalistic practice, which made the editors cautious about presenting people's voices in the physical structure of the news.

The low literacy rates in Indonesia, which mean that many citizens are unable to read literature or documents, also affected how the Indonesian editors built the visual display of their news. Namely, the news development about a single event tended to be published in many short stories rather than in one long article. This approach was adopted not only because the readers were not used to reading longer materials but also because short stories can generate high page-view ratings. These ratings are one of the marketing values that are still influential in Indonesian online media.

Besides audience culture and habit, the research also found that the traditional culture of journalism still influenced the Indonesian media. At least two of the research subjects, editors from *Kompas.com* and *Tempo.co*, had extensive experience serving these two leading companies of print media in Indonesia. This experience had made the editors comfortable with traditional journalism. However, as the study revealed, significant efforts are underway to get the newsroom more involved in the contemporary media industry as the international news networks are.

Even though the three Indonesian media outlets adopted particular visual formats for presenting the news that did not demonstrate curation journalism, this study argues that the practice of curation journalism is still implemented in the process of information gathering. Based on the findings, these media are indeed curating information from public statements on social media or blogs, even though the original posts are not revealed in the news. Journalists from each of the three outlets stated that they are continuously observing social media as one of their information sources. This



is an implementation of gatewatching, which is a curation procedure. As for public participation, all three outlets, in a relatively similar way, are eager to include the reports of so-called ‘citizen journalists’, albeit in a special channel outside the news section. In some cases, the media outlets may curate citizen reports from this special channel, though the citizen’s name will never be revealed in the published news for safety, security, and credibility reasons.

Based on the discussion in this thesis, the Indonesian media outlets take the current condition of their audience for granted. This attitude is contradictory to the idea behind the practice of curation journalism. Moreover, this attitude does not assist in building a literate society or creating a more democratic environment. Ideally, in line with this thesis’ core premise, the media should educate the public and thereby help form a better society, which in this case means a society that allows for a more democratic and reliable sharing of information. By practising only traditional journalism, the media is failing to make the public more active in supplying information and more critical of information that emerges. As a result, changes in the public's attitude are unlikely. Furthermore, specific media outlets are retaining their dominance in the information industry. Even though this situation is not entirely negative for the development of the businesses, it is not the best way to build a more literate society in Indonesia or to develop public participation, which is the base of curation journalism.

In summary, cultural issues are the primary factors that have made Indonesian curation different from Western and international news networks’ curation. These cultural issues include both the audience's communication culture and the media's journalistic culture. This situation is not necessarily negative. This unique style of curation journalism may simply be the natural fit for the Indonesian cultural context. However, from the perspective of democracy and participatory journalism, and considering the increasing social media penetration in the daily life of the people, Indonesia does need to find ways to increase literacy.

## **B) The Meaning of Curation Journalism in the Indonesian Context**

The research revealed that the three online media outlets in Indonesia respect the practice of curation journalism as a necessary method in news production. At first, the

journalists did not recognise the term *curation journalism*. However, after a short discussion, they all agreed that they have in fact practised curation journalism for quite a while, especially since social media activity has increased. All the informants stated that the public's voices in the social network have a significant influence on the work of the media. Through social media, the public is now very active in publishing information, and the public can publish information even faster than the mainstream media. Therefore, curating these voices is unavoidable since the flow of information among communities is fast and immense. The situation requires the media to select and present the most accurate content among many alleged facts carefully.

However, the study also discovered that Indonesian online media, which were represented by the three online news publishers, conduct a different version of curation compared to Western or international news networks. The particular policy for placing curated materials from social media in the body of the news, as well as for formatting the visual display of news stories, has shown the hesitation of Indonesian media to involve the public in news production fully. Consequently, it is difficult to find original public voices in the body of hard news, political stories, or reports on crisis events in the Indonesian version of online reports.

Seemingly, these three news outlets remain reluctant to accept the public, in general, as a significant information source. This hesitancy came from the journalists' evaluation of the people's culture and habits as stemming from an oral society, a society that adopts a specific communication culture according to Ong (2002). An oral society is considered unreliable in the journalism industry, which is based on a reading-writing tradition. Furthermore, there was also a concern among the journalists regarding the independence of the media, which they felt could be diminished by opening the newsroom's gate too wide to the public.

The positioning the public in Indonesia's journalism industry has created a particular way of practising curation journalism in the country. Even though the journalists' acknowledged the existence of social media and the public's activity in distributing information, they reported only undertaking curation in the process of gathering data. When it came to the process of news production, the newsroom kept its position as the controller of the information. That role of the newsroom is actually also the case in

the international news industry, regarding the practice of gatekeeping. Nevertheless, in the case of Indonesia, the power of journalists is greater, to the point that journalists dominate the process. As a result, instead of sharing the public's statements in the original social media format, the editors choose to rewrite the statements and take the traditional journalistic approach of quoting sources. The study revealed as well that social media communication was used more as a marketing strategy to maintain engagement with the public, not as the journalistic practice.

The differences from international practice aside, the findings of on curation journalism in Indonesia show that the so-called 'public' in the media industry has globally changed. Journalists can no longer avoid the necessity of embracing the information on social media in news production, even in Indonesia. The penetration of social media users in the business of information is inevitable. The journalists from all three companies acknowledged the domination of social media among the public, which in turn forces editors to compromise their credibility by choosing information sources from social media. It is common in Indonesia to retrieve online information from links shared on social media instead of from the original articles shared on media companies' websites.

Moreover, there has been massive development of independent newsmakers in Indonesia that are using social media as their channel. This development means, inevitably, journalists of mainstream media must develop their own ability to curate appropriate information from social media. This ability will help the mainstream media outlets to survive in competition with these new newsmakers. Instead of going head to head with social media channels, mainstream media need to embrace their competitors' existence. Adjusting to this new competition is for their own benefit. It would not only add the information context within the news but also grant advantages by strengthening the bond with the audience. Based on the study, even though the curating process is not as straightforward as that of international news networks, the Indonesian media industry is in the midst of making a promising effort to involve social media content.

In conclusion, this thesis has concluded that Indonesian media outlets are practising curation journalism, but in a unique form based on their perspective of social media

content and their hesitation towards the public's credibility as a source. The curation is employed only as a method of gathering information, not as a way of presenting the news. The involvement of the public is not as great as in Western journalism, where journalists' work mixed with social media contents in the news' body. As for the visual display of the news story, the format is to some extent similar with that of traditional journalism, much like what could be seen in a newspaper, which means that Indonesian media still prefer the conventional practice of journalism. The public's involvement in the media industry is indeed welcomed, as an inevitable consequence of the massive development of communication activity through social media channels. However, the curation process is different from the process in international or Western media since the editors of the three Indonesian media outlets remain reluctant to trust ordinary people's comments as reliable news sources. Instead, the audiences' activity on social media has been used more for public relations purposes to support marketing and retain readers' loyalty.

### **C) The Use of Traditional Principles within Curation Journalism in Indonesia**

According to the study, the traditional principles of journalism still largely apply despite the arrival of the social media journalism in Indonesia. The same code of ethics is still in place, wherein the first obligation of the journalistic practice is always to present the factual truth.

A slight shift has emerged regarding the selection of sources. The presence of the public's voice via social media has not yet been taken into account as a news element in the current journalistic principles, which are still based on traditional journalism. Curation journalism should surely change that. However, curation journalism has not yet made many differences in Indonesian media since its adoption is still limited to the process of gathering the information. As noted above, the news production process in Indonesian online media still operates as traditional journalism.

Regarding ethics, some debates did emerge among the journalists about copyright issues related to the use of social media content. However, in the development of curation journalism, the three media outlets selected as the representatives of

Indonesian journalism agreed that using statements from social media does not cause ethical or copyright issues because these statements are already considered as available for public use. Practically speaking, to avoid any dispute, as well as to preserve the traditional practice of journalism, the statement's owner should always be credited. Of course, embedding the original link to the social media content is not complicated. In addition, even more often than the other two outlets, which are already crediting sources, *Viva.co.id* has begun embedding link's code connecting to the original social media account when quoting. Using codes is a convenient way to cite people's statements because the identity of the source is already embedded. Embedding the original link of social media content within the news' body is a common practice in Western and international news networks.

Nevertheless, this study found that Indonesian journalism to some extent is still governed by traditional methods. This condition may be a result of current Indonesian culture, which is still a collectivist and high-context culture. As discussed in the presentation of the findings (see Chapters Four to Eight), editors will eventually have to adjust their idealism to accommodate the current condition of the audience, at least in the current generation. Editors will need to take this decision in order to maintain the existence of their potential readers. Moreover, it seems that the cultural issues are present not only among the audience. The study revealed as well that there is also a specific corporate culture in the Indonesian media industry, which in some ways leads journalists, and some editors, to prefer traditional journalism over the more sophisticated emerging world of online journalism.

In short, the practising of curation journalism in Indonesia has not changed traditional journalistic principles much. The study indicates that even though traditional journalism demands more work (e.g. requiring more journalists to write and edit more articles), the Indonesian media remain more comfortable with traditional journalism than with curating information from the public's postings on social media. However, regardless of the traditional circumstances in the newsroom, the presence of social media and curation journalism has changed the relationship between the audience and the media. Namely, that relationship has become more fluid, with the audience able to have more informal and real-time conversations with media members through social media. As a consequence, these three Indonesian news outlets have built a specific

channel for public voices in the form of citizen journalism blogs. At its point of current development, stories created by representatives of the public with good news values may be adopted by editors for the news production and published in the news section, even though the editors have decided not to include the original author's real name. Moreover, it has been found that these three outlets are continuing their efforts to monitor public conversations in social media, which helps them stay aware of trending topics and current events in the community.

#### **D) Contributions to the Study of Journalism and Media**

The present research on curation journalism in Indonesia has demonstrated that the idea of participatory journalism differs depending on where the practice is conducted. Even though journalistic ethical codes around the world share the same basic perspective of the journalistic professionalism, the manifestation of those codes in practice can vary. The variation occurs as a result of cultural influences and the journalists' understanding of journalism itself.

In the first part of this thesis, the study generated a specific definition of curation journalism, that is, the activity of journalists to find, gather, and select information from disparate resources and then publish that information in a news story within a certain context. Per this definition, the study found that Indonesian news publishers, as represented by three popular news outlets, have been implementing curation. However, it can be concluded that their implementation does not fully align with what the Western journalism theories have promoted.

As described in point B above, curation journalism is used only as a method of gathering information, despite the media's respect to the existence of social media. Among the journalists from all three media outlets in this study, when it comes to the journalistic products that are published to their audience, there is still hesitation to adopt curation journalism in designing the visual display. The relationship between the newsroom and social media is mostly limited to marketing efforts, including the effort to maintain the public's engagement with the media. This situation is caused by the cultural aspects of the Indonesian people with regard to public participation, freedom of speech, and democracy. In addition, the public's level of knowledge is

perceived as somewhat unreliable due to Indonesians' habits stemming from oral communication, which tends to lack accuracy.

However, this study does not intend to generalise the situation in Indonesia. According to the findings, there are differences among Indonesian media to some degree with respect to their perspectives of public participation in the newsroom. Furthermore, as the development of communication technologies is fast and extreme, Indonesia's culture and its perspective towards democracy are likely to continue to change.

The results of studying three Indonesian news publishers have made significant contributions to the field of journalism study. First, it is important to take into account the aspects of cultural and social habit when studying a journalistic practice. A researcher must not evaluate findings through the lens of only one specific culture. For instance, the principles in Western countries may not be appropriate in a developed country in the Asian region that has its own traditional habits.

Another key point that arises from the discussion of this thesis is the significance of professionalism. In response to debates on whether journalism should be considered a profession, journalistic principles proposed the idea that journalism is obligated to serve the public; presenting the truth and protecting people from the harmful impacts of questionable information are responsibilities that place journalists in a professional position in the society they serve.

Subsequently, this thesis also connected professionalism to the practice of curation journalism. The connection was established by bringing to the fore the theory of gatekeeping. By pointing out gatekeeping is a key principle of curation, this thesis emphasised that curation journalism is not merely a form of aggregation or collecting people's opinions. On the contrary, curation journalism is a serious process of maintaining journalistic responsibility while filtering information, presenting the most appropriate information to the audience, and offering more opportunities to the public to be involved in determining the news. Despite the opinion that the curation method has been demoralising journalists in their work, the practice of gatekeeping is actually how journalists maintain their professionalism.

Consequently, the professional gatekeeping process needs to be accompanied by a highly literate culture. As far as the conclusion on the situation of Indonesian journalism, it is clear that institutions of journalism studies have to cultivate more media literacy and critical thinking. These two elements are key to curation journalism serving as a tool for establishing a democratic society. This thesis has situated its research in the real circumstances of Indonesians' media consumption. Even though they seem to openly accept democracy and freedom of expression by actively using social media channels, most Indonesians retain their traditional habits as members of a collectivist society. From Westerners' perspective, arguably, collectivism does not lead to the perfect democratic environment. However, it is crucial to appreciate that the Indonesian context is unique. Indonesia's point of view will be different because collectivism is part of its core culture. This fact, of course, does not set aside the importance of critical thinking ability. I agree that Indonesian people's reading habits should be encouraged to make them more aware of reliable data and information; at present, false information is widespread in the world of social media.

Furthermore, it is also crucial for the media to foster a more critical culture by encouraging the public to be more reliable when providing information. As previously discussed, Indonesian media outlets taking Indonesian reading habits for granted is a pragmatic solution. Adjusting their news presentation format to audiences' preferences instead of developing a new way of conducting curation journalism will create stagnation in Indonesian democracy. In other words, maintaining the current situation by applying the traditional style of journalism does not help the society to become more democratic and critical. If the media, as well as the public, can increase their capabilities in distributing reliable information, the practice of curation journalism will surely foster an environment of democracy.

Apart from the study of journalistic practices, this thesis has also demonstrated how a particular form of journalism that was developed in a Western culture could be beneficial in other areas of media business. It was found that curation journalism that involves public participation could increase engagement with the public. This benefit makes a significant contribution to attracting potential advertisers and supports public relations efforts to build a good corporate image. Therefore, further research related to the relationship between public participation and the media could be established in



the context of media marketing and public relations studies. Since journalism is a part of the media business, these various studies could be interconnected to build a more sophisticated and more democratic mass media industry.

This thesis has also confirmed that the conditions reflected by the research findings might be applicable not only to *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* in 2016 but also to the entire media industry in Indonesia today. This conclusion comes from the surprisingly aligned responses from the journalists from the three media outlets. The journalists from *Kompas.com*, *Tempo.co*, and *Viva.co.id* all shared the same perspective about the position of social media content in news production. They all agreed that the relationship with the audience through social media offers more benefits in the areas of marketing and public relations than in the news department. The journalists from all three companies also agreed in describing Indonesian culture as a collectivist society in which the public's particular reading habits are poor. This general picture suggests that this thesis successfully captures the reality of the Indonesian online media industry through the three representative news outlets. The thesis is thus all the more a valuable contribution to the study of journalism and offers a reference for future research regarding the relationship between journalistic practice and the indigenous culture of Indonesia.



## Appendix 1: The Element of Journalism

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Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstie initially identified nine essential principles and practices of journalism in 2003. However, after the emerge of new media which allows citizen to be more active in the relationship with journalists, they added one more principle. These principles they called elements of journalism.

### **1) Journalism's first obligation is to the truth**

This “journalistic truth” is a process that begins with the professional discipline of assembling and verifying facts. Then journalists try to convey a fair and reliable account of their meaning, subject to further investigation.

Journalists should be as transparent as possible about sources and methods so audiences can make their own assessment of the information. Even in a world of expanding voices, “getting it right” is the foundation upon which everything else is built – context, interpretation, comment, criticism, analysis and debate. The larger truth, over time, emerges from this forum.

As citizens encounter an ever-greater flow of data, they have more need – not less – for suppliers of information dedicated to finding and verifying the news and putting it in context.

### **2) Its first loyalty is to citizens**

The publisher of journalism – whether a media corporation answering to advertisers and shareholders or a blogger with his own personal beliefs and priorities — must show an ultimate allegiance to citizens. They must strive to put the public interest – and the truth – above their own self-interest or assumptions.

A commitment to citizens is an implied covenant with the audience and a foundation of the journalistic business model – journalism provided “without fear or favor” is perceived to be more valuable than content from other information sources.

Commitment to citizens also means journalism should seek to present a representative picture of constituent groups in society. Ignoring certain citizens has the effect of disenfranchising them.

### **3) Its essence is a discipline of verification**

Journalists rely on a professional discipline for verifying information. While there is no standardized code as such, every journalist uses certain methods to assess and test information to “get it right.”

Being impartial or neutral *is not* a core principal of journalism. Because the journalist must make decisions, he or she is not and cannot be objective. But journalistic *methods* are objective.

When the concept of objectivity originally evolved, it did not imply that journalists were free of bias. It called, rather, for a consistent method of testing information – a transparent approach to evidence – precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of the work. The method is objective, not the journalist.

Seeking out multiple witnesses, disclosing as much as possible about sources, or asking various sides for comment, all signal such standards. This discipline of verification is what separates journalism from other forms of communication such as propaganda, advertising, fiction, or entertainment.

### **4) Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover**

Independence is a cornerstone of reliability. Journalistic independence, write Kovach and Rosenstiel, is not neutrality. While editorialists and commentators are not neutral, the source of their credibility is still their accuracy, intellectual fairness and ability to inform – not their devotion to a certain group or outcome. In our independence, however, journalists must avoid straying into arrogance, elitism, isolation or nihilism.

### **5) It must serve as an independent monitor of power**

Journalism has an unusual capacity to serve as watchdog over those whose power and position most affect citizens. It may also offer voice to the voiceless. Being an independent monitor of power means watching over the powerful few in society on behalf of the many to guard against tyranny.

The watchdog role is often misunderstood, even by journalists, to mean “afflict the comfortable.” While upsetting the applecart may certainly be a result of watchdog journalism, the concept as introduced in the mid-1600s was far less combative. Rather, it sought to redefine the role of the journalist from a passive stenographer to more a curious observer who would “search out and discover the news.”

The watchdog role also means more than simply monitoring government. “The earliest journalists,” write Kovach and Rosenstiel, “firmly established as a core principle their responsibility to examine unseen corners of society. The world they chronicled captured the imagination of a largely uninformed society, creating an immediate and enthusiastic popular following.”

Finally, the purpose of the watchdog extends beyond simply making the management and execution of power transparent, to making known and understood the effects of that power. This includes reporting on successes as well as failures.

Journalists have an obligation to protect this watchdog freedom by not demeaning it in frivolous use or exploiting it for commercial gain.

### **6) It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise**

The news media are common carriers of public discussion, and this responsibility forms a basis for special privileges that news and information providers receive from democratic societies.

Traditionally, this covenant has been between news organizations and government. The new forms of digital media, however, place a responsibility on everyone who “publishes” content – whether for profit or for personal satisfaction – in the public domain. The raw material cast into the marketplace of ideas sustains civic dialogue

and serves society best when it consists of verified information rather than just prejudice and supposition.

Journalism should also attempt to fairly represent varied viewpoints and interests in society and to place them in context rather than highlight only the conflicting fringes of debate. Accuracy and truthfulness also require that the public discussion not neglect points of common ground or instances where problems are not just identified but also solved.

Journalism, then, is more than providing an outlet for discussion or adding one's voice to the conversation. Journalism carries with it a responsibility to improve the quality of debate by providing verified information and intellectual rigor. A forum without regard for facts fails to inform and degrades rather than improves the quality and effectiveness of citizen decision-making.

#### **7) It must strive to keep the significant interesting and relevant**

Journalism is storytelling with a purpose. It should do more than gather an audience or catalogue the important. It must balance what readers know they want with what they cannot anticipate but need.

Writing coaches Roy Peter Clark and Chip Scanlan describe effective newswriting as the intersection of civic clarity, the information citizens need to function, and literary grace, which is the reporter's storytelling skill set. In other words, part of the journalist's responsibility is providing information in such a way people will be inclined to listen. Journalists must thus strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.

Quality is measured both by how much a work engages its audience and enlightens it. This means journalists must continually ask what information has the most value to citizens and in what form people are most likely to assimilate it. While journalism should reach beyond such topics as government and public safety, journalism overwhelmed by trivia and false significance trivializes civic dialogue and ultimately public policy.

#### **8) It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional**

Journalism creates a map for citizens to navigate society. As with any map, its value depends on a completeness and proportionality in which the significant is given greater visibility than the trivial.

Keeping news in proportion is a cornerstone of truthfulness. Inflating events for sensation, neglecting others, stereotyping, or being disproportionately negative all make a less reliable map. The most comprehensive maps include all affected communities, not just those with attractive demographics. The most complete stories take into diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

#### **9) Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience**

Doing journalism, whether as a professional writing for a news organization or as an online contributor in the public space, involves one's moral compass and demands a personal sense of ethics and responsibility. Journalists must be willing to question their own work and to differ with the work of others if fairness and accuracy demand they do so. Having a sense of ethics is perhaps most important for the individual journalist or online contributor.

#### **10) Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news**

The average person now, more than ever, works like a journalist. Writing a blog entry, commenting on a social media site, sending a tweet, or "liking" a picture or post, likely involves a shorthand version of the journalistic process. One comes across information, decides whether or not it's believable, assesses its strength and weaknesses, determines if it has value to others, decides what to ignore and what to pass on, chooses the best way to share it, and then hits the "send" button. Though this process may take only a few moments, it's essentially what reporters do.

The new journalist is no longer a gatekeeper who decides what the public should and should not know. The individual is now his or her own circulation manager and editor. To be relevant, journalists must now verify information the consumer already has or is likely to find and then help them make sense of what it means and how they might use it.

Thus, the first task of the new journalist/sense maker is to verify what information is reliable and then order it so people can grasp it efficiently. A part of this new journalistic responsibility is to provide citizens with the tools they need to extract knowledge for themselves from the undifferentiated flood of rumor, propaganda, gossip, fact, assertion, and allegation the communications system now produces.

Source: Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2007). *The elements of journalism: what newspeople should know and the public should expect*. New York: Three Rivers Press.



## Appendix 2: Galtung and Ruge's News Values

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**The Concept of News Values, originated by Johan Galtung and Mari Holboe Ruge (1965) in their paper “The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers”.**

The first point they suggest is ‘**conflict**’. This indicator aims the fact that every event usually has at least two sides to the story. In relation to that, the story will have a high value when these sides are in dispute. Journalists must have a sense of immediacy to consider this conflict as a potential public interest, as well as their conscience to retain the objectivity. There is always a potential for journalists to take a side and become a part of the conflict.

The second one is ‘**relevance**’. This factor is related to the proximity or closeness between the news and the audience, between the event and the readers. The closeness does not have to be physically. It could also an indirect familiarity related to audience’s experiences and potentially have an impact on the audience’s lives.

The third indicator is ‘**timeliness**’. This value is one of the most popular elements in journalism, which sometimes creates fatal inaccuracy. The reason is that journalists often produce the news carelessly in a rush. It is believed that the audience favours stories that are published as close as possible to the events’ actual time, especially events that have occurred 24 hours before the publication.

The next one is what they call as ‘**simplification**’. The best stories are those with simple issues that can relatively minimise the ambiguity. Publishing this kind of stories will help journalists to reduce potential differences of interpretation. Moreover, it is preferable to have the clarity to identify human actors involved in the events rather than abstract descriptions of “faceless structures, forces or institutions”. The study calls this characteristic ‘personalization’.

‘**Unexpectedness**’ could be considered as the typical character of the news. Something that has novelty or newness as a result of an unusual or extraordinary event is usually considered as interesting, thereby enhancing its value to be covered as a story. Journalists can add the desirability of the story if the event has ‘continuity’,

another suggested news value. It means that an event should have a projection for further development in a sequence to make it more attractive to the audience. This will also allow a news organization to allocate its resources. Moreover, this factor also relates to event's consonance or conformity to the trends of news story type that journalists and audiences have.

Another value is '**composition**'. This value is clearly suggested in the era of traditional print media since it relates to the format of media. Galtung and Ruge indicate that the event must suit a particular format, which makes the story more accessible and more favoured to read. This value refers to the section in newspapers. Galtung and Ruge observe that to increase the value, an event must be able to be processed in a good composition and fits in a specific section, such as international, national, sports, or local news. This section, traditionally, is usually marked in newspapers.

The next suggestion is '**reference to elite nations**'. Again, this value comes from the old days. When Galtung and Ruge conducted this research, the more attractive news was the one that covered events in so-called the 'first world' countries, which at that time were regarded as 'directly affecting the audience's well-being'. This factor may be still valid at the moment, even though the term 'elite nations' is probably pointing to different countries. As we can observe today in the global situation, the members of the first world are no longer a central issue in the news anymore.

Another factor is '**reference to elite persons**'. This term is an alternative to '**prominence**'. The audience of news media mostly likes to read stories involving well-known people such as politicians, members of the monarchy, artists, celebrities, sports figures, business figures and so forth, far more than to read the news about ordinary people.

The next factor is close to the ethnic sentiment. Galtung and Ruge name this factor as '**cultural specificity**'. Usually, an event will attract more attention and have more meanings for the audience if it has a close relation to the audience's culture. A form of ethnocentrism will give priority to the stories about events which have commonness with the audience's way of life. This kind of stories will have a more significant chance to be consumed by relevant readers.

The last factor suggested is the typical event in journalism, which is called '**negativity**'. An old cliché that says 'bad news is good news' is very close to representing this factor. The audience was envisaged to be more interested in stories about incidents, scandals, or other negative events.

In further discussion, Galtung and Ruge apply different terms of news qualifications which confirm their previous values criteria (Brighton & Foy, 2007: 7). The first one is '**frequency**', which suggests that an event needs to be told frequently to make it understandable and allow audiences to unfold its meaning. The second one is '**amplitude**', to represent an event that has something extraordinary, unexpected and beyond normal that is believed will always be an exciting story.

The third one is '**clarity**'. This term is another word for simplification, which emphasises that an event will be easily noticed and attract the audience's attention if it can minimize ambiguity. Furthermore, there is '**meaningfulness**'. This term summarises the previous values related to specific interests, such as elite nations, elite persons, or a specific culture. It talks about cultural and social relevance, which can increase the meaning of the story. Another term is '**predictability**'. The audience is believed to favour events that are predicted or expected to happen.

The last two terms are actually the same as the previous list. They are '**continuum**', which means that an event will have its own momentum to continuously attract people's attention after it has become a news story, and '**composition**', to emphasise the relevance of the event and the media format as discussed above.

Galtung and Ruge did not include more relevant issues to new media. At the time they started to devise their theories newspapers were still the main serious mass media. Broadcast news was still in the first stage of development, and the Internet did not even exist. Only a few broadcast organisations (mainly radio) had the technology to transmit their material broadly. Ironically, they were not media that could be categorised as having good news program, in terms of the quality as well as quantity – such as Voice of America, which was basically a propaganda media, or *BBC* as the UK's public service media - which was basically a popular music station without a regular news program. The situation at that time had made live reports so exclusive and challenging, while trans-national broadcasting coverage had to depend on physical

shipping from the event's site to the country of the broadcast organisation before the material was actually aired.

Source: Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1), 64–90.

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