Framing Analysis of Media Coverage of Papuan Riots on SKH Kompas and Tirto.id in 2019

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Abstract

The study examines the media's framing of the Papuan riots, with a focus on protests against racial discrimination. It highlights how stereotypes like "lazy" and "separatist" exacerbate social tensions for Papuans, particularly in urban areas. Triggered by a racially charged incident in Surabaya, these riots led to significant protests in Papua and West Papua, receiving national media coverage. Through qualitative analysis of news from SKH Kompas and Tirto.id, the research shows selective framing, often emphasizing violence and commodifying racial tensions, which perpetuates discrimination. The study advocates for the reevaluation of media narratives to improve the representation of marginalized groups and promote dialogue and reconciliation.
Keywords: Media Framing, Papuan protests, Escalation Fear, News Commodity

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti pembingkaian media terhadap kerusuhan Papua, dengan fokus pada protes terhadap diskriminasi rasial. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana stereotip seperti "malas" dan "separatis" memperburuk ketegangan sosial bagi orang Papua, khususnya di daerah perkotaan. Dipicu oleh insiden bermuatan rasial di Surabaya, kerusuhan ini menyebabkan protes besar di Papua dan Papua Barat, yang mendapat liputan media nasional. Melalui analisis kualitatif berita dari SKH Kompas dan Tirto.id, penelitian ini menunjukkan pembingkaian selektif, yang sering kali menekankan kekerasan dan mengkomodifikasi ketegangan rasial, yang melanggengkan diskriminasi. Studi ini menganjurkan evaluasi ulang narasi media untuk meningkatkan representasi kelompok terpinggirkan dan mempromosikan dialog dan rekonsiliasi.

Kata Kunci: *Framing Media, Protes Papua, Eskalasi Ketakutan, Komoditas Berita*

Introduction

We are not monkeys! The Papuan lawsuit regarding racial persecution began in the Papuan student dormitory in Surabaya. This incident of persecution is considered a catalyst for riots in various cities across the Papua and West Papua Provinces (BBC News Indonesia, 2019). Racial expressions targeting Papuan identity are not isolated incidents limited to the student dormitory in Surabaya. Pervasive and damaging stereotypes against Papuans—such as "lazy," "stupid," "drunkard," and "separatist"—are widespread. These stereotypes not only perpetuate prejudice but also contribute to systemic discrimination in multiple aspects of life.

According to Amnesty International's 2019 report, there have been numerous instances of Papuans facing

racial slurs and physical abuse from both civilians and security forces. (Amnesty International, 2020). Additionally, a report by Human Rights Watch revealed that Papuans experience significant discrimination in employment and education, with many opportunities denied based on their ethnicity. This systemic discrimination is a daily reality for Papuans, which exacerbates social tensions and perpetuates cycles of misunderstanding and prejudice (Human Right Watch, 2024).

In other words, racism is an ongoing issue for Papuans living outside Papua Island. Consequently, the riots in Papua, which were seen as a form of resistance against racism, took place in cities like Jayapura, Manokwari, and Sorong. This situation garnered media attention and was further discussed on social media.

Suddenly, the riots on Papua Island became national news very quickly. Considering media as agents refers to the organizational entities (e.g., broadcasters, newsrooms) and the professional roles associated with these organizations (e.g., editors, owners, journalists) that are involved in editorial decision-making regarding the content of their products, whether it be news, commentary, or entertainment in its various forms. By selecting issues and events and packaging them within frames and narratives, the media plays a pivotal role in constructing reality rather than merely reflecting it (Voltmer & Kraetzschmar, 2015). In this light, mass media, with their agenda-setting power and ability to create interpretive frames, play a critical role in conflict. For this reason, framing is considered a narrative structure, as Entman (1993) explains:

To frame is to select aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular.. causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described.

Previous research on the framing of news regarding Papuan protests and conflicts has examined various aspects of media representation and their implications. Kirsch (2002) investigated how media narratives influenced perceptions of violence against Papuans, emphasizing the role of rumors and other narratives in shaping the experience and expression of political violence. Lee and Thien (2015) explored the impact of colonial legacies on racial representation in Indonesian media, highlighting how historical contexts of colonization affect contemporary stereotypes and stigmas against Papuans.

These studies offer critical insights into the ongoing and evolving nature of media framing and its role in perpetuating racial biases. Building on these earlier works, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of media framing, with a particular focus on the intersection of racial discourse and media narratives and contributes to the broader discussion on conflict resolution and reconciliation in Indonesia.

Racial discourse in the News framing

Framing is a critical concept in understanding how media shapes racial discourse. It involves the selection and emphasis of specific aspects of an issue, which can prime audiences to interpret events in particular ways. This process is not merely passive; audiences actively engage with and sometimes resist these frames, particularly those who have

experienced societal oppression. The dominant media narratives often align with a "white racial frame," which perpetuates stereotypes and maintains the racial hierarchy by portraying whites in a favorable light while depicting people of color negatively (Feagin, 2013).

Racial discourse encompasses how language and communication shape, reflect, and influence societal understandings of race and racism. This discourse is not merely a reflection of individual beliefs but is deeply embedded in social practices, ideologies, and power dynamics. The following sections explore key concepts, theories, and historical contexts relevant to racial discourse. Language plays a crucial role in the construction of racial identities and the perpetuation of racial ideologies.

According to Back and Zavala (2018), racialized identities are produced through discourse, which is a public process that evolves dynamically over time. Van Dijk (2016) emphasizes that racism and its associated ideologies are acquired and exercised through discourse, highlighting the importance of understanding how language shapes perceptions of race. This perspective aligns with the emerging field of raciolinguistics, which examines the intersection of language and race, suggesting that the way individuals "languaging race" can reveal the linguistic resources used to construct identities (Alim et al., 2016).

Racial discourse is a complex interplay of language, power, and social dynamics. It is shaped and, in turn, shapes the historical and cultural contexts in which it exists (Omi & Winant, 2014).

Understanding this discourse requires an interdisciplinary approach that considers the roles of language, emotion, and societal structures in the construction and perpetuation of racial identities and ideologies. As scholars continue to explore these dimensions, it becomes increasingly clear that discourse is not merely a reflection of beliefs but a powerful tool for both reinforcing and challenging racial inequalities.

News framing is a critical concept in communication studies that examines how journalists present social and political issues. It involves the selection and emphasis of specific aspects of a story to shape the audience's interpretation and understanding. Framing refers to the way information is presented, which influences how audiences perceive and interpret events. Erving Goffman first introduced the concept in 1974, describing frames as "schemata of interpretation" that help audiences locate and understand news (Goffman, 1974).

The framing process can be broken down into three key mechanisms: frame building, frame distribution, and frame setting (Scheufele, 1999). This study will look at how the media framed the news of the Papua riots, which were a response to the incident of racial abuse against Papuan students, and the theoretical abstraction about it is important to be a discriminatory context that surrounds the backlash delivered by Papuans in response to racial abuse against them. Papuans, not only students living in dormitories who were direct victims of racial abuse, but also Papuans in general.

Understanding Papuan Racial Formation and its Conflict

Racism against Papuans is a social construct rooted in the discourse that contrasts the 'civilized white race' with the 'uncivilized black race.' This same racist narrative was perpetuated by brown-skinned individuals whom the Dutch colonial government exiled to Boven Digul during a similar historical period. Racist speech primarily serves to differentiate oneself from others in a subordinate manner. Moreover, racism acts as a central justification for colonialism, which relies on a hierarchy that portrays the colonized as incapable of living as proper human beings. This narrative supports the belief that colonial intervention is necessary to enable Papuans to attain a proper human existence.

The conflictual relationship between Papua and the Indonesian government has persisted since the transfer of power from Dutch colonial rulers to the newly established Republic of Indonesia. While formal Indonesian authorities describe the Indonesia-Papua relationship as one of integration rather than annexation, significant underlying tensions persist. Budi Hernawan (2015) highlights that the dehumanization of Papuans by these authorities manifests in various ways, including labeling them with derogatory terms (such as dogs, pigs, and monkeys) and portraying them as primitive or backward (e.g., idiots, stone age).

Additionally, the use of physical torture in handling security and political matters is openly displayed, serving as a means to showcase and confirm state domination over Papua. As a result, racism is often perceived as a fundamental cause of frustration among the indigenous Papuan people in Indonesia. There is a growing awareness that the racist actions directed towards Papuans represent a mode of domination that places them in a marginalized position.

Papuan students in Surabaya encounter significant challenges as migrant students in Java, struggling to socialize with non-Papuan peers and predominantly Javanese locals due to cultural and social differences. They are often perceived negatively because of variations in speaking style, skin color, and social status, which causes them to feel like outsiders (Wijanarko & Syafiq, 2013). According to Bagus Ajy Waskyto Sugiyanto (2022), these students are positioned peripherally within the Yogyakarta semiosphere, where the core is defined by "Indonesian" and "Javanese" symbols. Their limited proficiency in standardized Indonesian, coupled with the use of Papuan dialects, further hinders their integration into the central semiosphere.

Cases of racism can lead to prolonged conflicts if the news reports are not conveyed accurately. Therefore, reporting on racism is a complex task. The media has the power to frame particular events, which ultimately shapes how the audience perceives and understands these events from specific perspectives (Eriyanto, 2002). In August 2019, significant protests, violence, and fatalities stemming from resistance to racism faced by Papuans resulted in widespread outrage. This anger spread to thirty cities, both within Papua and beyond (Savitri, 2020).

Racial Conflict as a News Commodity

It is crucial to recognize that news coverage is intricately linked to the media industry and its political interests, necessitating a critical examination of conflict-related news. The role of media ownership is particularly significant in shaping, influencing, or even homogenizing news, resulting in similar scope, focus, and issues across outlets (Baum & Zhukov, 2019). The news framing process selectively presents information to the audience, often emphasizing interventionism over substantive discussion of cases, resulting in a portrayal characterized by violence, conflict, and victimhood (Bartholomé et al., 2018; Greenwood & Jenkins, 2015).

The portrayal of racial conflict in the news market is driven by its controversial nature, which enhances its marketability. News about conflict or war can significantly influence public perception and opinion formation (Dobernig & Lobinger, 2010). This inherent attraction to conflict news, engaging emotions and curiosity, poses a risk as the media industry commodifies such news, potentially sidelining the media's ethical role. Analogously, the media-induced demand for plastic surgery illustrates the broader impact of media in shaping public behavior (Moon, 2015), underscoring the criticism that news about racial conflict is commodified for its high market value rather than its importance.

In the contemporary free market, virtually everything can be commodified, including news. Jackson (2009) contends that conceptualizing news as a contested commodity is essential for maintaining a free press within a democracy. The commodification theory sheds light on the tension between profit-driven news coverage and the journalistic duty to inform the public. This tension often gives rise to ethical dilemmas, including the temptation to produce sensational or fabricated news. Fact-checking becomes critical in conflict situations, such as the Ukrainian conflict, to avoid misinformation and analyze narrative strategies effectively (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016).

Despite the conflicting interests of media owners and journalists, alternative reporting methods for racial conflict news exist. Non-profit news sites, for instance, are more inclined to cover conflict news that supports public awareness and democratic engagement (Boehmer et al., 2018). In the digital age, social media platforms provide avenues for sharing information and attracting public attention. However, the debate continues regarding the preference and value of conflict, controversy, and oddity in news content (García-Perdomo et al., 2018).

Research Method

This study utilizes qualitative framing analysis to scrutinize the news coverage of the Papuan riots by SKH Kompas and Tirto.id during the initial two months of the disturbances. By examining media texts, the study aims to uncover the prominence of information based on its placement or repetition, thus illuminating how the dissemination of information shapes human cognition. Robert Entman (1993) provides a widely accepted definition of framing, stating that to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment

recommendation. This definition underscores the active role of communicators in shaping narratives and guiding audience interpretations. He posits that a primary objective of framing is to yield data that accurately reflects the media messages most consumed by the public. SKH Kompas and Tirto.id were selected for this study due to their prominence and extensive national readership, as well as their reputation for non-partisan coverage.

Data was gathered using the KompasData archive centre and the Tirto.id website, employing search terms like "Papua riots" and "the latest Papua riots" to account for spelling variations. The analysis focused on articles published from August to October 2019, covering the first eight weeks of the Papuan riots. Between August 19, 2019, and October 19, 2019, SKH Kompas published 82 articles on the subject, while Tirto.id published 31 articles. The analysis included articles from SKH Kompas published during the initial incident at the student dormitory in Surabaya and subsequent riots in various cities in Papua and West Papua.

Articles that only briefly mentioned the Papua riots or were not part of the main headlines (such as editorials, political columns, and regional highlights) were excluded from the study. This criterion narrowed the selection to 53 news articles. The most informative pieces were chosen for analysis, comprising 11 articles from SKH Kompas and 17 from Tirto.id. These articles were read multiple times to identify the framing of the news according to Entman's definition. Notes were taken on each article's focus, themes, language use, tone, sources, and similarities or differences in coverage between SKH Kompas and Tirto.id. Additionally, the use of catchphrases, terms, and metaphors was documented to determine if their usage indicated a specific frame of reference. The findings were then organized to assess the constructed frames and representations presented in the coverage.

Result and Discussion

Papuan Riots in the news

SKH Kompas, founded on June 28, 1965, is one of Indonesia's oldest and most respected newspapers. Throughout its history, Kompas has been recognized for its in-depth reporting, journalistic integrity, and editorial independence. As a pioneer in Indonesian print journalism, it played a crucial role in shaping public opinion by providing balanced, accurate news and holding authorities accountable. In 1995, SKH Kompas entered the digital space by launching its online version, continuing its mission to adapt to the changing media landscape while upholding the same high standards of journalism for which it is known. The transition to the digital era allowed Kompas to reach a broader audience while maintaining its reputation for authoritative reporting and editorial independence(Haryanto, 2018).

On the other hand, Tirto.id represents a more recent and innovative wave of digital journalism in Indonesia. Established to deliver precision journalism, Tirto.id places a strong emphasis on investigative reporting, data-driven analysis, and visual storytelling. Registered with Indonesia's Press Council, Tirto.id has quickly distinguished itself by adopting a modern journalistic approach incorporating statistical data, photo documentation, and firsthand accounts. The outlet's focus on

data-driven stories, investigative techniques, and in-depth reporting has allowed it to stand out in Indonesia's growing digital media landscape. Unlike traditional media, Tirto.id blends analytical rigor with digital storytelling, creating visually engaging and factually robust reports.

Tirto.id's commitment to producing high-quality, research-based journalism has earned it a significant reputation in the Indonesian media landscape. The outlet's distinctive approach has earned it a spot among Indonesia's top 50 online media outlets, as recognized by global rankings (https://tirto.id/insider/about-us). Its rising prominence demonstrates the increasing influence of digital-first media outlets in shaping public discourse in Indonesia. While traditional newspapers like Kompas play a pivotal role in Indonesia's media ecosystem, Tirto.id and similar outlets highlight the evolving nature of journalism in the digital age, offering a glimpse into the future of news reporting in the country.

Together, Kompas and Tirto.id represent two different generations of journalism in Indonesia. Kompas has a historical and institutional presence in print and digital media, while Tirto.id leads a new wave of online journalism focusing on data, transparency, and audience engagement.

As prominent media outlets, they continuously publish news about Papuan riots, presenting specific news framing. Here, the media emphasizes certain aspects, diagnosing problems, identifying causes, making moral judgments, and recommending treatments.

By categorizing the news and

Table 1. The headline news of the Papua riots

SKH Kompas	Tirto.id
Tegakkan Hukum Kasus Papua	Wiranto: Kerusuhan Papua Dipicu Pernyataan Negatif Oknum
Pemulihan Papua Menjadi Prioritas	Pemblokiran Internet Papua, Wiranto: Ada "Komunikasi yang Merusak"
Kasus Papua: Presiden: Tindak secara Hukum	Ralat: Jayapura Papua Memanas, Akses Komunikasi Terputus
Presiden: Jangan Anarkistis	Daftar Kerusakan Kantor & Gedung Akibat Kerusuhan Manokwari Papua
Papua: Pemerintah Siap Mendengarkan	Internet Diblokir, Layanan Telepon & SMS Telkomsel di Papua Normal
Papua: Wujudkan Dialog dengan Saling Tahan Diri	AJI dan Sejuk Minta Wartawan Tidak Picu Konflik Horizontal di Papua
Analisis Politik: Menggugah Asa Papua	Berapa Korban Sipil di Papua? Wiranto: Jangan Bicarakan Itu!
Konflik Papua	Situasi Terkini Jayapura: Massa Masih Demo, Aktivitas Warga Lumpuh
Pemerintahan: Papua Butuh Pendekatan Baru	Polri Yakin Tidak Ada Aksi Demo Lanjutan di Manokwari
Kerusuhan di Papua: Tentara dan Polisi Diminta Tidak Terpancing	Klaim Papua-Papua Barat Aman, Wiranto Belum Tarik Pasukan TNI-Polri
Ungkap Dalang Rusuh Papua	Tambah Personel, Polri: Kami Tidak Meremehkan Situasi Terkini Papua
	Jayapura Rusuh, Majelis Rakyat Papua Ungkap Penyebab Amuk Massa
	Papua Terkini: Polisi Tetapkan 20 Tersangka Kerusuhan Papua Barat
	Kasus Persekusi Mahasiswa Papua, JK Minta Dijelaskan Secara Terbuka
	Tak Terima Rasisme, Dewan Adat Papua Desak Negara Minta Maaf
	Jayapura Memanas, Kantor MRP Papua Dibakar Massa pada Hari Ini

Source: Processed data by authors (2019)

selecting sources according to the agendas and interests of the media in constructing the reality of the Papuan riots. All the news was chosen in the first eight weeks: 11 news articles from *SKH Kompas* and 17 from *Tirto. Id*. It was found that the representation of the Papuan riots is constructed in every news report, with resource persons being interviewed and discussion raised **(see Table 1).** Framing, as defined by Entman (1993), involves analyzing each section, as coined by Entman, framing is understood as the placement of information in a typical context so that a specific issue receives a higher allocation than other issues. Framing emphasizes how an issue is highlighted or considered necessary. Therefore, the construction of messages attempted by the media institutions will be very apparent. Collectively, both *SKH Kompas* and *Tirto. It shows they played off their mandate and*

leveraged their respective media strengths to frame the Papuan riots. It's crucial for the audience to be aware of these framing techniques, as it empowers them to critically analyze the news they consume and demand balanced reporting.

Table 2. News Construction at defined problems level on *SKH Kompas* and *Tirto.id*

Entman's Frames	SKH Kompas	Tirto.id
Define problems	National security issue	National security issue

Source: Processed data by researchers (2019)

This framing element highlights how the Papuan riots are portrayed through the media, emphasizing national security concerns. SKH Kompas and Tirto.id predominantly present the situation as maintaining state control and stability, often framing the issue in terms of the state's role in ensuring security. Headlines like *"Tegakkan Hukum Kasus Papua"* (Enforce the Law on the Papua Case) from SKH Kompas and *"Klaim Papua-Papua Barat Aman, Wiranto Belum Tarik Pasukan TNI-Polri"* (Papua and West Papua Are Safe, Wiranto Has not Withdrawn Military Troops Yet) from Tirto.id suggest that the conflict is essentially a security issue requiring intervention from the government, particularly military and law enforcement agencies.

Similarly, Tirto.id's coverage with the headline *"Soal Penarikan Tentara, Menhan: Sekali TNI Ditarik, Papua Merdeka"* (Regarding the Withdrawal of Soldiers, Minister of Defense: Once the Military is Withdrawn, Papua Will Be Free) reinforces the narrative that military presence is essential to prevent further violence and possible independence movements in Papua.

This framing choice prioritizes the state's perspective and obscures the underlying social and political causes of the unrest. Rather than examining the deeper issues of racial discrimination, inequality, and demands for self-determination that might be driving the violence, the media instead portrays the situation as a threat to national unity and territorial integrity. By focusing on the national security implications of the riots, the media outlets downplay the voices of the Papuan people and their legitimate grievances, reducing the conflict to a matter of law enforcement and military action.

This, in turn, perpetuates a nationalistic narrative where the state's sovereignty is seen as paramount, and any form of dissent or resistance from Papua is framed as a challenge to the country's unity. Moreover, Waisbord (2002) argues that this framing often creates a "culture of fear." The media, by emphasizing the threat of chaos, separatism, and violence, cultivates a sense of insecurity among the public, which in turn justifies the government's heavy-handed response. In this context, the media's role goes beyond simply reporting the events; it actively shapes how the public perceives the conflict. Instead of providing a balanced, objective view of the situation, the media focuses on amplifying the risks and portraying a "vast array of threats," which justifies military intervention and government control (Altheide, 2006; Glassner, 1999).

This framing strategy presents the government as the sole protector of national security, thus elevating its actions as necessary and justifiable while

simultaneously marginalizing other potential solutions or critiques, such as dialogue or political negotiations. The media's failure to report the facts of the violent conflict in a nuanced manner results in a one-sided portrayal, reinforcing the idea that the government's actions— whether military presence, internet shutdowns, or security crackdowns—are the primary means to restore order. By relying on government sources for information, both SKH Kompas and Tirto.id align themselves with the state's narrative, amplifying the voices of authority figures like President Joko Widodo, Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto, and Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs Wiranto.

These sources dominate the news coverage, with limited representation of dissenting views, particularly those from the Papuan population. This imbalance in reporting ensures that the public's understanding of the conflict is primarily shaped by the government's stance, leading to a skewed perception of the situation. It's important for the audience to be exposed to diverse perspectives, as it fosters inclusivity and respect for different viewpoints.

In this context, the media's role is to report the news, shape public opinion, and hold government actions accountable. The portrayal of the Papuan riots as a national security threat creates a narrative that prioritizes control over reconciliation and militarization over dialogue. As a result, the government's position is solidified as the only legitimate solution to the crisis, leaving little room for alternative perspectives or for the grievances of the

Papuan people to be fully heard and addressed.

This highlights the critical role of the media in shaping how conflicts are perceived, particularly regarding national security and territorial integrity issues. It's important for the audience to be aware of this influence, as it encourages them to critically evaluate the news they consume and understand the potential impact on public opinion.

Table 3. News Construction is diagnosing the cause level on *SKH Kompas* and *Tirto.id*

Entman's Frames	SKH Kompas	Tirto.id
Diagnose Causes	The Papua riots were understood as the impact of racial persecution toward Papuan students in Surabaya and the spread of hoaxes broadcast that provoked the riots in some cities in Papua Island.	The riots are often provoked by hoaxes that are broadcast through social media. They seem closely related to the agendas of intellectual actors who used this riot to advance their interests.

Source: Processed data by authors (2019)

Both SKH Kompas and Tirto.id present a reductive and oversimplified diagnosis of the causes behind the Papuan riots, framing the conflict as the direct result of racial provocation and the amplification of hoaxes via social media. In this diagnostic framework, both media outlets emphasize the immediate triggers:

the alleged racial abuse of Papuan students in Surabaya and the viral spread of false information. By focusing primarily on these elements, the media constructs a narrative that attributes the escalation of violence to misunderstandings fuelled by misinformation, thus positioning the Papuan community as victims of misleading digital content and racial discrimination.

This framing simplistically reduces the complex socio-political unrest in Papua to a series of misunderstandings and reactive violence, diverting attention away from deeper structural issues that have long plagued the region. By focusing on the spread of hoaxes, the media imply that the violence could have been averted had it not been for the distortion of facts circulating through social media platforms. This approach diminishes the broader historical context of Papuan grievances, including decades of political marginalization, economic exploitation, and the systemic neglect of Papuan demands for greater autonomy and recognition within the Indonesian state.

Moreover, the emphasis on misinformation and racial provocation transforms the issue from one of systemic injustice to a matter of public order and national security. The media implicitly suggest that the riots represent a threat to the country's territorial integrity and national unity, framing the situation as a security issue that requires state intervention rather than a political issue that calls for dialogue and structural reform. In doing so, both SKH Kompas and Tirto.id not only simplify the origins of the conflict but also shift the narrative away from the Papuan people's longstanding demands for justice, instead reinforcing the government's stance on the need for military intervention and security measures.

Table 4. News Construction at Make moral judgment level on *SKH Kompas* and *Tirto.id*

Entman's Frames	SKH Kompas	Tirto.id
Make moral judgements	The government should protect non-native Papuans who are trapped in the conflict situation. Here, the government apparatus is actively taking steps to mitigate the risk of horizontal conflict escalating into civil war through the control of public services, including internet access, surveillance of journalists' reporting, and an increase in military personnel.	Regarding military personnel, the government held a significant position as a stabilizer in reducing tension in the Papua riots. Meanwhile, the military needs to discipline the native Papuans, who are often portrayed as the subjects of the offenders.

Source: Processed data by authors (2019)

Through the strategic use of specific keywords and the amplification of government perspectives, both SKH Kompas and Tirto.id contribute to shaping public opinion in a way that positions native Papuans as the primary perpetrators of the violent riots. This framing perpetuates stereotypes and reinforces a narrative that

absolves the government of deeper accountability for the unrest. By predominantly reflecting the state's viewpoint, these media outlets create a skewed portrayal of events, where the focus shifts away from systemic issues such as historical marginalization, racial discrimination, and socio-economic inequality that underpin the Papuan struggle.

This tendency highlights the media's critical role, albeit unintentional, as conflict intensifies rather than serving as agents of de-escalation or resolution. Instead of providing a platform for balanced dialogue and fostering mutual understanding, the reporting fosters a one-sided narrative that exacerbates public bias against Papuans. By consistently framing the government as the stabilizing force and the Papuans as instigators of violence, the coverage marginalizes the voices of Papuans, failing to delve into their lived realities and legitimate grievances.

This lack of balanced reporting undermines the principles of journalistic fairness and objectivity. It presents the riots exclusively through the lens of state authority, omitting the perspectives of those most affected by the conflict. Consequently, the Papuan narrative is silenced or overshadowed, thereby reducing the public's opportunity to understand the complex and multifaceted nature of the unrest. By prioritizing the government's stance, the media outlets risk perpetuating societal divisions, fostering mistrust, and deepening the conflict rather than contributing to its resolution. A more balanced and inclusive approach to reporting would not only uphold journalistic integrity but also serve as a vital

tool in promoting peace and understanding in such sensitive and polarized contexts.

Table 5. News Construction at Treatment Recommendation level on *SKH Kompas* and *Tirto.id*

Entman's Frames	SKH Kompas	Tirto.id
Treatment Recommendation	The Papua riots have the potential to threaten national security and stability, so the government must take immediate and decisive action to resolve the conflicts and prevent broader tensions.	National security was the primary justification for the government's action in resolving the riot.

Source: Processed data by authors (2019)

A first glance at the distribution of news accounts (17 news) published during the chosen period suggests a parallelism between the development of the conflict and the intensity with which both media report the facts surrounding the conflict. As shown in **Table 1**, the headline news on Papuan riot cases focuses on supporting the government and justifies the government's decision. Given that news media tend to centralize specific remedies or marginalize them in conflict news reporting, this evaluation primarily aims to determine the extent to which Indonesian media offer comprehensive suggestions for implementing conflict resolution in the Papuan riots.

Absence of the Papuan Voices

Borrowing Spivak's concept (Spivak, 1988) Of the subaltern, the question of

whether the subaltern can speak is crucial when analyzing the Papuan riots and the media's portrayal of the events. Spivak's theory, which highlights the systemic silencing of marginalized voices, resonates deeply in the context of the Papuan conflict. The absence of Papuan voices in mainstream narratives is not outright but rather a muffled echo of their pain and resistance. Visual representations, such as photographs of Papuans holding posters that reject racial slurs like "Monkey," attempt to highlight their plight. However, these images rarely lead to meaningful storytelling about their suffering, lived realities, or the historical and systemic injustices they face. Instead, the narratives are dominated by the perspectives of the ruling elite, often reducing Papuan expressions of resistance to acts of rebellion or separatism.

The dominant narrative perpetuated by the government and echoed by the media frames the Papuan conflict as a national security issue, overshadowing the deep-seated racial and socio-political grievances that underpin the unrest. This framing justifies the government's reliance on militarized responses, such as deploying additional personnel to quell riots, rather than addressing the root causes through dialogue and meaningful engagement. The voices of Papuans, which articulate their demands for justice, autonomy, and recognition, are frequently dismissed or overshadowed by the state's portrayal of their actions as threats to territorial integrity. Consequently, the Papuan struggle is not recognized for what it is—a legitimate fight against systemic marginalization—but is instead reduced to an issue of law and order.

A sharpened analysis reveals that a critical omission of Papuan perspectives and voices characterizes the media's treatment of the Papuan riots. Media framing plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception and discourse. By focusing predominantly on the government's narrative, the media marginalizes the Papuan narrative, effectively silencing their voices. This selective reporting and framing serve to reinforce state-centric views, presenting the conflict through a lens that prioritizes national stability over social justice.

Furthermore, the media's reliance on official sources and their tendency to report the perspective of dominant power structures exacerbate the silencing of Papuan voices. This creates a homogenized narrative that neglects the complexities and nuances of the conflict. The lack of diverse perspectives in news coverage perpetuates stereotypes and misconceptions about Papuans, contributing to their ongoing marginalization and disenfranchisement.

In conclusion, the absence of Papuan voices in media framing is a significant issue that highlights the need for more inclusive and representative journalism. By failing to provide a platform for Papuan perspectives, the media not only undermines the legitimacy of their struggle but also perpetuates a cycle of marginalization and injustice. Addressing this requires a concerted effort to challenge dominant narratives, seek out marginalized voices, and provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of the conflict.

This perspective sheds light on the Papuan resistance, which, while often stifled by dominant narratives, remains

evident through their actions and visual protests. For example, in 2020, during the anti-racism protests in Jayapura, Papuans held up posters and banners condemning racial slurs and demanding justice, demonstrating their active resistance despite media suppression. Various news outlets, including The Jakarta Post, covered these protests. Mambor (2020), highlighting the ongoing struggle and the assertion of Papuan identity. Though framed within contradictory narratives, the imagery of Papuan demonstrators reveals a clear message of resistance and identity assertion. Even when their voices are misrepresented or suppressed, the Papuan people continue to assert their presence and make their grievances known, challenging the notion that they are entirely voiceless.

The role of the media in amplifying or suppressing societal voices is critical and warrants careful consideration. Media outlets often operate under various constraints that can compromise their ability to report the truth comprehensively and impartially. Firstly, agenda-setting within Indonesian media frequently aligns with the prevailing interests of the state. This alignment can foster structural biases that prioritize government-favorable narratives while marginalizing dissenting or alternative viewpoints. Such biases are particularly pronounced in conflict reporting, where the state's narrative is frequently treated as the authoritative account of events (Entman, 1993).

Secondly, adequate coverage of conflicts, such as the Papuan riots, necessitates that journalists navigate precarious conditions, often on the front lines. Journalists may face significant pressure from governmental and military authorities, limiting their capacity for independent reporting. This pressure can lead to an overreliance on official sources, thereby reinforcing the state's perspective in news coverage. Consequently, journalists may unintentionally perpetuate the dominant narrative rather than challenge it or provide a platform for marginalized voices (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013).

Thirdly, the media industry's dependency on profitability presents a significant challenge. In a competitive market, sensationalism and stories that align with mainstream sentiment often overshadow nuanced and critical reporting. This commercial imperative can undermine journalistic integrity and perpetuate ideological biases as media outlets strive to cater to the interests of advertisers and broader market considerations. As a result, the media landscape may become compromised, where truth is frequently subordinated to economic and political factors (McChesney, 2004).

Lastly, the digital era has introduced new complexities to the pursuit of accurate and responsible reporting. The proliferation of fake news and misinformation, particularly during periods of conflict, complicates the media's role as a reliable source of information. In the context of the Papuan riots, misinformation disseminated through social media has exacerbated tensions and presented additional challenges for journalists seeking to deliver factual and balanced coverage. Furthermore, employing terms such as "fake news" to discredit media organizations complicates the situation, undermining public trust in the press and contributing to a further polarization of

audiences (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). The interplay of these factors creates a media landscape that struggles to act as a neutral arbitrator in the Papuan conflict. Instead of promoting understanding and dialogue, the media often serves as a mechanism that reinforces existing power structures and perpetuates societal divisions. To address these challenges, media outlets must adopt and implement conflict-sensitive reporting practices that are objective, impartial, and transparent.

This involves actively seeking out and amplifying marginalized voices, providing historical and socio-political context, and challenging state-centric narratives. A 2018 study by the International Federation of Journalists reveals that 72% of journalists in conflict zones face direct threats, significantly undermining their ability to report independently. Furthermore, a 2020 report by the Committee to Protect Journalists ranks Indonesia 119th out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index, highlighting severe restrictions on journalistic freedom. Economic pressures are also pronounced; a 2019 survey conducted by the Reuters Institute indicates that 54% of media organizations prioritize profitability over journalistic integrity (Newman, 2019).

This emphasis often leads to sensationalism and a lack of nuanced reporting. In today's digital landscape, the issue of misinformation is exceptionally pressing. The Edelman Trust Barometer (2021) reveals that 59% of the global population finds it challenging to distinguish between genuine news and misinformation, thereby intensifying public mistrust in the media.

These findings underscore the pressing need for enhanced protection for journalists and a commitment to responsible reporting that upholds journalistic integrity and fosters balanced discourse. Enhanced protections are essential to ensure journalists' independence and safety when covering sensitive issues. To effectively address fake news and misinformation, these efforts should include media literacy campaigns that help audiences critically evaluate the information they consume.

The media should aim to provide balanced dialogue, giving equal consideration to all perspectives rather than acting as an extension of the state. Ultimately, the portrayal of the Papuan riots underscores the need to reevaluate journalism's role in conflict situations. By addressing biases and economic pressures within the digital landscape, the media can better connect marginalized communities to the broader public. This transformation is crucial for fostering a more inclusive society where every voice, including that of Papuans, is valued and respected.

Conclusion

The article examines the media's portrayal of the Papuan riots in Indonesia, focusing on how racial discourse influences narrative construction. It argues that ongoing racial stereotypes against Papuans have led to significant social unrest. The study highlights that derogatory language directed at Papuans is embedded in social interactions, thereby reinforcing discrimination and resistance. It posits that media does not merely reflect reality but actively shapes public perception through framing choices, which can escalate

tensions. The authors utilize Entman's framing theory to explain how media framing affects audience interpretation and emotional responses.

Colonial legacies and racial tensions have profoundly shaped the relationship between Indonesia and Papua. The article analyzes how the Indonesian state has marginalized indigenous Papuans through a process known as "Othering," which perpetuates stereotypes and social hierarchies. Understanding this context is crucial for addressing the contemporary conflicts and systemic inequalities that contribute to unrest.

The study emphasizes the necessity of a multifaceted approach to conflict resolution in Papua, with a focus on dialogue among the government, local communities, and international stakeholders. It emphasizes the importance of transforming media narratives to enhance understanding and reconciliation, notably by refining language in reporting to more accurately represent Papuan identities. The authors argue that media framing can perpetuate stereotypes, suggesting that re-evaluating the portrayal of racial identities in Indonesian media is essential for acknowledging historical injustices and promoting social harmony.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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