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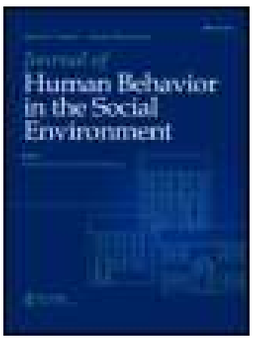

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# Cyber media news coverage on diversity issues in Indonesia

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**ABSTRACT**

This research focuses on diversity issues of ethnicity, race, religion, and societal groups, in the journalistic text of four cyber media, i.e. Kompas.com, Tribunnews.com, detik.com, and Viva.co.id. The news coverage on diversity issues shows the attention of cyber media to the different values of groups, tribes, religions and race in a unity bond, or otherwise, it triggers potential conflict. The research problem is how the cyber media report diversity issues on the basis of news coverage norms. The research purpose is to describe and analyze diversity issues in the cyber media in relation to (1) main news sources in news coverage; (2) the essence of news coverage in diversity issues; (3) neutrality in news coverage; and (4) themes of news coverage in diversity issues. The research was carried out with the case study methods through content analysis, in-depth interview, online survey and Focus Group Discussion. The physical research objects are news coverage on diversity issues in the cyber media, and the research subjects are cyber media journalists. The research results are that major news sources in the news coverage differ significantly; the news coverage does not totally support the diversity; there remains unneutrality in the news coverage; the news coverage themes are various; and the elements are not ideal and appropriate to the cyber media ethics.

**KEYWORDS**

Cyber media; journalism; group difference; news coverage; diversity issues

## Introduction

Communication technology-based cyber media and diversity issues are interesting factors in contemporary mass communication studies. Internet presence and easy access to communication technology give rise major changes in social, economic, and media business structure with full of competitiveness. Biagi states the Internet presence is under the categorization of media revolution, which has been identified to the situation when television was born in the 1950s (Kemper, Verne, John, & Patrick, 2012).

The Internet's existence brings a variety of new phenomena in the media industry, which is increasingly free to spread information in the corridors of freedom and communication freedom. The Internet flexibility as the realization of communication technology also encourages people to use their right to control media. The social supervision that uses communication technology becomes more important because it can know various informations required through technological uses to access or look for flexible information (Rogers, 1986, p. 254).

In essence, communication technology pushes media from the government's control for 10 years to those, which become more freedom. News can be easily accessed for

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audience who needs information without censorship and various prohibitions to get public information. The communication technology-based media development stimulates the growth of cyber media reporting institutions. Based on Indonesia Press Board's record, until to 2015 there were 68 cyber media with official legal body and operating institutions according to the stipulated guidance (Prasetyo, 2015).

However, increasing cyber media news coverage, which is very fast, free and ethical cause complaints from the various segments in society to Indonesian Press Board. They feel unsatisfied with information from the cyber media related to the diversity issues. The cyber media is considered to violate the news coverage ethics and cause potential threat to pluralism in the corridors of national and state democratization. Prihandoko mentions that among media workers it appears awareness on the need of cyber media management guidance that is in line with the news coverage ethics concerning the diversity issue (Tempo, 2012). To make the cyber media management, which is appropriate to Law Number 40 Year 1999 on Press and Journalistic Ethics Code, Indonesia Press Board together with press organizations, the cyber media management and public drafted Cyber Media News Coverage Guidelines ratified in 2012.The cyber media news coverage guidelines was drafted in the long process being carried out in a variety of public discourses and involving the elements of media organizations, campuses, and private parties. As the cyber media reference in the news coverage on the diversity coverage, which always develops and covers complex problems, it should be evaluated every 2 years. However, until 2018 the cyber media news coverage guidelines is definitely never revised again. Moreover, when spreading the conflicts of societal groups, which have different interests, the guidelines has been forgotten. In the context of recent press freedom situation in Indonesia, moreover, the news coverage of the diversity issues of ethnicity, race, religion, and societal groups, which is frequently related to information democracy potentially triggers latent and open conflicts that endangers the diversity in this country.

The cyber media has to report events to audience, which is appropriate to the events that occur factually. It does not construct reality from a partisan viewpoint or those, which support one entity in the news coverage of diversity. The condition prompts a variety of opinions, which states that the news coverage, which has to become the reference, is natural reality than the engineering of news. Concern to the news coverage of the diversity has developed among Indonesian journalists who are under the Association of Journalists for Diversity (*SEJUK*). The association sees that there is a trend of reporting the diversity issue in the mass media including the cyber media that does not meet journalistic ethics and endangers the existing pluralism. Therefore, it proposed the News Coverage Guidelines for Diversity Issues to Indonesian Press Board in an open discussion event on April 12, 2016 (Association of Journalists for Diversity, 2016).

From the above description, the research problem is "how cyber media reports diversity issue based on news coverage norms appropriate to the news coverage guidance and ethics. Meanwhile, this research aims to comprehensively describe the news coverage in complex cyber media related to the diversity issues in Indonesia.

The previous research results come from Gibbons (2015) and Gunawardene (2016). The first previous research was conducted by Thomas Gibbons (2015) in relation to media and pluralism. The research findings indicate that pluralism is widely acceptable as the basic characteristic of democratic media but it is relatively passive because the availability of information sources is inadequate. The second previous research came from Gunawardene

(2016) with the topic of pluralism media in the digital age that highlighted the reduced scenario of media diversity due to the market-based media approach. The market-based news coverage ignored the importance of pluralism. On the other hand, the existence and role of amateur news senders were getting stronger in the information dissemination.

## Literature review

### *Accountability of Cyber media coverage*

Cyber media is an important part of the rapidly developing mass media (Kuang, 2014). In the context of traditional media, media effect occurs at the primary and secondary level (DeVito, 2013). As at the primary level it acquires information and entertainment, at the secondary level it covers the level of value structure that potentially reduces the attitude of diversity and mutual respect in the society.

In Indonesian perspective, diversity issues are including religions, mainly Muslim-non Muslim, ethnicity, such as Javanese and non-Javanese, and societal groups, for example military/bureaucrats/Chinese civilians, and race (native and non-native). Besides that, societal groups could include secularist and religious Muslims, modernist, and traditionalist Muslims (Bakti, 2000).

A great number of the news coverage in fast cyber media has to be observed intensively. Because space, distance, and time are no longer to be obstacle for public to produce or consume news from a variety of sources (Wood, 2011). The cyber media development, which goes hand in hand with the development of religion diversity, tribal groups, and races in the context of social and political construction (Poster, 2018).

The responsibility of cyber media news coverage on diversity issue refers to the media responsibility in relation to content covering: (1) media has social responsibility because media ownership is a public trust; (2) media has to be honest, accurate, fair, factual and relevant, media freedom must be able to manage itself; (3) media must be able to follow a code of ethics and guidance of professional behavior; and (4) under certain conditions the government should do intervention for public interests (McQuail, 2010).

### *The essence of journalism in the Cyber media Era*

In considering the media position in society, cyber media has to produce and disseminate factual news. It is because "mass media is an important factor to encourage any changes in all social life aspects" (Susanto, 2009, p. 151). In line with this condition, cyber media in the digital era also stimulates the occurrence of great change in the world of journalism. There is a shift in the orientation of news coverage, professional ethics, workflow, working condition, and the management of news coverage. On the other hand, the plagiarism issue of news coverage, lack of verification, and unethical journalistic practices have drastically increased in several countries (Zion & Craig, 2015).

In the context of mass communication academic study, the Internet-based cyber media appears as the realization of communication technology, which triggers debate on whether it is necessary to build new theories in journalistic studies or not (McQuail, 2010, p. 135).

In essence, the cyber media and the news coverage of the diversity issue are the current issue that mostly does not become concern in mass communication study. Despite there is

already a guideline, the cyber media news coverage, which is related to the news coverage on the diversity still not yet meet the existing provisions for various reasons of the media's editorial considerations. Diversity in media can mean the plurality of sound, analysis,, and issue, which is expressed diversity (Reporters Sans Frontieres, 2016).

If it is seen on the basis of information storage and control, a polemics appears whether cyber media truly differs from traditional media or whether it really operates in a manner similar to traditional mainstream media that emphasizes one-way communication principle (Loisa, Eko, Ahmad, & Felicia, 2019). "The digitalization of cyber media develops fast, and it stimulates the need for digital media press study in relation to the journalistic model of digital media and possible threats" (Yuen, Christian, Dusˇan, Russell, & Damian, 2014).

### *Cyber media news coverage guidelines*

The threat to the ethics of news coverage goes on hand in hand with social media development in the society. Moreover, the news coverage in cyber media and information from social media is definitely difficult to differ. Therefore, Indonesian Press Council through the Cyber Media News Coverage Guidelines defines that cyber media is all kinds of media that use Internet technology and carries out journalistic activities and fulfill the requirements of the Press Laws and Press Company Standards having been stipulated by the Indonesian Press Council (Pers, 2011). The content of cyber media is any kind that is made or published by the users among other articles, images, comments, audios, videos and various forms of uploads that are closely related to the cyber media, such as blogs, forums, readers' comments, and others.

The Cyber Media News Coverage Guidelines are all kinds of media that use Internet technology and carry out journalistic activities as well as fulfill the requirements of the Press Law and the Press Company Standards having been stipulated by the Indonesian Press Council. Moreover, the Users Generated Content (UGC) is any content that is made and or published by cyber media users. The published content must have been verified and consider the balance aspect. Finally, cyber media has obligation of inserting the terms and condition regarding the Users' Generated Content that does not contradict with the Law Number 40 Year 1999 concerning Press, and the Journalistic Code of Ethics.

## Research methods

The research used a case study method by combining quantitative and qualitative approach. The quantitative approach was carried out in form of content analysis and survey. Moreover, the qualitative approach was used for data collection through in-depth interview and focus group discussion (FGD). "The content analysis was carried out quantitatively in the calculation that shows an accurate representation of a message body" (Kripendorf, 1980; Walizer & Wienir, 1978; and Kerlinger in Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 150).

The physical research object was news on diversity issue in the cyber media. Moreover, the research subjects were cyber media journalists. Total research population was the news of diversity issue published in the cyber media and by cyber media journalists. In addition, the samples for the news of diversity issue were selected purposively from 4 (four) cyber

media that the Internet users mostly access in 2016 based on the report of the rating company, i.e. Alexa.com. The online survey respondents were journalists of 68 cyber media registered in the Indonesian Press Council. The participants for the Focus Group Discussion were journalists from three big cities in Indonesia, i.e. Greater Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan.

The data collection on the news texts was carried out online by downloading the news with the diversity theme. The online survey was conducted by sending the e-mail questionnaire to the cyber media editorial board members. Moreover, the in-depth interview and the Focus Group Discussion were done in field with the cyber media journalists. The data analysis was realized by interpreting the data processing results on the basis of content analysis and survey in the form of frequency distribution. The results of the in-depth interview and the Focus Group Discussion were analyzed through a coding process or categorization to draw the summary of the research results.

## General description of the research object

As the research object in this study, the four news portals are media that are mostly accessed by the cyber media users, i.e. *Kompas.com., Tribunnews.com., Detik.com., and Viva.co.id*. The general description of the four media having been taken from their websites and other sources is as follows.

Kompas.com was one of the online media pioneers in Indonesia when it was the first that appeared on Internet on September 14, 1995 with the portal name *of Kompas Online*. At that time, *Kompas.com* only displayed a digital replica of the daily print news edition of Newspaper *Kompas* published at the same day. In beginning in 1996, the portal of *Kompas Online* changed its name into www.kompas.com. It was developed in 1998 when it became a separate business unit under the flag of P.T. Kompas Cyber Media (KCM) until right now (Kompas.com, 2017b).

The news portal of Tribunnews.com publishes its electronic paper or epaper of *Tribun Network Newspaper*. There is a variety of categories as well, such as *Tribuners, Citizen Reporter*. With the last two rubrics, public is expected to participate, share information and participate in conveying their fresh ideas and empirical experiences particularly to enrich national life. Tribunnews.com also presents digital paper of *Tribun Network Newspapers*. As differing from the e-paper which is a replica of the print news edition, the digital paper is a newspaper that is only published online in the digital format (*tribunnews.com*., 2017).

Detik.com was established in 1998. At the beginning, it focused on political, economy and information technology news. After political and economic situation in Indonesia became more conducive, detik.com expanded its content into entertainment and sport news. The news portal was acquired by CT Corp in 2013. Until right now, it remains under the flag of Trans Corp. (Kompas.com, 2013).

*Viva.co.id* is the news portal that serves information and news, and it differs from other news portal, i.e. emphasizing speed and depth. The online media is updated 24 hours a week. It combines texts, images, videos and audios. *Viva.co.id* applies the qualified journalism standards in covering international and national events. The news portal operates on the basis of spirit to educate the national life through smart, sharp, balanced, and entertaining journalism (Viva.co.id, 2017).

Based on the general description of the four cyber media, to make the writing easy, the research results will be written as: *Kompas, Detik, Tribun* and *Viva.*

## Research results and discussion

The research findings on the news coverage of diversity issue in the cyber media in Indonesia cover: Overview of the major news sources that comes from various professions and positions in the society; The support of the cyber media news coverage for the diversity issue; Neutrality and balance of the news coverage for diversity issue; and Description of news coverage themes on diversity issue. The four findings focus on the analysis described comprehensively to provide factual overview of the news coverage on diversity issue made by the cyber media in Indonesia.

### *Major news source from various professions and positions in the society*

The news source is the important factor to support the accurate news coverage that contains the diversity issue in Indonesia. As deciding incorrect news source, it can result in inadequate information that audience will receive. Frequently, the selection of news sources relates to the position of informal power in the society such as religious figures, public figures, NGOs activists. Moreover, the news source from formal institutions can come from the government or law enforcement particularly in this content, i.e. security apparatus.

News sources can be selected incorrectly. Whether it is on purpose, accidentally or under pressure from certain parties who are considered strong in the society, it can occur. If information that is conveyed has good content and cares about the importance of pluralism, it does not matter. The problem is information from news sources who support groups in the society that have superiority and accuse others that to have different sides.

The credibility of news source is the power of news to be trusted in the level of audience who need qualified information. Therefore, the selection of news source that have the praiseworthy social, economic and political reputation, becomes the reference of the cyber media. However, it cannot be realized easily due to the inter-group conflicts in relation to values, attitudes and beliefs. It is not definitely impossible if the cyber media dramatically select the news source from the dominant groups that have mass power.

In essence, the incorrect selection of news source can have negative impact on the news coverage. The social groups who feel aggrieved can protest or commit violence acts against the media crews or other groups who they dislike. Moreover, in the context of media economy, audience can move their reference to other cyber media when choosing, obtaining and using information appropriate their interests. The selection of news source from each cyber media can be completely seen in Table 1.

The above table shows the position of a person in the society who becomes main news source of the cyber media when uploading the news coverage in relation to the diversity issue. Despite in the era of political information the role of public figures and NGOs activists is frequently very dominant and becomes the reference of various social, economic and political news coverage, in the news coverage on the diversity issue, disappointedly the groups cannot become main news source of the cyber media. The selection

**Table 1.** Position of informants in society in news coverage.

| | | *Kompas* | | *Tribun* | | *Detik* | | *Viva* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | Position in The Society | Σ | % | Σ | % | Σ | % | Σ | % | Average |
| 1 | Religious Figures | 13 | 26.0 | 18 | 36.0 | 17 | 34.0 | 8 | 16.0 | 28.0% |
| 2 | NGOs Activists | 15 | 30.0 | 21 | 42.0 | 19 | 38.0 | 7 | 14.0 | 31.0 |
| 3 | Public Figures | 2 | 4.0 | 8 | 16.0 | 15 | 30.0 | 12 | 24.0 | 18.55 |
| 4 | The Government | 21 | 42.0 | 17 | 34.0 | 27 | 54.0 | 19 | 38.0 | 42.0% |
| 5 | Law Enforcement | 4 | 8.0 | 9 | 18.0 | 15 | 30.0 | 9 | 18.0 | 18.5% |

Source: Data Processing Results

of news source that comes from NGOs reaches 31.0% in average. Moreover, public figures only appear 18.55%.

There is a possibility that public figures and NGOs activists in the era of political reformation generally affiliated with the power of mass-based political groups. Moreover, it is definitely likely that they have strong relationship with the ownership of economic and business authority. Therefore, if they become the news source, definitely they will be not neutral.

The biggest percentage of the news source is those from high-ranking officials in the government with total number of 40% in average. Detik.com uses news source from the government totaling 27 news. *Kompas.com* is in the second row with total number of 21 diversity news.

The selection pattern of news source indicates that cyber media journalists prefer those who have formal power as their main news sources. In fact, it is definitely unavoidable that officials from the state power can also be trapped into the politicization of political party-based bureaucracy controlling the government institutions. However, if it bases on the factor of certainty and security in the news coverage on diversity issue, those from the government who formally become public servants are considered more competent and credible to convey any explanation on the very sensitive issue of diversity.

However, *Tribunnews.com* definitely differs from the other cyber media. Its news source comes from NGOs with total number of 21 news. Tribunnews.com has covered the other side because the government is considered something that has been common or dominant in the cyber media coverage. Based on the FGD results, *Tribunnews.com* usually confirms news to the government officials and law enforcement. It is said: "*As we come from region, the main new source of reporting the diversity issues from the society itself, such as NGOs*," (the FGD results on September 6, 2017). Different opinion came from the Kompas.com journalist who stated: "*As minimizing riots in the society, we report from the official sources of the government that are not as emotional as those from the society*" (FGD results on September 6, 2017).

It is interesting to consider that in the democracy and political freedom, religious or clergy figures usually become new sources for mass media. It is understandable in view of the religious figures that they become reference in the community life. Moreover, in the political climate heating up, it frequently occurs that the religious figures appear to cool down the situation so that open conflicts cannot occur.

Therefore, it is definitely disappointed if the news source who comes from religious figures gets low rate if compared to those from the government. Average percentage of news uploading the religious figures reaches 28% of total news studied. Apparently, the cyber media tries to place the religious figures as the reference of religious issues in a honorable position.

The overview also shows that cyber media is relatively strong when it avoids religious politicization that frequently arises in many political contestations and competition among interest groups. Definitely, it is understandable if the cyber media more often seeks information from those in the circle of formal power. The FGD participant from Tirto.id. confirmed it: "We try to select source from the government who is considered neutral so that it will maintain pluralism in the society" (FGD results on September 6, 2017). In addition, there is another opinion and it refers the form of caution, and the participant stated: "*We carefully take voice from parties who are in conflict, therefore we will contact the police to justify or not justify the conflicts*" (the FGD Participant from Swara.com).

Based on the above statements, in essence the news sources who are frequently asked their opinions are the government officials or those in the circle of the government power. The reason is practical due to look for the sense of security and avoidance from the potential conflict that can jeopardize the pluralism of the nation.

It is unavoidable that the post-reformation in 1998 carries on the political freedom and it is frequently interpreted as the freedom to act in appropriate to the interests of their groups. Moreover, informal or elite figures in the state power more often fall into the shackle of political interest so that their acts cannot be objective and neutral.

### *Cyber media news coverage does not maximally support diversity*

The objective of news coverage is an effort of the cyber media to support the importance of diversity in the pluralistic society. In a country with the diversity of religions and ethnicities like Indonesia, with a population of more than 200 million, at least 300 ethnic groups living in more than 13,000 islands, the creation and definition of common culture which is needed by its residents is important (Bakti, 2008, p. 99). Therefore, the cyber media should prioritize pluralism in the national and state life. Moreover, considering the post of political reformation, the freedom demand has been stronger and stronger, and therefore, maintaining integrity in national pluralism becomes the main demand.

The diversity, which is popularly known in Indonesia related with ethnicity, religion, race and societal groups. The diversity issues are increased as the country entering the era of freedom of communication and expression. In this research, the diversity issues are not explored in detail, but in more general. Another consideration, the cyber media do not classify the types of diversity issues in their news coverage.

If considering the content of news coverage, there are a variety of motives from the cyber media, i.e.: those supporting diversity, refusing diversity, expose the news content that contains inter group conflicts and prioritizes the importance of reconciliation when there are conflicts in the society that are hidden or open.

The motives of cyber media news coverage: 22% of *Kompas*, 48% of *Tribun*, 76% of *Detik* and 52% of *Viva* are viewed of supporting diversity. Meanwhile, 4% of *Kompas*, 6% of *Tribun*, 4% of *Detik* and 2% of *Viva* news coverage are against the diversity.

The above results prove that the cyber media supports diversity in news coverage. Average value that supports the diversity reaches 49.5%, and definitely it pleases for the society that expects a safe and harmonious life in pluralism situation.

However, based on the content of news coverage related to the diversity, there are 40.5% that describes conflicts in the content of the news coverage. Whether the conflicts can be solved immediately or not, the conflict news themselves become negative

information for efforts to maintain the national diversity. Reporting the conflicts can encourage the appearance of conflicts from verbal and physical attacks to the most frightening form, i.e. mass violence. The conflict description in the news coverage becomes dominant in *Kompas.com* despite it is stated factually that it will maintain the ethics of diversity with the reliable news sources.

On the contrary, in average the news coverage that describes reconciliation and definitely can be highlighted due to the content of positive information that is useful for diversity, reaches 9.5%. In fact, effort to encourage reconciliation is required when intergroup conflicts and disputes become general phenomenon in Indonesia. Moreover, *Viva.co.id* is the cyber media that never report diversity in the context of reconciliation. It is definitely possible that journalists or editorial board members consider that the reconciliation news is a normal and common thing to happen so that it does not need special attention.

Despite cyber media has a tendency to support diversity, it textually still gives greater space for the conflict description. It is definitely possible that media freqyebtkt consider conflict to be interesting to be conveyed because it becomes the attention of audience. Despite the news coverage model tries to take the safe position, which does not dissolve in conflict as sayings in the FGD:

> *"Today's online media cannot eliminate high interest of audience, and it does only relate to neutrality. The cover both side does not only pay attention to the parties who have been known as radicals. Because we uphold independence, in Suara.com it takes from the laws and human interest" (*The Journalist from *Swara.com*, September 12, 2017).

Based on the opinion, the cyber media actually reports the conflict but it will be combined with the nuances that are more related to legal formal and humanitarian aspects. For example, when conflicts occur and mass makes destruction, it will be conveyed in the frames that are not in accordance with the laws and humanitarian values.

Conflicts are conveyed factually and highly uphold independence as conducted by *Kompas.com*. Therefore, it does not prioritize conflict events that trigger mass chaos but explore the conflicts that contradict with the existing laws and regulations as well as humanitarian values in diversity. As reporting conflict in the context of diversity, generally the cyber media also reminds that the events can interrupt nation unity or ruin the unity of Indonesian nation that highly upholds diversity.

### *Neutral and balanced news coverage about diversity issue*

Cyber media is a source of information for audience who has high adaptation to communication technology. Messages and news coverage from the cyber media are disseminated to meet audience's information needs who have the diversity of values, attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, good information has to be neutral and impartial to the existing entity or parties in the news coverage. The neutral news coverage is required to support the news coverage about diversity issue.

Therefore, in effort to uphold the principle of cover both side highly, the cyber media has to be brave to refuse the willingness of certain parties who feel strong, have mass or strong capital that try to dictate the news coverage. The groups frequently identify themselves as the most entitled entities to give information. In any situation including the pressure from the owners of social, economic and political authority, the cyber media

**Table 2.** Description of events in news coverage.

| | | *Kompas* | | *Tribun* | | *Detik* | | *Viva* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | Description of Events | Σ | % | Σ | % | Σ | % | Σ | % | Average |
| 1 | Cover Both Sides | 3 | 6.0 | 1 | 2.0 | 6 | 12 | 18 | 36 | 14.0% |
| 2 | Cover One Side | 4 | 8.0 | 13 | 26.0 | 17 | 34.0 | 8 | 16.0 | 21.0% |
| 3 | Neutral | 43 | 86.0 | 36 | 72.0 | 27 | 54.0 | 23 | 46.0 | 64.5% |

Source: Results of Data Processing

has to prioritize independence in the news coverage of diversity issue that occurs in the society. Related to the balance of news coverage, the overview on the diversity events in the cyber media can be shown in Table 2.

After reading the table, it can be known that in the news coverage on diversity issues of ethnicity, race, religion and societal groups, the cyber media has to be neutral. The average number of the news coverage in the four cyber media reaches 46.0%. It is understandable since Indonesia is in the era of press independence, there is a tendency for media to carry out the tasks and responsibility appropriate to the existing regulations and laws of the communication freedom.

If the cyber media makes news coverage that is not in line with the ethics, and absolutely audience will leave them behind. At least the educated groups who understand the importance of neutrality in the news coverage will shift to other cyber media. In fact audience has strong position to control media after the government strictly controls media for many years until the year 1998.

However, total news coverage that make news from one side in fact remains great. With the average number of 21.0%, it indicates that the cyber media remains not maximal in maintaining neutrality as the foundation of diversity. In fact, the average number is relatively small, and it is far lower if compared to the neutrality theme which amounts to 64.5%.

It is worried that a large number of non-neutrality occurs because it deliberately favors one group and marginalizes others. Due to the era of political freedom after the state reformation, a variety of political powers has the wing of power in various institutions including media. With the assumption, journalists have different opinion because cyber media has different characters if compared to the print media. The position and placement of confirmation in the online news differ from those in the print media. The journalist from *Suara.com* in the FGD in Jakarta stated:

> *"Online media has different characters if compared to the print media. A major characteristic is speed in conveying news. The news is sometimes published with one news source. However, after the news is published, it will look for other news source for the follow-up news. Moreover, the information comes from the opposite parties. Therefore, the follow-up news which publishes different news source can become a form of confirmation and cover both side in the news" (*The FGD results, September 12, 2017).

The same statement comes from the journalist of *Tirto.co.id* in the same event: "*In technical matters, cyber media and print media are different in the handling of cover both sides. All cover both sides depend on the policy of each editorial board" (*The FGD results, September 12, 2017). Other statement comes from the FGD participant who identifies himself not affiliated to certain media by sayings: "*Cover both sides in the online news*

*depend on the issue. The following news in relation to the news is effort to carry out cover both sides*" (The FGD results, September 12, 2018).

From the explanation of the journalists, it can be concluded that if a news cannot meet the principle of cover both side, it is not intentional but it merely relates to technical matter in the news coverage that chases speed. Moreover, the confirmation for balance can be in a kind of the follow up news with different news sources. On other hand, there are opinions that state that news in a cyber media should not contain the explanation of news sources from the various parties in one news. It can be carried out in the follow-up news coverage related to the news. However, the problem is if audience prefers to believe the first news coverage, it is known that communication is irreversible. If a message has been sent, it is difficult to control or disappear its effect to the receivers of messages (Gamble & Gamble, 2014, p. 31). In other words, it is definitely possible that audience will accept it as the truth, i.e. the first news coverage. Moreover, the following news coverage is only considered as supplement. If the first news coverage relates to negative matters in the viewpoint of a group, it potentially triggers conflict, violence acts, or other negative impacts which will be more dangerous for the life of pluralistic society.

Therefore, many cyber media prefer not to be too critical in the news coverage of diversity issue. The journalist from Tribun.com in the FGD in Greater Jakarta on September 6, 2017 stated: *"Each media has a local sound, and therefore, when taking up an issue to be reported it prefers to play safe. It does not want to play unclear and sensitive issues*."

However, if the problem only plays safe because the cyber media feels afraid against the dominant groups, it cannot be abandoned continuously. The follow-up news to give communication rights to other groups that are considered inferior will not solve the problem because it cannot be read or trusted again. Moreover, it makes worry in the middle of communication freedom, public can do many things if they consider the news coverage is not in accordance with the value which the groups believe.

## *News coverage themes in diversity issue*

The news coverage themes can represent the cyber media orientation in disseminating the news on diversity issue of ethnicity, religion, race and societal groups. In line with the political reformation in Indonesia in 1998, it appears the trend of strengthening sectarian and sub-national spirit as well as other behaviors that are not parallel with the life demand for mutual coexistence in the pluralism.

In this context, it is not impossible that the mass media falls into the shackle of behaviors that do not ignore diversity. In the ideology of media owners, it is very possible that media has orientation to support certain groups to maintain their existence. Moreover, there is a relationship between media ownership and politics and state power. However, it does not mean that it apparently appears and it can be hidden since the status of a mass media has to be legally independent and nonpartisan.

The news coverage theme also closely relates to the media characteristics, i.e., the history of media establishment, ownership and ideological orientation as well as different focus of news coverage. Table 3 indicates the theme of cyber media news coverage in relation to diversity issue.

*Tribunnews.com* mostly uploads conflict issue in the news coverage, i.e. 50% or 25 news. In the second row, there is *Kompas.com* with 24 news (48%), and the next rows are subsequently *Detik.com* with 21 news (42%) and *Viva.co.id* with 11 news (22%). Total

**Table 3.** Diversity theme in cyber media.

| | | Kompas | | Tribun | | Detik | | Viva | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | Themes | Σ | % | Σ | % | Σ | % | Σ | % | Average |
| 1 | Pluralism | 15 | 30.0 | 28 | 56.0 | 39 | 78.0 | 29 | 58.0 | 55.5% |
| 2 | Harmony | 14 | 28.0 | 32 | 64.0 | 44 | 88.0 | 28 | 56.0 | 59.0% |
| 3 | Discrimination | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 14.0 | 4 | 8.0 | 3 | 6.0 | 7.0% |
| 4 | Stereotype | 4 | 8.0 | 7 | 14.0 | 7 | 14.0 | 6 | 12.0 | 12.0% |
| 5 | Hate | 3 | 6.0 | 5 | 10.0 | 6 | 12.0 | 1 | 2.0 | 7.5% |
| 6 | Minority Group | 8 | 16.0 | 4 | 8.0 | 12 | 24.0 | 7 | 14.0 | 15.5% |
| 7 | Conflict | 24 | 48.0 | 25 | 50.0 | 21 | 42.0 | 11 | 22.0 | 40.5% |
| 8 | Regionalism | 1 | 2.0 | 1 | 2.0 | 4 | 8.0 | 5 | 10.0 | 5.5% |

Source: Results of Data Processing

news coverage on conflict issue is relatively great and average number reaches 40.5% and it indicates that conflict issue becomes attractive news for the cyber media (Table 3).

It is unavoidable that conflict issue among social groups with different values, attitude, and beliefs becomes repeating trend in various regions throughout Indonesia. The inter-group conflict with different religions and beliefs indicates the rising phenomenon year by year in the political reformation era in Indonesia (Susanto, 2017). According to Wall & Callister, the conflict issue is process where one party feels concerned about their ownership or something they have is opposed against or made a loss by other parties (Hong Ha & Ferguson, 2015, p. 6).

The Wahid Institute (TWI) recorded that there were 267 cases in 2011 and 274 cases in 2012 and 363 cases with the violence of religious freedom (*Kompas*, December 29, 2012). In the period of 2015, there were 147 conflict cases related to the religious and belief freedom (TWI, 2015). Moreover, the data of the National Committee of Human Rights indicate there were almost 100 cases in the period of 2016, and it related to the religious and belief freedom in various forms (Kompas.com, 2017a).

To overcome the differences and conflicts, Bakti views that human factor is the key for human development in Indonesia, a program with human factor is needed to develop quality, nonsectarian, personal integrity, accountability, and beliefs. Such a program could solve problems of ethnicity and religion in Indonesia (Bakti, 2000, pp. 34–54).

However, there is something interesting in the FGD. A representative of the National Alliance for Unity in Diversity (ANBTI) explained that media sometimes became the trigger of jeopardizing diversity. It was stated: "*Media ruins diversity. The nationality orientation is very weak, so journalists should understand the principle of peace journalism to strengthen the diversity*" (The FGD Results. September 14, 2017). The opinion proves that the cyber media have to prioritize diversity issue in the national and state life, and therefore, audience can trust the media as a source of information to uphold diversity.

In addition to the news coverage theme with conflict issue, another one definitely becomes our concern, i.e., stereotype. The number remains great totaling 12% in average. If compared to the news coverage that cares about the diversity issue, the number remains small. However, the stereotype issue definitely jeopardizes the life of pluralistic society.

Stereotype is too broad, oversimplified or exaggerated generalization when categorizing a group of people (Samovar, Porter and Jain, 1991). Therefore, it is emotional and it generalizes the characteristics of a person with a group that have negative or positive meaning. The stereotype potentially triggers conflict among different groups throughout regions in Indonesia.The theme of cyber media news coverage, which is also interesting to

observe relates to regional theme. Despite the number is relatively small, i.e. 5.5% in average but it more often has great impact in the society. The small number frequently gets support from the unsatisfied groups to the existing condition. The regionalism or sub-national spirit appears because the excessive prejudice against some social groups they dislike. "The prejudice is a rigid attitude against a group on the basis of belief system and preconception" (Samovar. Porter & McDaniel. 2009, p. 323).

Attitude from prejudice is manifested in the discussion of other groups negatively, and it discriminates against other social groups they do not like. In the cyber media, news coverage which contains the prejudice elements it can be a kind of news which contain the elements of vilification and discrimination against other parties on the basis of their own group viewpoint. The spirit of regionalism grows fast in line with the political democracy that occurs in Indonesia after the reformation in 1998. It signs the strengthening of ethno-centrism, and it considers that their ethnic groups are the best in the matters of values, attitude, and beliefs. Moreover, other groups that differ from their own group are considered as interferences, obstacles, or competitors, which have to be eradicated. The behavior of regionalism can trigger conflict among different groups, which directs to mass attacks.

The manifestation of ethno-centrism as the sub-national spirit appears from threat of various regions that want to separate themselves from the aspect of the government administration in parent regions, such as Districts, Cities and Provinces. In the macro level, moreover, the sub-national spirit can be in a kind of threat to separate from the country and on the contrary, they will establish new country. Substantively, the news coverage with the theme to spread hate, violence acts, marginalization of minority groups, and regionalism potentially triggers conflict in the pluralistic society in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

The existence of news sources from the government in the news coverage on diversity issues is the power of cyber media to minimalizing potential conflict and as effort of maintaining pluralism in Indonesia.

The cyber media news coverage does not fully support diversity. There remains news coverage that potentially jeopardizes harmonious relationship in the pluralistic society. Moreover, the news coverage with conflict themes is still found in the cyber media despite it is packaged with description that the existing conflicts are not appropriate to the existing laws and regulations as well as norms in human relations.

The cyber media in Indonesia has been trying to maintain neutrality and balance in their news coverage. It tries to give information to meet audience's information need. However, there remain the cyber media news coverage, which is not neutral but only prioritizes one side particularly from those who have great mass. It definitely jeopardizes national unity.

The news coverage theme on diversity issues can represent cyber media orientation in disseminating news. In line with the political reformation in Indonesia, it appears the tendency to strengthen sectarian spirit, sub-national spirit, and other behaviors, which are not in line with the demand for peaceful coexistence in the framework of pluralism.

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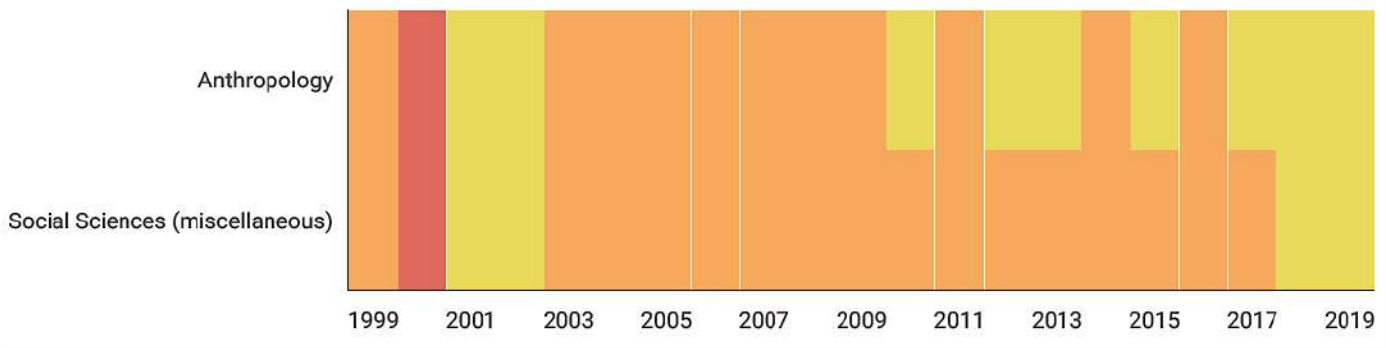


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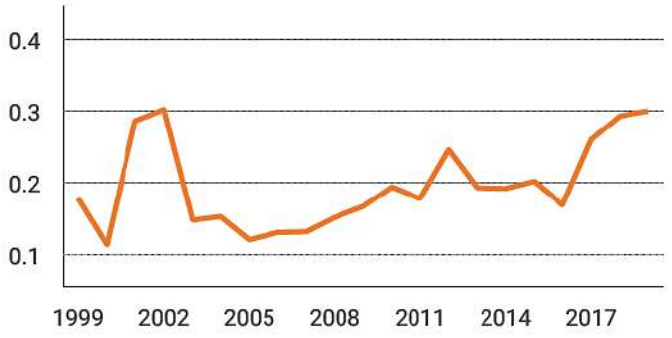


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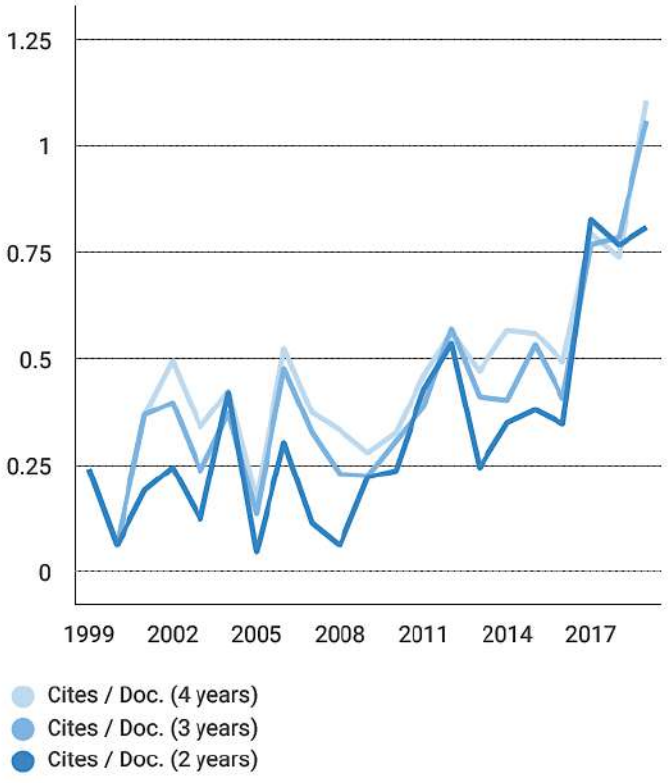


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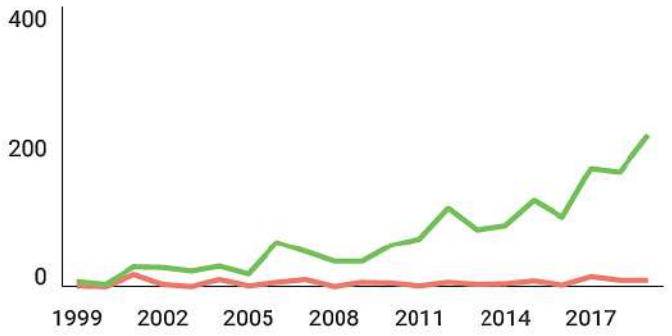


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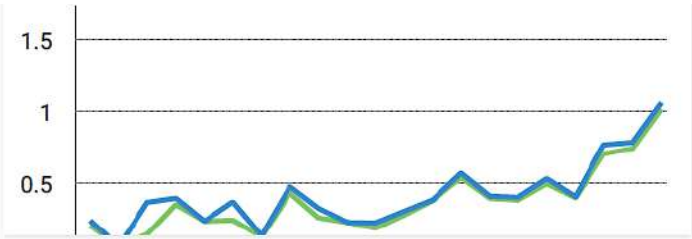


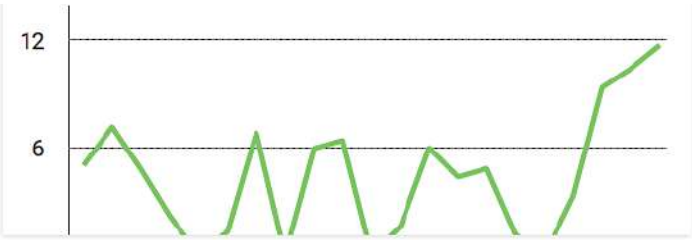


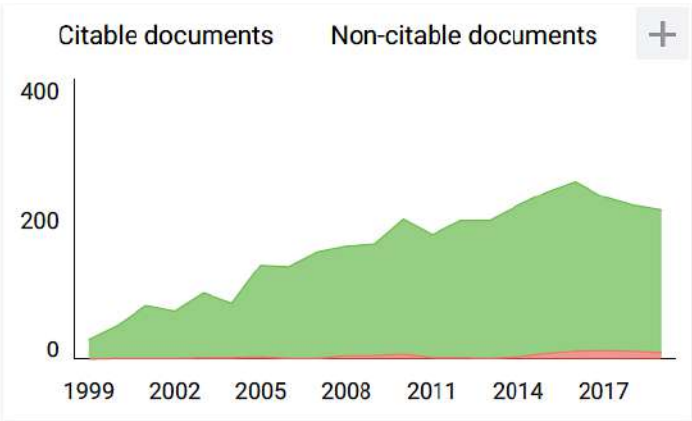


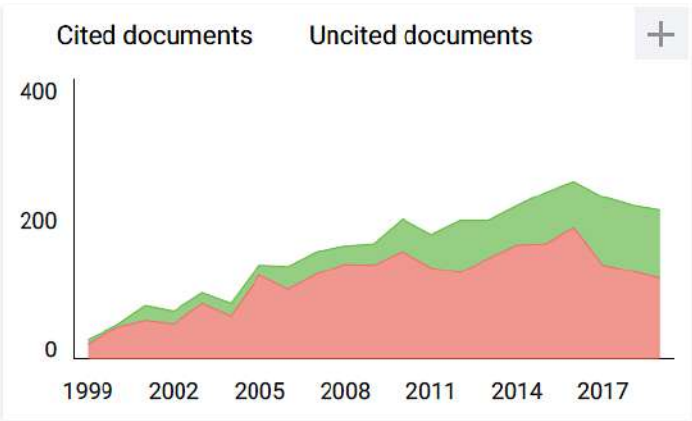

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