Theme: Sociology of Media and Communication "The Role of Mass Media on the Issue of Terrorism"

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ABSTRACT

Mass media has an important role in shaping public opinion, including public opinion on the issue of terrorism. Mass media coverage of terrorism can influence the way people perceive terrorism, both positively and negatively. On the positive side, mass media coverage can increase public awareness of the dangers of terrorism. Accurate and balanced reporting can help people understand the root causes of terrorism and ways to address them. On the negative side, inaccurate or unbalanced mass media coverage can cause panic and fear in the community. News that places too much emphasis on violence and victims can make people apathetic or even support acts of terrorism. Therefore, the mass media needs to be responsible in reporting on terrorism. The mass media needs to present accurate, balanced, and non-sensational news. The mass media also needs to avoid using language and images that can cause fear and hatred in society. Mass media has an important role to play in fighting terrorism. Accurate, balanced, and non-sensational mass media coverage can help people understand terrorism and ways to deal with it.

Keywords: Mass Media, Communication, Terrorism

1. Introduction

The September 11 attacks (called September 11, September 11th or 9/11), were a series of four suicide attacks that had been orchestrated against multiple targets in New York City and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. That morning, 19 hijackers from the Islamist militant group al-Qaeda hijacked four passenger jets. The hijackers deliberately crashed two planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City; both towers collapsed within two hours. The hijackers also crashed a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. When passengers attempted to take over a fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, it crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania and failed to reach its original target in Washington, D.C. According to the 911 investigation team, about 3,000 people died in this attack.

This event has raised many pros and cons, even tending to be Muslim and non-Muslim sentiments. Most Muslims regard this as jihad, and then consider Osama bin Laden a hero capable of defying the establishment of the United States. On the other hand, sentiment towards Muslims has also increased. The Arab-American community has been threatened by unknown people. Suspicious views are addressed to them (the Muslim community). It turned out that the events of September 11 had a global impact on Islamic and non-Islamic relations, especially Christianity.

The news of September 11 took quite a long time and almost all print and electronic media around the world reported this event and of course formed public opinion in its own way. On November 13, 2015, a series of planned terrorist attacks—mass shootings, suicide bombings, and hostage-taking—took place in Paris, France and Saint-Denis, a northern suburb. At least 129 people

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were killed, 89 of them at the Bataclan theatre. Another 352 people were injured in this attack, including 99 seriously.

And again print and electronic media around the world reported on this event and this news continued to be talked about for weeks. Even as a form of public sympathy, many people replace their profile pictures on various social media with French flags and then continuously update status with hashtags #PrayForParis and so on.

A mass shooting by a couple that killed 14 people in California is being investigated as an act of terrorism, the FBI says. FBI Director James Comey said there were indications that the couple had been radicalized. Tashfeen Malik, 27, and her husband Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, were killed in a shootout with police after the killings in San Bernardino, East Los Angeles. Comey said they "likely have been inspired" by foreign terror groups. However, he said there was no evidence they were part of a network.

This news very quickly spread to all corners of the world through various media in just minutes. Let's compare it to a shooting that a few months ago occurred that killed 3 Muslim students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States. The American and other western media outlets have been very slow and have given less attention to this incident than the shooting in California, United States. Muslim Americans reacted to the incident by saying there was a lack of mainstream media attention on the event because the death toll was Muslim. Netizens also questioned the attitude of western media that called the perpetrators as 'attackers' not 'terrorists' as they often pin when the perpetrators are Muslims.

The development of the issue of Islam and terrorism is so intensely heard, that the formation of a frame that spontaneously when hearing the words terrorist and terrorism described is the Islamic ummah / movement, it cannot be separated from the enormous influence of the media in delivering a news to form public opinion indirectly.

In the current era of globalization, mass media is certainly not a foreign instrument in society. Every second, billions of humanity cannot escape interaction with the mass media. He seems to be an opium for his connoisseurs. It is so easy for the media to influence human behavior. It is this power that makes mass media a channel used to control the direction and give impetus to social change.

2.   Results And Discussion

Mass media is one form of advancement in information and communication technology. Through mass media that is increasingly developing allows information to spread easily in society. Information in any form can be disseminated easily and quickly so as to influence the perspective, lifestyle, and culture of a nation. The rapid flow of information causes us to be unable to filter incoming messages. As a result, unknowingly the information has gradually influenced the pattern of behavior and culture in society. The culture that has long existed and has become a benchmark for society in behaving is now almost lost and escaped from public attention. As a result, more and more social changes in society began to surface.

In today's era of information and technology, information delivered by mass media is increasingly spread and can be accessed at any time. Including for very sensitive news such as various acts of violence in the name of religion, terrorism, and radicalism. The mass media is competing to present reports on terrorism and radicalism exclusively and make headlines.

The shooting of three Muslims in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States, Tuesday (02/10/2015) at around 5:11 p.m. local time. The victims were three people in a Muslim family, each named Deah Shaddy Barakat (23), his wife Yusor Mohammad (21), and his sister-in-law named Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha (19).

North Carolina police said initial leads suggested that the man, Craig Stephen Hicks, may have shot dead three Muslim students in a parking lot. But police also said they did not rule out the shooting being motivated by religious hatred. The American media outside North Carolina was very slow to cover this incident. Netizens compared this case to the shooting at the offices of Charlie Hebdo magazine that happened some time ago.

Muslim Americans reacted to the incident by saying there was a lack of mainstream media attention on the event because the death toll was Muslim. "We won't see this news because it's about Muslims," said one Muslim Twitter user. If the victim is white and non-Muslim, then the media immediately reports it heavily. When the dead are Muslims then the Western media seems to apply double standards (Source: harianterbit.com).

It is not uncommon for Muslims to be brutally slaughtered, blindly, without mercy, in the Western media to silence a thousand languages. There is no exposure like the death of an American, or anything like that. As recently there was a murder of three Muslims in a residential area of the University of North Carolina, America, Tuesday night local time or Wednesday afternoon WIB. There is no coverage from the Western media as they usually do when non-Muslims die.

CNN media, which is usually always at the forefront and fastest reporting various events around the world and being a reference for all world news, only reported it the day after the incident. Other Western media also seem to be less "passionate" to expose this event.

The attitude of the Western media is very unfair. if there is a perpetrator of the murder who is not Muslim, then the perpetrator will be considered to have a mental disorder or fundamentalist who acts alone. Thus, there is no reason to report it on a large scale.

Compared to some other shooting news that has occurred in the United States or other news that concerns non-Muslims, the news of the student shooting is considered as unimportant news to the western media including the media in the United States.

In the current era of globalization, mass media is certainly not a foreign instrument in society. Every second, billions of humanity cannot escape interaction with the mass media. He seems to be an opium for his connoisseurs. It is so easy for the media to influence human behavior. It is this power that makes mass media a channel used to control the direction and give impetus to social change.

Based on its purpose, mass media can be divided into two, namely *government oriented* and *profit oriented*. The state mass media was more often used as the mouthpiece of the rulers during the New Order era. The influence of commercial mass media is an important milestone in the history of communication, as it further confirms its role in public service rather than as the trumpet of the ruler.

A media can be categorized as a commercial mass media based on two reasons, namely (1) its work system as a profit-seeking business entity is colored by a monopolistic attitude, and (2) a very large dependence on income sourced from advertising. This commercial goal can indirectly have a major influence on the content of mass media that prioritizes the business world, consumerism, and free competition.

The media is not a neutral domain that equates the interests and meanings of various groups. Instead, the media becomes a subject that constructs reality based on its own interpretation and definition to be disseminated to the audience. Media plays a role in defining reality. Journalists write news not only as an explanatory, but as a construct of events from themselves with observed reality. News is a social construction that involves various relations of interest that take place in the newsroom.

Agenda Setting Theory

In this case, I relate it to *agenda setting theory.*Agenda setting was introduced by McCombs and D. L. Shaw in *the 1972* Public Opinion Quarterly*, entitled The Agenda Setting Function of Mass*

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Media. The basic assumption of agenda-setting theory is that if the media puts pressure on an event, then that media will influence the audience to consider it important. So, what is considered important for the media, then it is also important for society. Therefore, if the mass media pays attention to certain issues and ignores others, it will have an influence on public opinion (Bungin, 2008: 281).

An important role is played by the media in today's information age. The media, especially the mass media, becomes a connecting bridge between the public and the authorities or government. Information becomes a commodity played by the media that acts as this bridge. Normatively and ideally, the media should be able to present information objectively, factually, and empirically. But in fact, the media can present manipulative news and information, given the strategic role it plays. The media has the power to determine what information to report, what image to display, the angle used, and who gets more news attention.

McCombs and Shaw define agenda setting as the media indicating to the public what is the main issue and perceived by the public as the main issue. The concept of agenda setting recognizes three agendas and their dimensions:

a. Media agenda
   1) Visibility is the number and degree of prominence of news.
   2) The level of prominence for the audience, the relevance of the content of the news to the needs of the audience.
   3) Valence is a pleasant or unpleasant way of reporting an event.

b. Public agenda (audience)
   1) Familiarity, that is, the audience's awareness of a particular topic.
   2) Personal prominence, namely the relevance of individual interests to personal characteristics.
   3) Pleasure, which is the consideration of happy or unhappy news topics.

c. Policy agenda
   1) Support, which is a fun activity for the position of a news.
   2) Possible activities, namely the possibility of the government carrying out what is likened.
   3) Freedom of action, namely the value of activities carried out by the government.

The news agenda in the media is not only for its reporting to be a channel for issues and events, but also a strategy played by the media so that the news has more value to the existing problems. The media is not only a source of information, but can move the public to think about one issue seriously. Agenda-setting refers to the ability of the media, with repeated coverage of Gaza on national television, to raise the importance of an issue in the minds of the public, so the public needs to follow the development of the issue and how they receive news in the media.

To look further at the link between persuasion and agenda setting, following Lasswell's identification to describe the act of communication—who, what to say, with what channel, to whom and with what effect, it is clear that the persuader—politicians, professionals and spokespersons—are news sources for journalists that can be used for specific political purposes.

The media has the ability to structure issues for society, society does not respond to actual events in the environment but to "images in our heads", suggesting that the actual environment is too large, too complex, and too demanding direct contact (Lippmann, 1921). The agenda-setting function is explained by Donal Shaw, Maxwell McCombs:

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a. There is evidence that editors and broadcasters play an important part in shaping social reality.
b. The influence of mass media is large cognitive changes between individuals. The media can tell us what to think.

Agenda-building happens because the media is active in reporting news, gatekeepers make choices about what to report and how to report it. There are two levels to media agenda-making, the first determining the general issues that are considered important and determining the part of the issues that are considered important. Media coverage that has been on the agenda, choosing issues to be given more or less attention based on certain pressures, the effect of the agenda is peripheral and short-term, the agenda comes from public opinion. There are two levels in the preparation of the media agenda, including:

a. Determine common issues that are considered important
b. Determine the parts of the issues that are considered important.

In the case of the shooting of Muslim students in the United States, the media considers that the event is not news or an important issue that should be reported as soon as possible. This may be based on the background or religion of the shooting victim. It would have been different if the victims had been non-Muslim Americans with Muslims as the shooter. In the United States and other Western countries, discrimination against Islam is still very strong. This is also a factor in the slow reporting of Muslim student shootings in the United States. Although this incident was finally reported by the western media due to the insistence of netizens, it was only limited to ordinary news that was only aired once or was not discussed prolonged. Western media consider that there are many more important issues than reporting on a Muslim student shooting.

In this case, every media has a way and tendency to display a news. This is because media policies and journalists' backgrounds can influence in determining what news will be published and which parts are the focus of news and other parts that are not reported. Thus, the news delivered to readers is the result of the formation of the media concerned. Referring to the constructionist approach, it is said that news is the result of construction and reality that is subjective. Therefore, the news displayed is inseparable from bias and its separation.

When wanting to understand the true meaning of terrorism, which to this day has not been found the meaning of the term itself. It becomes unclear who and how a person can be considered a terrorist. In the end, the issue of terrorism is only seen as a legitimacy of the interests of certain parties who have power, and is assisted by the media in providing justification for terrorism for which the definition of the term is not yet clear.

The development of the issue of Islam and terrorism is so intensely heard, that the formation of a frame that spontaneously when hearing the words terrorist and terrorism described is the Islamic ummah / movement, it cannot be separated from the enormous influence of the media in delivering a news to form public opinion indirectly. After the September 11 attacks, the media had an important role in spreading issues related to Islam and terrorism, even this theme always became the main topic or headline in every news story.

Sofia Hayati Yusof, MA. et al in the Europan Scientific Journal entitled The Framing of International Media On Islam and Terrorism explained how Western media after the tragedy of 9/11 had an active role in shaping and developing perceptions related to Islam and terrorism, where the language and themes of terrorism are often accompanied by Islam, both through print, audio and visual media.

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The Spiral of Silence Theory

The spiral *of silence* theory or spiral of silence is one of the theories about the effects of media that explains a model of the influence of mass media in the formation of public opinion. Elizabeth Noelle – Neuman, a German sociologist in 1974 who first developed this theory, pioneered a premise that every individual in general naturally has a fear of being ostracized because they maintain attitudes or beliefs that are different from those of the crowd. Therefore they try to express opinions that follow the majority or dominant opinion (Purba, 2010: 61).

In order to be integrated with the majority opinion, people will try to observe the surrounding conditions to find out which opinions are marginalized and which survive and get support to become the majority opinion. If people realize that their opinions are not the same as the majority opinion, they tend to lack the courage to express because of the fear of being eliminated (Purba, 2010: 61).

The media is the main source of information for them to get information about the majority opinion. As is known, journalists are one of the influential parties who help determine the climate of opinion about certain situations and conditions in order to become popular opinion. Thus the mass media has great power in addition to individual perception in the process of forming this majority opinion. In other words, majority opinion is often determined by the mass media. This theory is said to be *a spiral of silence* because the more the majority opinion spreads through the mass media, the quieter or quieter the voices that contradict the opinion which means in this case the influence of the media is increasing (Purba, 2010: 62).

Individuals have opinions on various issues. However, the fear of isolation determines whether the individual will express his or her opinions in general. To minimize the possibility of isolation, these individuals seek support for their opinions from their environment, especially from the mass media. The mass media – with their leftist bias – misinterpret individuals about the actual differences in public opinion on various issues. The media supports leftist opinions and usually portrays the group in a dominant position. As a result, these individuals may think of what the majority position really is as the opinion of a minority group. With the passage of time, more people will believe in opinions that are not supported by the mass media, and they will no longer express their views in general for fear of isolation. During this time, as the 'mute majority' remained silent, minority ideas dominated the discussion. What happens then, what is initially a minority opinion, can later become dominant.

In my case, people in non-Muslim majority countries give their own opinions based on the experiences and conditions they see and feel become an opinion that makes people who have also felt the same event or experience justify the opinion. The opinion of Muslims in Western countries as minorities sank as the majority opinion progressed and spread. Plus there is the role of mass media in shaping the opinion of the majority community.

Noelle-Neuman explained that the media does not provide a broad and balanced interpretation of events so that people have a limited and narrow view of reality. Mass media has three traits or characteristics that play a role in shaping public opinion (Morissan, 2013: 531), namely:

    a. The nature of ubiquity, refers to the fact that the media is a very broad source of information because it exists everywhere, in other words ubiquity is the belief that the media is everywhere.

    b. Cumulatively, media refers to the process of media that always repeats what it conveys. Repetition occurs throughout the program, either on one particular medium or on another, whether similar or not.

    c. Consonant nature, refers to the similarity of beliefs, attitudes, and values espoused by mass media. Noelle-Neumann states that consonants are produced based on the tendency of the media to affirm or confirm the thoughts and opinions as if they were from society.

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Noelle-Neuman's study emphasizes the role of opinion in social interaction. Public opinion as a controversial issue will develop rapidly when it is raised through the mass media. This means that people's public opinion is also shaped, structured, and reduced by the role of the mass media. So, there is a close relationship between opinion and mass media. Opinions that develop in the majority group and a person's tendency to be silent (as the basic basis of the spiral theory of silence) because he comes from a minority group can also be influenced by issues from the mass media (Nurudin, 2013).

3. Conclusion

Every media has a way and tendency to display a news. This is because media policies and journalists' backgrounds can influence in determining what news will be published and which parts are the focus of news and other parts that are not reported. Thus, the news delivered to readers is the result of the formation of the media concerned. Referring to the constructionist approach, it is said that news is the result of construction and reality that is subjective. Therefore, the news displayed is inseparable from bias and its separation.

Every religion teaches peace, compassion, togetherness and tolerance. Likewise with Islam, as a religion that is most widely believed by mankind and has contributed a lot to the world. Islam does not tolerate acts of terrorism, but it also cannot accept that the theories developed by Islam are close to terrorism.

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