The Role of Online Media in the Public's Agenda Setting on the Crisis Situation. Case on Floods, Jakarta 2013

Yudi Perbawaningsih

Atma Jaya Yogyakarta University, Indonesia

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Abstract

For some scholars the old theories of media effect such as agenda setting theory is no longer relevant to use to analyze the effect of new media. Based on this theory, the media have power to set the public agenda. However recent time indicated by (1) the improvement of media literacy on public, (2) high media competition, and (3) internet-based media, the power of media have been decreased. However, if associated with a crisis situation characterized by an abnormal situation which threatens human existence and creates high uncertainty, media regain the power to control public behavior.

This research goal is to test the relevance of agenda setting theory in the new situation, by identifying media agenda and public agenda, and comparing the two agenda. Media agenda could be used to analyze the way of media communicate crisis whereas the public agenda could be used to identify the public responses to the media and issues. Using framing research method, researcher analyzes news and comments from public posted in online media. The issue will be explored is floods in Jakarta, on January 2013.

The finding is the Indonesian online media communicate the crisis in a positive way, by providing information about the crisis objectively, not dramatizing the fact, less information about the pain of the victim and the damage caused by the disaster but more news about the effort of the government and relevant institutions to cope the crisis. Other finding is online media not quite strong to set the public agenda. Media have power to control public's thought, but do not have power to influence public's interpretation and public's responses. So then, the agenda setting theory is not quite relevant to understand the effect of online media in crisis.

Keywords: media agenda, public agenda, crisis communication, natural disaster.

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INTRODUCTION

There were a large numbers of research on *media coverage* of crisis, both political crises, economic and natural disasters, both at the level of the individual, organization, community, nation and state. In general, the aim of studies is to identify the focus of news and media perceptions associated with crisis events. Those studies usually use content analysis research methods or both quantitative and qualitative text. In terms of media, the research focused on conventional media such as print (newspapers) and audiovisual (television). Lately, there are several researches of crisis media coverage on internet-based media, such as online news media and social media. If related to the theory underlying the researches, most researchers use the theory of agenda setting to identify the media agenda as well as the relationship between media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda in order to handle the crisis. Barnes and his friends (2008) states that in a crisis due to hurricane of Katrina that occurred in the United States, media tend to focus on efforts or government responses compared to public health policy makers.

> "The media framed most Hurricane Katrina stories by emphasizing government response and less often addressing individuals' and communities' level of preparedness or responsibility. Hence, more articles covered response and recovery than mitigation and preparation. The newspapers studied focused significantly more on government response than on key public health roles in disaster management."

In this study, Barnes assess that media have failed to influence the policy makers in effort to help victims. Media is also considered to have failed to inform the public about the prevention and preparations of the upcoming potential disaster. Specifically related to the news or coverage of the crisis due to natural disasters, the research shows the tendency that the media put more emphasis on natural disasters and victims themselves. Includes a description of the severity of natural disasters or force of damage and the impact on the environment, while the victims of natural disasters described about the number of victims and the degree of suffering experienced. There is a tendency that the media, especially television and newspaper, like extraordinary reality, such a great disaster force, the number of victims and suffering a fantastic heart-wracking. The media mentioned is television and newspapers. Agenda media in a crisis like this in a positive way is meant to get the attention of policy makers to be able to take action immediately responsive and adaptable to disaster and disaster victims and to raise donations including from society. However, crisis communication efforts by the media can also be understood negatively as the packaging of human suffering as a media commodity.

Style of reporting on the crisis and the acquisition of donations appears to have relevance. Style of reporting about the crisis that is exploiting emotions and be repeated in the long term was associated with the amount of donations from the public. Nevertheless, the crisis more acute gain media attention and bring in donations greater than the chronic crisis or a prolonged crisis, though the sheer number of victims of the crisis much more chronic. A study showed that the political crisis in the Republic of Congo are causing millions of deaths over the years, and the news is also quite intensive, does not produce as many donations due to the tsunami crisis in India. In this

case, researchers say that the news is dramatized, narrated emotionally and able to arouse the imagination is more effective in raising funds rather than reporting on the suffering, poverty, and death due to civil war or political crisis. This event is a crisis that did not get media attention, and thus do not gain attention from policy makers, public and donor organizations. (Matthew, 2013). This research was supported by other research that says that a low media attention on specific types of crises such as civil war or political turmoil evident from the small number of journalists sent to cover it. This decision was based on the prediction of the low value of the news and of course tied to the worth of information as a commodity. The study also mentions that the media often propagate misinformation about the victims or the survivors of the disaster, which illustrates that the victims are always *helpless* and *looters,* while on the other hand, not all the victims had this kind of behavior (Ali, 2013). In the Indonesian tsunami disaster in 2004 that killed about 180 thousand people, there is a tendency to establish the reality that journalists are not objective about disaster and victims. It is rated as the media attempts to get donations from the public (HarianJogja.com, February 6, 2013). Media coverage of the tsunami that exploit the grief and suffering of the victims prompted a group of journalists in Aceh formulated ethical disaster coverage, especially for journalists in Aceh. Some of the rules of ethics are (1) barred journalists interviewed the dying victim, (2) is prohibited from preaching the catastrophic predictions are not reliable sources such as the results of predictions psychics and forbidden to associate the disaster with superstition or mystical, and (3) prohibited broadcast images of the bodies o the victim clearly specially if the body naked, broadcast victim excessive grief (Okezone News, October 18, 2011). Emerging existence of this code indicates that the news media in the case of the tsunami in Aceh are considered not conducive to exclude the public from the crisis. Associated with the role of media on tsunami, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) with a number of agencies in charge of disaster management in the country launched a guide book for the Tsunami Early Warning Information Indonesian Broadcasting. With the guidebook expected media in Indonesia, particularly broadcasters, to increase participation in informing potential natural disasters especially earthquakes and tsunami in the country (Jurnas.Com, July 12, 2011). Publication of this guide can also be understood as a response to the role of the Indonesian media was not so positive in communicating Aceh tsunami crisis. It is also of concern to many researchers, however, the media is only concerned with the issue and information can be 'sold' to public, meanwhile the media is supposed to have a role to create public perception and reality are more objective and positive about a disaster ..

On the other hand, the reality shows that social media such as twitter and facebook have a very significant role in easing the panic situations that arise as a result of natural disasters. Social media is helping the community in terms of providing useful information to prepare if there is another disaster (preparedness) and the response should be done if you have a disaster. This information is not only carried out by the competent authorities, such as the Red Cross or the government, but also by his fellow victims. Through smart phones, the victims can exchange information about events and experiences of disaster, either in the form of photos and videos. Social media also provides the facility 'call for help', which can be used at any time for users if they need help. This reality found during hurricanes Katrina in the U.S. in August 2006 (Stanley, 2012).

> "Social media's reach, and its 24/7 accessibility made possible by smart phones, make it an invaluable resource at risk when people need information to stay safe. Smartphones give users constant access to their social networks and have changed the game when it comes to disaster preparedness and response. "

Exchange information and experiences is what cannot be done by conventional media such as newspapers and television. Exchange images and videos can help victims overcome the difficulties as a result of the crisis, also helps communities prepare to the next crisis. In other words, social media or new media that allows the interaction between users and simultaneous interaction between media personnel and users encourages media to be more positive in communicating crisis. On the other hand, this interaction between users might be able to increase panic and emotional situation faster and stronger. It can be strengthened by media which communicate the crisis more on the events and victims. A study showed that even if the audience has the freedom to determine its own agenda and interpretation of an event, in an atmosphere of crisis characterized by panic, uncertainty, limited time availability, make the most of the freedom was eroded. Most of the audience and the critical elaboration ability (even well educated) disappears and adjust the agenda and offer interpretations of media (Perbawaningsih, 2013).

This study aims to (1) test the assumption that online media has a role to shape public opinion or encourage more positive responses related to the crisis due to natural disasters, and (2) prove that media still has power to shape the public agenda, as stated in agenda setting theory. This theory assumes that the media has power to shape 'what to think, how to think about and what will be done related to a particular issue' of the public (Griffin 2007, West and Turner 2010, Littlejohn 2008). Although the subsequent development of this theory states that the media agenda, the public agenda and the policy agenda do interaction and interplay and is not linear, however, this study assumes that in a crisis situation, the media still has a dominant force on the public agenda and the policy agenda.

As the cases in this study were the floods that hit the city of Jakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia, starting on 17 till 27 January 2013. Online media in question is 'Detik.com'. To analyze the news media framing analysis was used, while for the public to see the response and disaster-related interactions used content analysis of public comments were posted after the news was written. There are hundreds of news published in detik.com on the time range, but for the study were taken at random by using 'search' in the column detik news with keywords 'Jakarta flood on January 2013'. While public comments are taken randomly, by taking the first page of comments posted on the same day the news published.

DISCUSSION

1. Jakarta floods

There is one major issue that held in Jakarta, which have not been able to overcome as long as the city's age, the flood and in addition to congestion. This is the whole issue of flooding in Jakarta citizens without exception, without being limited by differences in

socio-economic class and culture. Floods in Jakarta is a chronic natural disasters, which always comes in the rainy season, but when the floods have crippled business life in Jakarta, the disaster became acute as predicted will always occur in the five-year cycle. The flood also has always been an important political issue and promises by a candidate for Governor in every local election campaign. Jakarta's floods that occurred on January 17, 2013 and began to recede at the end of the month, is the most severe flooding in Jakarta, after the floods in 2002 and 2007.

The signs will begin to flood occurred on January 14, 2013 due to heavy rains almost every day, but the water began to inundate several parts of the capital began on January 17, 2013. Referring to media monitoring, flood described by heavy rains with high rainfall (the highest was 125mm - detik.com 17/01/2013 13:11 pm), rise in water level in the canals monitoring water discharge (1030 cm - detik.com 17/01/2013 12:16 WIB), the height of standing water, the extent of the flooded area (41km2 or 8% of the total area of Jakarta-Detik.com January 18, 2013 at 13:47), traffic congestion due to flooding, disrupted even of business operations various institutions, the number of refugees (19,000 people - detik.com, 01/17/2013 14:44 pm) and casualties associated directly or indirectly with the floods (11 deaths - detik.com, 18 January 2013 at 12:01 this figure different from the police version 24). Although not a major natural disaster, but refers to the social impacts, catastrophic flooding in Jakarta in 2013 was pretty bad for the city's business.

2. Media and the Public Agenda

2.1. Agenda 'Detik. Com'

The unit of analysis of this study is the news about the floods in Jakarta which was published from 17 to 27 January 2013. This time range is a flood emergency period set by the government of DKI Jakarta. There are 52 news on Detiknews.com. Table 1 below shows the description of the media agenda on the identification of "detik.com".

Table 1
Agenda Media Detik.Com
(n= 52 news)

Theme/ Issues	Keywords	Number
Disaster	Water level, rainfall, rainfall intensity, flooded areas	12
Victims	Number of refugees and casualties, refugees and survivors conditions	6
Informant/authorities	Joko Wi, Ahok, DPR, sponsor, BMKG, BNPB, BPPT	18
Crisis impacts	Business, transportation, social impacts	4
Recovery efforts	Climate engineering, sowing salt, stone and sand delivery	9
Others		3
	Summary	52

Referring to table 1, there are two basic issues about floods which delivered by Detik.Com, namely (1) the condition of the flood - with all its aspects, and (2) political figures associated with flooding. Related to the flooding, the media focused more on physical symptoms including physically signs of potential disasters due to flooding. There are more numbers of news about the flooding than the news of the statements of political figures and government about the flood. Meanwhile less reviewed is about the victims of the disaster. This suggests that crisis communication is done 'detik.com' quite positive for crisis resolution. The news tends to provide information that supports victims of disasters to prepare if there is a following disaster and cope with the crisis. Here is some news which educates public about the dangers of flooding so that the public can prepare and anticipate.

> "*Hariyadi mengatakan hujan lebat di pagi hari berpotensi terjadi 3 hari ke depan karena ada fenomena monsoon. Monsoon adalah suatu pola sirkulasi angin yang berhembus secara periodik pada suatu periode (minimal 3 bulan) dan pada periode yang lain polanya akan berlawanan. Di Indonesia dikenal dengan 2 istilah monsoon, yaitu monsoon Asia dan monsoon Australia.*" (detiknews.com, Kamis, 17/01/2013 14:49 WIB). (Detiknews.com, Thursday, 01/17/2013 14:49 pm).

> (Hariyadi said heavy rains could potentially occur in the next 3 days because there is a phenomenon of monsoon. Monsoon is a wind that blows circulation patterns periodically at a period (minimum 3 months) and at

other periods the pattern will be the opposite. In Indonesia known as the 2nd term monsoon, the Asian monsoon and the Australian monsoon)

"*Sedangkan curah hujan tertinggi pada Kamis (17/1/2013) ini, tercatat 125 mm di wilayah Kedoya. Namun demikian, peluang hujan lebat di Jakarta pada hari ini masih berpeluang terjadi mulai pertengahan Januari 2013 hingga pertengahan Februari 2013…[…] Sebagai tolok ukur, kategori hujan lebat > 50 mm, hujan sedang 30-50 mm, hujan ringan < 30 mm.*" (detiknews.com, Kamis, 17/01/2013 13:11).

(The highest rainfall on Thursday (01/17/2013), a total of 125 mm in the region Kedoya. However, the chances of heavy rain in Jakarta today still likely to occur from mid-January 2013 to mid-February 2013 ... [...] As a benchmark, the category of heavy rain> 50 mm, 30-50 mm moderate rain, light rain <30 mm.)

While the news following excerpt shows a solution to overcome the disaster and solutions for disaster victims.

"*Tanggul Kali Ciliwung (Kanal Banjir Barat) yang jebol di Jalan Latuharhary, Jakarta Pusat masih terus diperbaiki..[…]. Tak hanya itu, pemerintah pusat juga sudah menyalurkan bantuan untuk perbaikan tanggul ini yang terdiri dari batu kali dan kawat bronjong.*" (Detiknews.com, Jumat, 18/01/2013 14:25 WIB)

(Ciliwung River Embankment (West Flood Canal) which collapsed in Latuharhary Road, Central Jakarta still be improved .. [...].in addition, the central government also has distributed aid to repair the dike consisting of stone and wire gabions)

"*Di kompleks DPR Senayan, para pengungsi bisa ditempatkan di gedung lapangan bulutangkis, aula masjid DPR, dan memasang tenda di lapangan terbuka di kompleks DPR. Bahkan bagi korban banjir di kawasan Jakarta Selatan, juga bisa ditempatkan di kompleks tempat tinggal anggota DPR di Kalibata," katanya.* (Detiknews.com, Jumat, 18/01/2013 09:44 WIB)

(In Senayan complex, the refugees can be placed in the building of badminton courts, Parliament mosque hall, and set up tents in an open field in the Parliament complex. For flood victims in South Jakarta, also can be placed in a residential complex in Kalibata legislators, "he said)

This is positive change, at least compared to the crisis communication of the tsunami Aceh in 2004 and the eruption of Mount Merapi, Yogyakarta in 2006, which was criticized by many people is not conducive but actually worsen the crisis. As mentioned earlier, the news of Aceh tsunami and the eruption of Merapi, Yogyakarta assessed tend to be unethical because of exploiting the suffering of disaster victims, and as a commodity to make news rating and obtain donations from the public. The results of this study do not differ with research on political crisis communication done before.

Perbawaningsih (2013) mentions in a political crisis, a statement authorized parties or people got a large portion on media. However, when compared with the overall news related to political events, the statements are not too much different. That is, in a crisis with a variety of sources, authority figures always get a place on the media agenda However the political crisis get more media attention than the crises of natural disaster. Perbawaningsih (2013) noted that there are 46 news in 'detik.com' in just one day, while the natural disaster, there are 52 news in the media over a period of ten days. That is, in an average day there are only 5 news.

2.2. Public Agenda

There are hundreds of comments are posted by public linked to the news on media. In a range of research time (from 17 to 27 January 2013) there are 1493 comments. The study did not analyze all the comments just took the first page (main page) consists of an average of 10 comments on every news. Total number of comments that were analyzed was 300.

Table 2
Public Agenda at Detik.Com
(n=300 comments)

Theme/ issues	Keywords	Number
The roots of floods	Littering, building construction, population density, deforestation, sin, temptation of God, God punishment, corruption	12
Statements of authorities and people involved	Defend and denounce Joko Wi, the Government (Department of City Planning, BNPB) Foke, BMKG, PT KAI, FPI, BPPT, donors, UOB, minister, parliament	181
Disaster impact	Number of victims, business	7
Solution	rubber boat, praying, capital transfer, sowing salt, weather modification	40
Sympathy	Providing rubber boat, praying, move the capital city, sowing salt, weather modification	24
Critics	Critics to media, and commentators fellow	19

Others		17
	Summary	300

Table 2 clearly shows that more public comments (60%) refer to the statements and actions of the authorities. There are several parties such as the Governor and his Vice of DKI Jakarta, government and public service agencies such as the Department of City Planning, BPPT, BNPB, BMKG, donors (BCA, KPK), a former governor. The rest (40%) is spread with a variety of issues such as sources of flooding, impact flood, flood solutions, sympathy and solicitation statement, and also criticism in the media and fellow commentator. In case on the comments about the statements and actions of the authorities, mostly it is referring to the comments on Joko Widodo as Jakarta governor. Even if there are positive and negative comments, the public tends to support or positive comments. What is interesting is that the comments about Joko Widodo are mostly placed in the context of politics, especially in the context of competition between Joko Widodo (Joko Wi) with the ousted governor Fauzi Bowo, who is known by the name Foke. The following excerpt shows some of the public discourse that put the issue of flooding in the political context.

budimcb 24 Jan 2013 10:54:22 WIB

"*percuma... kasih tau JOKOWI mana nyambung?kan dah dari sebelum akhir tahun dikasih saran latihan mengatasi BANJIR sampai dibilang spt VENESIA segala bersama TNI, ehhh malah gladi resik urusan car free day dan hura2 tahun baru yg diurus... capek dan percumahhh... anggap JOKOHOK tak korupsi tapi kapabilitas kepemimpinannya sangat rendah mendekati NOL... qiqiqiqiqi*"

(useless ...giving information to Jokowi will be not understood. Before and after this year he had a training with Indonesian Military to resolve floods until called as VENICE, *eehhhh* today the Governor does the general repetition for car free day and a new year ...very tired and useless… assume that JOKOHOK do not do corruption but their leadership capability is very low to zero ... qiqiqiqiqi)

Heri Gunawan 24 Jan 2013 12:09:00 WIB

kayaknya ini salah satu orang yg rugi gede nih karena jokowi jadi gubernur.. jajaran sakit hati.. :p

(I think this is one person who feel a big loss because Jokowi became governor .. the fellow of heartache group.. : P)

warekpurwa 24 Jan 2013 06:26:35 WIB

JOKOWI itu pejabat yang mau kerja, sedangkan pejabat yang lain kebanyakan cuma cari-cari proyek.

(Jokowi that an official who would work hard, while other officials mostly just looking for projects)

Kilikalikulaku 24 Jan 2013 05:07:54 WIB

batu pasir nya diabisin si kumis buat bangun mall2 pak.. kumis mana kumis? ngapain aja lo mis 5 th jd gubernur? ngegedein kumis??? (** yang dimaksud si kumis adalah Foke, gubernur DKI sebelum Joko Wi-author)

(The sand and stone has been spent by the mustache to build malls…Where is the mustache? What has been done by the mustache for five years as governor? Made the mustache bigger? (** the mustache is a symbol for Foke, former governor of Jakarta before Joko Wi - author)

Political framework in the public discourse is more dominant than the discourse about the disaster itself. This is understandable because the Jakarta floods occurred during the 100-days of Joko Widodo's leadership. Political frame of the public is still associated with the atmosphere of the election campaign by Jakarta Governor 2012. But it could also, online media users to comment are the ones who like to talk about politics than about humanity. One news entitled "Council assess Joko Widodo has Failed to Overcome Flood in Flood Emergency" rises 397 comments. In other words, the Indonesian public would rather talk about politics or commenting on political issues. This conclusion is not different from the research on the public agenda and the media agenda on the political crisis in Indonesia. Research on the shooting of the prisoners in jail by a group of members of Special Forces of Indonesian Military (Kopassus) at Cebongan on March 23, 2013 showed that the public interest in the case of political discourse is very high. It is indicated by the number of public comments in a day that reached up to three hundred comments (Perbawaningsih 2013).

Using quantitative view, media and public tend to be more concerned on issues of political crisis than of natural disasters. Based on the content in a political crisis public comment is more diverse, more profound and dynamic. This is in contrast to the flood crisis in this study. Once placed in the framework of political perception, public discourse tends to be more conical and consistent on one idea or issue, and consistently offered also on issues in the news. As mentioned in findings, whatever the issue of flooding reported in the media, the public placing it in the context of political relations between Joko Widodo with Foke. This means that the crisis caused by the different sources contribute differently to the degree of interest of the issue for both the public and the media. On the political crisis, more intensive public discourse, rather than in crisis due to natural disasters. This finding is similar to findings in study of Perbawaningsih (2013) that in the case of a political crisis public perception and interpretation is more diverse, deeper and more dynamic than that offered by the media.

3. Agenda for Media and the Public Agenda: Match Closer?

There is a little bit difference between the media agenda and the public agenda. Even though the news about political figures Joko Widodo quite a lot, but when compared with

a review of the overall flood disaster, it is not too dominant. More news emphasis on the efforts to help victims and communities in preparing for and cope with flooding, while the public is more like a political discourse rather than a disaster. Although the two agendas together highlights political figure, in this case is Joko Widodo, but public interpretation and the interpretation offered by the media is a little bit different. Media put Joko Widodo in the context of floods, in contrast, public put the floods in the context of the 'campaign war' between Joko Widodo and Foke. It looks very clear that the political atmosphere after the governor election is still very dominant for public discourse. It means, the media is only able to determine what the important issues considered by the public, but was unable to steer the direction of the public thinking and interpretation.

CONCLUSION

In the crisis due to floods that occurred in Jakarta in January 2013, online media quickly communicate events in accordance with the development of the crisis. The time difference between a certain news with the next is in minutes. This is what distinguishes online media with traditional media. The other difference is online media able to create interaction or a direct response from the public related to the news. One-time reports, around an average of 25 comments appear. In this case, the public comments submitted are also very fast, also engaged in minutes, even seconds.

In this study, the media communicates crisis of natural disaster is quite positive. It is indicated by (1) does not exploit the suffering of the victim, (2) does not make the disaster as commodity, and (3) does not exaggerate the facts in the style of preaching that dramatize the situation. Media also provides easy to understand information related to flood hazards so that the public can prepare for and respond to flooding better. On the other hand, public issues tend to always be consistent to the issues offered by media, but different in issue interpretation. Floods and the actions of the authorities are framed on a political issue than humanitarian. Public agenda still hang on to this.

The difference of the two agenda shows that media is not any longer so strong to determine how to build the perception and interpretation of certain issues and what to do. It can be caused by several conditions as follows: (1) online news readers and news media users are well-educated public. With this background, they will be less likely to be directed by the media, and have the free will to decide what is important, how to think and what to do, (2) the news reader is affected by interactions with other news readers to comment. When the dominant public issues on support for Joko Widodo the comments will then lead to the dominant opinion, so the public with different comments would tend to be silent, and (3) media online news reader is not related to the victims of disaster or crisis so the issue of crisis in media not getting the most public attention. It also makes them not in an atmosphere of crisis. Crisis characterized by high uncertainty followed by high information seeking. In addition, the crisis also creates public panic, anxious, uncertain, so it becomes they are quite less rational. Such situation is not experienced by the media users and commentators on 'detik.com'. The lack of experience makes online media users do not have the emotional involvement with the flood. I suspect that the news readers (online media users) and commentators on this case are the instigators of

political campaigns for both Joko Widodo and Fauzie Bowo. Their involvement in the matter is what underlies their discourse.

In other words, online media have the power to form a public issue under the certain conditions (1) publics have a high relevance and involvement with the issues posted by the media, (2) publics rely on the media for getting information and ignore other sources of information, and (3) publics have high uncertainty about a particular issue or event so that will seek information in a high intensity too. In this condition, the public will depend on the media that is able to provide information faster and easier.

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