

***Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill:
A Framing Analysis of Coverage by Foreign Online Media***

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Abstract

Indonesia has been experiencing an increase in the number of sexual violence cases and this number has spiked even more during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Elimination of Sexual Violence bill (RUU PKS) was drafted by the National Commission on Violence against Women and the Service Provider Forum. On January 26, 2016, it was proposed to the House of Representatives (DPR). It focuses on the prevention of sexual violence, giving more rights to victims, as well as acknowledging marital rape. This bill was then incorporated into the 2016 Priority National Legislation Program (Prolegnas). However, in July 2020, the bill was dropped by the DPR, stating 'difficulties' to further discuss the matter. Since 2016, there have been numerous petitions, demonstrations, and protests demanding the immediate ratification of the RUU PKS. All these events have attracted media attention. The way these media cover news about Indonesia has a big effect on the international public perception about Indonesia. This research seeks to answer: How do online foreign media frame news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill? And; How has the framing of news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill shifted over time (2016-2022)? This study involves a framing analysis using codes in accordance with Robert Entman's (1993) four framing levels: Definition of the problem; Diagnosis of cause; Moral judgment; Treatment recommendation. The research population consists of all English language news articles on Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill covered by non-Indonesian online news outlets from 2016 to 2022.

Keywords: Indonesia, Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill, RUU PKS, Framing Analysis

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Introduction

There has been an increase in Indonesia's amount of violence against women cases in the last decade, with more than 431,471 registered cases in 2019 and many cases remaining unregistered (Gerlach, 2020). During the Covid-19, these numbers have spiked even more (Syakriah, 2021) because in most cases, the perpetrator is the victim's intimate partner (Gerlach, 2020). One recent national-level attempt to tackle this growing problem is the Elimination of Sexual Violence bill (*Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual, or RUU PKS*). The drafters of this bill were the National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) and the Service Provider Forum (*Forum Pengada Layanan*), who initially proposed it on January 26, 2016 to Indonesia's People's Representative Council (DPR). It focused on preventing sexual violence, giving more rights for victims, and acknowledging marital rape. This bill was then included in the 2016 Priority National Legislation Program (*Program Legislasi Nasional*). However, in July 2020, DPR took it off its annual agenda for reasons of 'difficulties' to discuss it further (Margaret & Pandjaitan, 2020).

This withdrawal proposal was previously submitted by Commission VIII of the People's Representative Council. This bill was controversial even within the same commission. The secular parties, including the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and the Democratic Party (PD) supported the bill, yet the Islamic parties, including the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the National Awakening Party (PKB) claim that this bill supported the "legalization of adultery and "LGBT behavior", while other groups fail to see the urgency to pass such bill (Gerlach, 2020). As a consequence, the bill was taken off from the National Legislation Program priority list and its deliberation was postponed until 2021, with Commission VIII member, Marwan Dasopang (PKB) stating that it was difficult to discuss the bill at the time because of the conflicting differences in the definitions of sexual violence and its consequences (Sari, 2020). However, according to another Commission VIII member, Diah Pitaloka (PDI-P), this decision was Dasopang's personal statement as there was no meeting held on that decision (Mazrieva, 2020).

The law was finally passed in April 2022, but only after with 4 main revisions were made (Saptoyo, 2021):

1. A change of name from Elimination of Sexual Violence bill to Sexual Violence Crime bill.
2. A change in the scope of forms of sexual violence from 9 forms of violence to 5 forms. The initial draft included 9 forms of sexual violence as formulated by *Komnas Perempuan*, namely: Sexual harassment; Rape; Forced marriage; Forced contraception; Forced prostitution; Forced abortion; Sexual torture; Sexual slavery, and; Sexual exploitation. The new draft contained 5 forms of sexual violence, namely: Sexual harassment (Article 2); Forced use of contraceptive devices (Article 3); Forced violence accompanied by other criminal acts (Article 6).
3. The initial draft included a prohibition against law enforcement officers from taking discriminatory actions against sexual violence victims. This article was not included in the new draft.
4. There is no article that regulates online-based gender violence (Saptoyo, 2021).

The reason why this bill was so controversial is because of the various discourses regarding the role of women that are deeply rooted in Indonesia's society, especially the New Order State *Ibuism* – the construction of women as housewives and social counterpart to men, who

are regarded as breadwinners, thus assigning women to the domestic role and omitting them from public and political spheres – and the Islamic perspective (Gerlach, 2020). Qibtiyah (2009) suggests that one essential factor in Indonesia's gender equality movement is the progressive Muslim movement, "the modernist *santri* or neo modernist/*pembaharuan* (renewal) movement" (p. 23), which argues that Muslims should learn from and adopt the progresses in education, science, and politics of the West in order to develop and modernize the Muslim community.

A petition was distributed in 2016 on Change.org, urging DPR and the government to discuss the RUU PKS was signed by over 50,000 people. Then, in 2018, people rallied from different groups and demanded that the immediate passing of the RUU PKS by the government. That year, the #sahkanruupks (pass the Elimination of Sexual Violence bill) became the most viral post on Twitter (Primastika, 2018). In 2019, various demonstrations and riots happened in Indonesia, involving journalists and students, addressing various issues, one of which being the demand for PKS bill to be passed (Edi, 2019). Again, in 2020, protesters of the Indonesia Omnibus bill also demanded the passing of PKS bill (Berita Kota Ambon, 2020). All these events have surely attracted media attention – both national and international. While some foreign media opt to simply translate a news article by a local media, others may have correspondences in Indonesia. The way these media cover news about Indonesia has a big effect on the international public perception about Indonesia. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze how foreign media have covered news about the RUU PKS over time.

This research aims to answer these research questions:

1. How do online foreign media frame news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill?
2. How has the framing of news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill shifted over time (2016-2022)?

Using Robert Entman's framing analysis model (1993), this study will identify the: 1. Problem definition; 2. Cause diagnosis; 3. Moral judgment; and, 4. Treatment recommendation prescribed by foreign media in its news coverage since the bill was proposed in 2016.

Framing Theory

Erving Goffman (1974) states that the frame is actually something studied and used in everyday life, even the underlying behavior of man himself. By studying frames that exist in a society, it will guide someone to be capable of socializing and blending in with the community. The frame that is applied in the society will give a set a guidance on how people have to feel, heard, and seen in the society.

Framing has been applied since the press and media emerged in the world. The media create reality that is then understood by its audience. Media from various countries make a huge impact on the social and political realms. Poirier, Ouellet, Rancourt, Béchar, and Dufrense (2020) argue that the media is able shape public opinion and also change people's attitudes through this framing process. Therefore, various framing analysis has been developed throughout the years. In this research, the Robert Entman (1993) model was used.

News Framing

The news that citizens all over the world consume are produced by news outlets, using their perspectives to tell their own story regarding an issue that could influence their readers' perspectives, opinions, and even behavior. De Vreese (2009) explains that the media may shape public opinion by framing events and issues in particular ways. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Frames, according to Entman (1993), highlight some information about an event or an issue that is the subject of communication, thereby elevating them in salience, making it more visible, meaningful and memorable to the audience and that's what enhances the possibility that the recipients of the message will understand the information, grasp its meaning, process it, and store it in memory.

There are internal factors in journalism that govern how journalists and news organizations frame issues (de Vreese, 2009; Shoemaker & Fos, 2009). While frame building deals with the factors affecting the structural qualities of news frames, frame setting deals with the interaction between these media frames and the individuals' previous knowledge and susceptibilities. Therefore, news frames can influence the audience's learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events (de Vreese, 2009). This framing process is so influential that it has been the subject of numerous intricate research studies with the goal to explore its level of influence under various conditions. De Vreese (2009) explains the effects of framing can be both in individual and societal level. At an individual level, framing may alter attitudes regarding a certain issue depending on the level of exposure to particular frames. At a social level, framing can shape social level processes, including political socialization and collective actions.

Therefore, the information displayed by the media must have a purpose. The purpose could be commercial, ideological, or political. To achieve the goal, the media frames the news by influencing the reader's mind so that the readers' opinion is formed as expected by the media. However, there are policies determined by the editorial before conveying the news to the public. The editorial policy becomes guidelines for determining what kind of perspectives to write the news and decided whether it deserved to be news and comment material. The vision is translated into editorial policies to serve as a framework as well reference criteria in selecting and processing make news. Mass media in constructing and deconstructing reality, especially in reporting, usually gives priority to coverage of certain events or issues and ignores others (agenda setting). In addition, the media also emphasizes the substance of certain issues relating to certain events and issues and also ignores the substance of other issues (framing). In these two ways the mass media construct and deconstruct a reality.

The Robert N. Entman Model

Entman (1993) posits that framing essentially deals with reporting definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations in a story in order to highlight the frame of mind for that story. To find out the framing carried out by the media, Entman described how an event was interpreted by journalists. According to Entman, news stories contain four levels of framing:

1. Defining the problem: This level emphasizes how an event is interpreted differently by journalists. Every journalist has a different perspective on an event.
2. Diagnosis of cause: This level predicts what the journalist identifies as the cause of the problem at hand. In this level, the journalist frames those who are considered

actors in an event and thus identifies the source of this problem in order to determine who is the perpetrator and who is the victim.

3. Moral judgment: This level analyses how the journalist provides an assessment of the event. The final level, treatment recommendation, depends on this stage, as it will determine whether the journalist chooses to solve the problem. This solution really depends on how the event can be seen and who is seen as causing the problem.
4. Treatment recommendation: This level analyses how the journalist offers to solve the problem based on an interpretation of the journalist's perception.

Therefore, Entman (1993) argues that the news that the world consumes essentially contain framed definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations in order to highlight the frame of mind for the related event.

RUU PKS in Indonesia's Online Media

The Elimination of Sexual Violence bill has received very little coverage by Indonesian media, while Islamic media has been reporting it using a rather negative sentiment.

Research conducted by feminist organization, Konde.co in 2020 found that the number of news coverage on the PKS bill and sexual violence in three major Indonesian online media (Okezone.com, Kompas.com, and Tribunnews.com) was no more than 3% of their total coverage each year. This explains why the issue of the PKS bill is only considered a narrow and highly segmented issue instead of being of shared urgency (Rizky & Mar'iyah, 2021).

Meanwhile, Islamic online news media such as Nu.or.id and Voa-islam.com have certain ideologies and interests in reporting the PKS bill. Even though both are Islamic media, they have ideological differences. Voa-islam.com focuses more on the negative image of the RUU PKS, labeling it as "pro adultery" and "pro LGBT" and identifying these as the reason why the bill was rejected. Voa-Islam also used metaphors such as "poison wrapped in honey" and "turning off the fire by pouring gasoline" to describe the bill. Meanwhile Nu.or.id has used a more positive tone toward the bill, emphasizing how the bill is for the benefit of the people and the protection of the rights of victims (Rohma, 2018).

Online media focusing on gender has given more attention to the RUU PKS. Content analysis research conducted on the Magdalene.co and Konde.co websites over the span of two months, between March 1, 2021-30 April 2021, show that Konde.co's advocacy of the PKS bill replicated through 15 news stories, with positive (80%), negative (20%), and neutral (0%) sentiments, whereas Magdalene.co seemed to treat the issue of the PKS bill as belonging to the elite and highly educated – which is its target audience. Still, both media advocated the passing of the bill (Rizky & Mar'iyah, 2021).

Methods

Based on the research problem, this study sought to answer the following question:

1. How do online foreign media frame news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill over time?

To answer this research question, a framing analysis using Robert Entman's model was conducted on online news coverage by foreign media from the period of 2016 to 2022. Data

analysis was be conducted using the QDA Miner Lite software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis.

A qualitative content analysis research design was used, using the following steps:

1. Data collection and classification;
2. Identification and categorization (coding);
3. interpretation and analysis of Entman's elements of news framing (problem definition, diagnosis of cause, moral judgement, and treatment recommendation);
4. Conclusion making.

Originally, the proposed research was set to analyze online foreign media coverage from 2016 to 2021 since the parliamentary discussion was postponed until 2021. However, the bill was finally passed in April 2022. Therefore, this study also included media coverage until April 2022. The research population consisted of all English language news articles on Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence bill covered by non-Indonesian online news outlets from 2016 to 2022. The sample was limited to English language articles published by non- Indonesian news outlets. In total, 33 articles published between 2016 and 2021 were collected. Then, in 2022, there was an addition of 65 articles up to April.

The research began with a Boolean search using keywords such as: RUU PKS; Indonesia Elimination of Sexual Violence bill; and, Indonesia sexual violence. Data was analyzed using the QDA Miner Lite software.

Results

Similar to Indonesian online media, foreign online media also gave very little coverage to the RUU PKS from 2016 to 2021, amounting only to 33 articles. However, this number spiked in April 2022, with 65 articles covering the passing of the Sexual Violence Crime Law. Figure 1 highlights the coverage topics per year and shows how in 2022 not only did the number of media coverage increase significantly, but it also expanded geographically.

Each year, the articles focused on the specific recent cases of sexual violence and mentions how the Elimination of Sexual Violence bill is yet to be passed, stating Indonesia's conservative and patriarchal culture as the reason why the bill keeps being neglected. In 2022, there was coverage about another recent sexual violence crime involving a teacher of religion, who had raped 13 students. However, the media also reported, with a positive tone, the passing of the Sexual Violence Crime Law, deeming it as a victory over fundamentalism, and saying that neighboring countries should follow this example.

Figure 1. Highlights of foreign media coverage

Year	No. of articles	Countries	Highlights
2016	3	Great Britain, USA, Australia	Mainly about <u>Yuyun</u> , a <u>14 year-old</u> student who went missing and was later found dead after being gang raped by 14 males. This case was then linked to the need for the sexual violence bill.
2017	1	ASEAN	<p>The cause of sexual violence in Indonesia is mostly because of the patriarchal society and the lack of laws with a gender perspective.</p> <p>The article also mentioned that Indonesia's sexual violence problem is not unique as it also happens in other ASEAN countries.</p> <p>The solution is to educate women and have more campaigns to uphold women's rights, and to change societal mindsets about women and gender.</p>
2018	3	Asia Pacific	Mentions the sexual violence victims of 1998 who are still awaiting justice, and the criminalization of homosexual relations under the Draft Revised Penal Code. The articles mostly discuss the need for the the sexual violence bill to be passed as soon as possible.
2019	16	USA, Singapore, Great Britain, Qatar, China, Hong Kong, Canada, Australia, Germany	<p>The case of <u>Baig Nuril</u>, a woman who experienced sexual abuse in her workplace but was sentenced to jail after sending the recorded evidence.</p> <p>Most articles discuss Nuril's seeking for the president's amnesty, and some articles also explain how the public has made donations for her to pay for her fines.</p> <p>Some other topics include the demand for the sexual violence bill to be passed soon as rape and other cases of sexual violence are rising.</p>
2020	7	USA, Canada, Asia Pacific, Australia, Cambodia	Mostly explained how people are demanding the government to pass the sexual violence bill as soon as possible. Some demonstrations have been held to pressure the government to pass the bill.

2021	3	Japan, Australia, Malaysia	<p>Reports about how sexual violence and marital rape cases are rising due to pandemic, which makes people have to stay at home.</p> <p>Indonesian citizen, including activists, were angry at the government because the latest draft of the sexual violence bill neglects the rights of the minority rights.</p>
2022	65	USA, Asia Pacific, France, Canada, England, Australia, Germany, Israel, India, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, South Africa, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Philippines, Japan, UAE, SE Asia	<p>Indonesia finally passes landmark sexual violence bill, overcoming conservative opposition.</p> <p>After a Teacher Was Convicted of Raping 13 Girls, Indonesia Finally Passed Sexual Violence Reform.</p>

The foreign online news media have consistently used all four levels of framing in their coverage. Upon analyzing the news coverage from 2016 to 2022, it can be concluded that the problem defined by foreign online media is the increased rate of sexual violence in Indonesia, and what causes this lingering problem is Indonesia's patriarchal culture and religious conservatism, evidenced by the conservative political parties that oppose the passing of this law. The foreign online media pass a moral judgement that Indonesia is facing a moral panic, and that by postponing the passing of the bill, the Indonesian government was neglecting the rights of the victims of sexual violence. Finally, the treatment recommended by these media is the passing of the Elimination of Sexual Violence bill. Figure 2 shows the frequency of framing codes per year, showing that the numbers relatively coincide with the number of coverages. This shows that throughout the years, the media have consistently applied the four levels of framing explained by Entman (1993).

Figure 2: Frequency of framing codes

Year	Problem definition	Cause diagnosis	Treatment recommendation	Moral judgment
2016	3	3	4	3
2017	1	1	1	1
2018	3	3	3	3
2019	15	16	15	15
2020	5	5	5	5
2021	3	3	3	3
2022	65	65	65	65

Conclusions

This research sought to answer the following research questions: How do online foreign media frame news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill? And; How has the framing of news about Indonesia's Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill shifted over time (2016-2022)?

After conducting a framing analysis using Entman (1993) four levels of framing on a total of 95 articles by foreign online news media, it is concluded that from 2016 to 2022, online foreign media have been consistently including the 4 elements of news framing as posited by Entman: Problem definition; Diagnosis of cause; Moral judgment, and; Treatment recommendation, as follows:

- Problem definition: Increased rate of sexual violence
- Diagnosis of cause: Indonesia's patriarchal culture, religious conservatism
- Moral judgement: Indonesian government neglecting the rights of the victims of sexual violence (including marital rape) by postponing the passing of the sexual violence bill. Moral panic.
- Treatment recommendation: RUU PKS (sexual violence bill) must be passed.
- Huge increase in the number of foreign media coverage in April 2022 due to the long-awaited passing of the RUU PKS.

Considering the low number of news coverage by both domestic and foreign media, in the case of the RUU PKS and the eventual passing of the Sexual Violence Crime law, it does not seem that foreign online media coverage had any effect on the policy-making decisions surrounding it. However, foreign media seemed to celebrate the long-awaited passing off the bill as a victory over fundamentalism.

As framing is often related to agendas, one may assume that the news framing of the newly passed Sexual Violence law serves the agenda of various national media in regards to the upcoming 2024 general elections. It is not yet clear what agenda this would serve to the foreign media. Further studies could investigate this issue. Also, future research could use different framing analysis models in order to analyze this issue more in-depth.

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