Media Framing on Indonesian Forest Fire in Three ASEAN Affected Neighboring Countries

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ABSTRACT: *In Indonesia, forest fires become a problem every year during the annual dry season, when fires are lit to clear and/or prepare land for agriculture. The smoke from the fires creates a haze that affects not only the area where land is being cleared but also neighboring countries since it travels with the wind. This study explores media framing related to haze that blanketed parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, through a qualitative content analysis of the news stories published in 2017 in three leading English newspapers from the three countries: The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), The Straits Times (Singapore) and The Star (Malaysia). A theoretical framework from Semetko & Valkernburg (2000) who suggest five media framing (conflict, responsibility, economic consequences, human interest, and morality) is used in the analysis. The research questions: What were the main frames used in the three newspapers from the three countries? The results indicate that responsibility was the most visible frame in the three newspapers. Alleged land clearance by plantation companies and individuals was the main theme associated with the responsibility frame.*

***Keyword:** haze, forest, fire, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia*

I. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, forest fires become a problem every year during the annual dry season, when fires are lit to clear and/or prepare land for agriculture. The smoke from the fires creates haze that affects not only the area where land is being cleared but also neighboring countries -Malaysia and Singapore- since it travels with the wind. Indonesia has in the last two decades become prone to widespread fires and haze during dry periods. Fires usually break out in regions with large plantation areas and land concessions.

At the root of the problem is the practice of land clearance known as slash and burn, the cheapest and fastest way to prepare land for agriculture. The methods are still commonly used to clear land for plantation expansion of palm oil, Indonesia's top export, where land is set on fire to clear it for new planting.

Fires occur mainly on peat swamp forests located in lowland areas of Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua, where the worst impacts of the fires and haze have been felt. Peat swamp forests are tropical ecosystems where saturated soils or frequent flooding prevents dead leaves and wood from fully decomposing. As this organic material slowly accumulates, it retains more water, becoming a giant sponge that holds in the moisture. Peat cannot burn as long as it remains wet. However, peat becomes susceptible to fire when they are drained. It is difficult to extinguish once fire starts on peat and it can smolder under the surface for months (The World Bank, 2015).

Indonesia is regularly hit by peat fires, and the country suffered some of its worst in 2015 when thousands peat fires raged across the country during the prolonged dry season brought on by the El Niño weather phenomenon. Stinging smoke from the illegal burning to clear land for palm oil and paper plantations blanketed parts of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia for over a month prompting school closures and disrupting sea and air travel in the region. The smog also forced some in Indonesia to flee their homes. The haze caused record air pollution levels in the region for months that year, pushing Indonesia to the verge of a national emergency.

Starting in July 2015, fires have burnt a total of 2,1 million hectares of land; 80 per cent in Sumatra and Kalimantan islands. As reported by Indonesian national disaster mitigation agency (BNPB) on 6 November, some 556,945 people suffer from acute respiratory infections and more than 43 million people have been

affected by the haze (OCHA, 2015). Neighbors Malaysia and Singapore, which were also badly affected by the haze in 2015, have reiterated their offers to assist Indonesia in its firefighting efforts (Chan, 2017).

Peat land fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan that led to the trans-boundary haze have been kept at bay since 2015.Government's efforts to extinguish fires hampered by combination of limited road access, water sources and fire-fighting facility as well as seasonal dry conditions exacerbated by the El Nino effect. On the heels of the 2015 fires, President Joko Widodo responded with some unprecedented measures, such as declaring a moratorium on peat land conversion even within existing concessions, and banning new oil palm plantation permits.

While the scope of fires in 2017 is still a far cry from 2015, analysts have predicted a return of the haze after a mostly haze-free year of 2016, when the rainy season lasted longer due to La Niña (Jong, 2017). In May 2017, President Widodo extended the moratorium on the issuance of new conversion permits for primary forest and peat lands, the third extension of the moratorium, which was established in 2011 under then President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Members of Association of South-East Asian Nation (ASEAN) agreed on the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) in 2002. This was a response to a haze crisis after huge forest fires in Indonesia between 1997 and 1998 created thick smog across neighboring countries (Tobing, 2017). At the time, fires burned some 45,000 square kilometers of forests in Kalimantan and Sumatra. The wind swept the acrid smoke across the region, polluting Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and even Thailand. The haze crisis happened in the midst of the devastating Asian Financial Crisis. The timing meant countries in the region struggled to cope with this disaster.

The thick haze engulfing parts of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore is also clouding diplomatic relations at least between Singapore and Indonesia. Under the Transboundary Haze Pollution Act (THPA) of 2014, Singapore last year demanded six suppliers of Indonesia's Asia Pulp and Paper Group for a questioning on their steps to prevent fires on their land. The action received fierce rejection from Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla who argued that Singapore could not take any legal action on its citizens especially when "the offence occurred in Indonesia." (Xinhua, 2016)

Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar echoed Kalla's statements saying that the ASEAN agreement on transboundary haze was multilateral between its country members. She also said that Singapore failed to show mutual respect to Indonesia's sovereignty.

This study explore the main frames, themes and emotions related to haze that blanketed the country as well as its neighboring countries, Malaysia and Singapore, through a qualitative content analysis of the news stories in three leading English newspapers from the three countries: The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), The Straits Times (Singapore) and The Star (Malaysia). In this qualitative content analysis, two theoretical frameworks will be used: (1) Semetko & Valkernburg's typology of frames (conflict, responsibility, economic consequences, human interest, and morality) and; (2) Nabi's emotion-as-frame perspective. The research questions were the following: What were the main frames, themes, and emotions used in the three newspapers from the three countries?

II. MEDIA FRAMING

Framing works similarly as a frame around a picture: attention gets focused and concentrated on what is important and relevant and away from external things in the field of view (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p.2). Media framing suggests how something is presented to the audience and influences the choices people make about how to process that information ("Framing theory", n.d.). Thus, in their news stories, reporters act as framers: they create a socially constructed process, producing their own vision of reality (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 2003). An impressive literature has helped our understanding of frames and framing effects over the past 25 years (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

Agenda-setting research shares with framing analysis a focus on the association between issues on public policy in the news and the public perceptions of these issues. However, framing analysis "expands beyond agenda-setting research into what people talk or think about by examining how they think and talk about issues

in the news" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 70).

Despite the fact that there is no single definition of framing or news frame, the various that have been utilized point up similar characteristics. News frames set the parameters in which citizens talk about public events (Tuchman, 1978, p. 4). They are conceptual instruments which media and individuals rely on to evaluate, convey and interpret information (Neuman et al., 1992, p. 60). Frames are to help audiences identify, locate, perceive and label information flow around them (Goffman, 1974, p. 21) and to narrow the political alternatives available to them (Tuchman, 1978, p. 156). News frames are persistent emphasis, selection and exclusion (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Framing is selecting some parts of an apparent reality to strengthen their salience so as to advance a specific problem definition, moral evaluation, causal interpretation, and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

A framing effect is one in which notable attributes of a message (selection of content, organization or thematic structure) render specific considerations applicable, bringing about their activation and use in evaluations (Price et al., 1997, p. 486). Put another way, framing effects are "changes in judgment engendered by subtle alterations in the definition of judgment or choice of problems" (Iyengar, 1987, p. 816). For example, experiments with question wording indicate that the framing of choices can have intense consequences for audiences' risk perception (Kahneman, 1984; Kahneman & Tversky, 1982). Frames have also been shown to form public perceptions of institutions or political issues. Depending on how the issue is framed in the survey question, the opinion of publics about certain issues can easily be swinged in different directions, (Saris, 1997).

The importance of certain frames in the news has been identified by a number of recent studies by focusing on their consequences for the public's meaning of issues and events (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Neuman et al., 1992; Norris, 1995). These studies have provided important information about the effects of frames or the occurrence. However, there isn't yet a standard arrangement of content analytic indicators that can be utilized to reliably gauge the commonness frames in the news (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Studies on business crisis news coverage highlight a visibility of attribution of responsibility, economic consequences and conflict frames. Other study indicated attribution of responsibility and conflict as the most visible frames in the Romanian and UK news articles (Coman & Cmeciu, 2014).

Studying developments in the news over time necessitate a reliable set of content analytic indicators. It is also used to study differences and similarities in the ways in which politics and other topics of international and national importance are framed in the news in different media outlets. There are two possible approaches to content analyzing frames in the news: deductive and inductive (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

A deductive approach includes predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to confirm the extent to which these frames happen in the news. Since the frames that are not defined from the earlier might be disregarded, this strategy makes it important to have a clear thought of the sorts of frames likely to be in the news. This approach can be duplicated effortlessly, can easily recognize differences in framing between media and can cope with large samples (e.g., TV versus press) and within media (e.g., tabloid-style media vs. highbrow news programs or newspapers).

The inductive approach endeavor to uncover the variety of possible frames that includes analyzing a news story with an open view, starting with very loosely defined preconceptions of these frames. This technique is labor intensive, frequently in light of small samples, and can be hard to repeat however it can identify the numerous conceivable ways in which an issue can be framed (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The literature to date focus on the existence of one or another frame in the news and its consequences for public opinion. Many studies recognized a handful of frames that happen regularly in the news, *despite the fact that not really at the same time* (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For example, the attribution of responsibility in the news has been the subject of much discussion (Iyengar, 1991) as well as the conflict frame (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Patterson, 1993). A recent study by Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) is a special case in that several different frames that were regular in U.S. news coverage of a scope of issues were identified including conflict, human impact, morality frames and economic consequences.

A research by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) extends the study of Neuman et al. (1992) by looking at the

occurrences of the various frames that have been talked in the earlier literature. They elaborate on the *hypothetical* work of Iyengar (1991), who explicitly measured how audience members framed who was responsible for different social issues after they were presented to two sorts of news formats: "thematic" news, which alludes to more contextual, analytical or historical coverage and "episodic" news, which alludes to particular events.

An additional review of the literature about the nature of news in the U.S. and Europe confirmed that the aforementioned frames largely account for all the frames that have been found in the news (Nossiter, Scammell, & Semetko, 1994; Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch, & Weaver, 1991; Brants & Neijens, 1998). The literature, therefore, affords us the chance to opt for the second, deductive approach to evaluate the pervasiveness of frames in the news. In particular, this study researched the following five news frames that have been recognized in earlier studies: responsibility frame, conflict, human-interest, economic consequences and morality frame.

Responsibility frame. This frame demonstrates an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to a government, group or an individual. As indicated by Iyengar (1987), the U.S. news media have been credited with (or reprimanded for) shaping public understanding of who is in charge of causing or taking care of key social issues, such as unemployment, poverty or racial inequality.

Conflict frame. This frame underlines the contention and conflict between people, groups, or organizations as a means of catching audience interest. According to Neuman (et al.1992, pp. 61–62), the media draw on a few central frames for reporting a range of issues. He found that conflict was the most common in the handful of frames in U.S. news they identified. Another research has also studied that talk show among political elites frequently reduces political debates with complex content to *oversimplified* conflict. For instance, campaign news of presidential election is framed to a great extent as conflict (Patterson, 1993). The news media have been lashed out for inciting public cynicism and pessimism as well as mistrust of political leaders as a result of conflict accentuation in the news (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). This research is interested in determining how visible a conflict frame in respect to other common frames in the news.

Human-interest frame. Editors and reporters are at pains to create a product that catches and holds audience interest as the market for news wherever turns out to be more competitive (Bennett, 1995). Frame of human-interest brings an emotional angle or a human face to the presentation of an issue, event, or problem. Neuman et al. (1992) depicted this as the human effect frame, and, next to conflict, found it to be a typical frame in the news. Keeping in mind the end goal to catch and hold audience interest, media utilize such a frame with an end goal to personalize the news, emotionalize or dramatize the news. Framing news in human-interest terms is one approach to accomplish this.

Economic consequences frame. This frame reports an issue, event, or problem in terms of the consequences it will have monetarily or economically on a country, region, organization, group or an individual (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). As indicated by Graber (1993), an event with the wide impact is an important news value, and economic impact are frequently considerable and significant. Neuman et al. (1992) also identify economic consequence as a common frame in the news.

Morality frame. This frame of morality puts an issue, problem or event with regard to or in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions. Reporters and editors frequently make reference to moral frames indirectly by having another person raise the question pertaining to certain issue, problem or event in order to maintain the professional norm of objectivity (Neuman et al., 1992). For instance, media could utilize the perspective of an interest group to raise issues about sexually transmitted diseases. Such a report or story may contain moral messages about how to behave or particular social prescriptions. Neuman et al. (1992, p. 75) recognized this frame as among the few utilized in reporting however they found this frame to be more typical in audiences' minds than in the substance of news.

In spite of the fact that the presence of a responsibility frame in the news has not been measured unequivocally, Iyengar (1991) contended that TV news offer individual-level explanations for social problems

by covering an issue or problem in terms of an event, instance, or individual (episodically) rather than in terms of the larger historical social context (thematically). Thus, the poor man on welfare is held responsible for his fate, rather than the system or the government (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000: 96).

According to Nabi (2003, p. 227) the framing of issues may be linked to emotions since they shape one's understanding and interpretation as well as provide an affective insight into the thoughts or events. Kim & Cameron (2011) expanded Nabi's "emotion-as-frame" hypotheses to *the setting of corporate emergency circumstances*. They found that the persons exposed to sadness-inducing news tended to have less negative attitudes toward the responsible company than those exposed to the anger-inducing news.

III. METHODS

This research investigated the main frames and themes related to haze emanating from forest fire in Indonesia that covered the country as well as Malaysia and Singapore through a qualitative content analysis of the news stories in three leading English newspapers from the three countries: The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), The Straits Times (Singapore) and The Star (Malaysia). The analysis was conducted on the news of forest fires in the three newspapers throughout 2017. The search for forest fire articles in the three newspapers was conducted using the Google search engine.

The Star is the biggest paid for an English-language newspaper in terms of circulation with tabloid-format in Malaysia. *As indicated by* the Audit Bureau of Circulations, Malaysia (2015), the Star has a daily circulation of around 250,000 while the E-paper version of The Star is the most well known paid e-paper in Malaysia, having circulation of more than 100,000. The Star is *additionally* published online for free, The Star Online. The website was awarded in 2014 as *truly outstanding* in Asia by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). The online version functions as the foundation of an online community that has a million strong following in social media including Facebook and Twitter (The Star Online, n.d.).

First published on July 15, 1845, the Straits Times is the most *broadly perused daily paper* in Singapore and it is one of the region's oldest English-language daily newspapers. The Straits Times is the flagship publication of the publicly listed Singapore Press Holdings group. The Sunday Times, which is produced by the same team of journalists, has a readership of 1.43 million and a circulation of 365,800 (The Straits Time, n.d.). The media said on its site that it endeavors to be *a legitimate* provider of news and *perspectives*, with special focus on Singapore and the Asian region.

With a circulation currently of about 40,000, the Jakarta Post has been described as being Indonesia's leading English-language daily (Eklof, 2003). The paper was one of the few Indonesian English-language dailies to survive the 1997 Asian financial crisis.The Jakarta Post has won several awards and it was considered one of the most credible newspapers in Indonesia. The paper was also noted for being a training ground for local and international reporters (Tarrant, 2008).*Despite the fact that* the middle-class Indonesian readership has increased, the newspaper's main readership target is foreigners and educated Indonesians. In 2006, the Reporters Union of Indonesia recognized The Jakarta Post as being one of the Indonesian daily papers that best followed the journalism standards and ethics. The paper got the Adam Malik Award in January 2009 for their reporting on foreign politics; the coverage was considered educated and accurate and, with good analysis (Pakpahan, 2009).

IV. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

As talked about before, there are two conceivable ways to deal with content analyzing frames in the news: inductive and deductive. The inductive approach involves analyzing a news story with an open view to attempt to uncover the variety of possible frames, starting with very loosely defined preconceived idea of these frames. A deductive approach involves predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to *confirm the degree to which these* frames appear in the news. This study will use analysis with both a deductive and an inductive method. Through a deductive approach we will utilize Semetko & Valkernburg's frames, as analytical variables so as to check to which degree these five frames (responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequence, morality frame) are visible in the articles of the media and in the public's comments.

Through an inductive approach, an in-depth analysis of the articles will be provided *keeping in mind the end goal to accentuate* the themes and emotions *identified with* the frames. The author and two other assistants served as coders. There is always a risk that different researchers draw dissimilar conclusions from the same data. In this study, at least two investigators should perform the analysis separately (read and code the articles and comments independently) and constantly discuss the findings and obtain consensus in order to increase the validity. This type of checking may serve as the quantitative "inter-coder reliability" within a qualitative analysis and it is essential for meeting the criteria of conformability and credibility (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). The research questions were the following: What were the main frames, themes, and emotions used in The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), The Straits Times (Singapore) and The Star (Malaysia) on the Indonesian's haze?

V. RESULTS

The analysis was conducted on the news of forest fires in the three newspapers throughout 2017. The search for forest fires in the three newspapers was conducted using the Google search engine that produced 45 articles. The Jakarta Post publishes 16 news headlines, The Straits Times 25 news and The Star 4 news. Responsibility was the most visible frame in the three newspapers. Alleged land clearance by plantation companies and individuals was the main theme associated with the responsibility frame.

The news articles described the parties involved (plantation companies, police, government and individuals), the reproaches brought to plantation companies or individuals, and the casualties were those affected by the smoke: "The President's order for strict law enforcement against forest burners has fallen on deaf ears as evident from the frequent halting of police investigations into forest fires implicating corporations and individuals, usually citing a lack of evidence" (The Jakarta Post, August 11); "Indonesian police have nabbed more than 450 suspects in connection with land and forest fires this year, as part of a wider move to get tough on errant farmers and companies that still insist on using the outlawed slash-and-burn land-clearing method. Indonesia's chief detective Ari Dono Sukmanto on Thursday said that besides the 454 suspects, a number of people linked to nine companies that allegedly 'started the fires' were also arrested" (The Straits Times, August 25); "In the few cases courts have found corporations guilty and sentenced them to hefty fines, a higher court then overturned the conviction" (The Star, August 13).

The frequent mention of land clearance by plantation companies may be closely linked to the attribution of responsibility frame. The types of local, national and international plantation companies responsibility were the most visible themes associated with this frame. Among the largest companies frequently mentioned were Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) and Asia Pacific Resources International Limited (April) whose executives in Singapore offices also suffered from the choking smoke coming from their backyard.

The Straits Times issued 16 stories (61.5%) pertaining to the responsibility frame during the course of 2017. The Singaporean newspaper especially grilled APP and April in their reports:"Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister on Monday urged Singapore-based pulpwood company April to meet stricter rules aimed at protecting fragile, flammable peatlands, a major source of choking annual haze" (The Straits Times, October 23); "APP, for example, is Indonesia's largest pulp and paper company, and one of the firms blamed for the record-breaking haze in the region in 2015. Since then, the Singapore Government has served APP with several legal notices under the Republic's Transboundary Haze Pollution Act, but has yet to receive a satisfactory response from APP" (The Straits Times, July 13).

The Star published 10 stories (38.5%) with regard to the responsibility frame as palm oil plantation companies bore the ultimate responsibility and stood at the center of the smoke problem: "Indonesia is pushing to ban new palm oil operations after last year's haze-belching forest fires were partly blamed on the industry's expansion, but producers are warning the move could hit the economy and green groups are sceptical. "(The Star, May 1); "At the heart of the problem are palm oil plantation owners, who use cheap and easy slash-and-burn techniques to clear forests and meet rising global demand for the oil used for cooking and in household products from shampoo to ice cream" (The Star, Oct 1); "Some 1.7 million ha of forest and plantation land have been razed by fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan this year, mostly as a result of firms opting for the cheap slash-

and- burn alternative to hiring bulldozers and other machines to clear land" (The Star, Oct 13). Malaysian newspapers implied any companies in general while it reported what happened in its neighboring country:"Singapore has served notice to six Indonesian companies it believes may have cleared land by burning but could target others as investigations continue" (The Star, July 3).

The Jakarta Post issued five stories (31%) pertaining to the responsibility frame. The Indonesian newspaper didn't mention any names but it referred to any companies in general: "The government had set deadlines for industrial forest (HTI) concessionaires to immediately submit a revision of their work plans that had previously been rejected because, for example, it outlined a plan to cultivate in peatland areas intended for conservation" (The Jakarta Post, July 28). Apart from the plantation companies, the newspaper also blamed the weak enforcement of environmental law that push the rise of the forest fires: "The inability of the police and prosecutors to convince courts of the criminal offenses in forest-fire cases on the one hand, and the judges' decisions to ignore incriminating evidence on the other, may not necessarily indicate bribery, but more their lack of knowledge and understanding about the 2009 Environment Law, which criminalizes people who harm the environment" (The Jakarta Post, August 11).

The conflict frame was visible only in two newspapers, The Straits Times and The Star, while The Jakarta Post didn't show any conflict. The Straits Times run three stories (18.8%) on conflict frame that highlight the dispute between the Indonesian government and PT RAPP, a subsidiary of April, a Singapore-based pulpwood company. For example: "Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya told The Straits Times on Monday that PT RAPP breached a deadline where they needed to adjust their work plan to the existing regulation, and opted to follow their own version of the law. At the heart of the dispute is a decree issued in February this year. The law, aimed at encouraging plantation firms to shift off deep peatlands, says that companies with plantations on deep peat cannot replant on their concession lands after the next harvest. Instead, they must work with the ministry to negotiate land swaps to replant on non-peatlands" (The Straits Times, Oct 23). The Star published two stories (7.7%) on conflict frame as the media implied that the city-state's efforts to punish Indonesian companies under its own anti-haze law have become a conflict point with its neighboring country. For example, the Star wrote: "Singapore is refusing to back down in its pursuit of those responsible for haze-belching forest fires in South-East Asia last year, despite struggling to bring the perpetrators before the courts and drawing a sharp rebuke from neighboring Indonesia" (The Star, July 4).

The economic consequence frame was displayed in the three newspapers although in a small number. The Star published two stories that highlight the economic consequence of forest fire on palm oil production as one of Indonesia's major export backbone, for example: "The proposed moratorium on new concessions is the latest move by (President) Widodo aimed at reducing environmental destruction caused by the industry and halting the annual smog outbreaks. But the Indonesian Palm Oil Association warned that the ban could damage a mainstay of Southeast Asia's biggest economy that supports 24 million jobs, directly or indirectly" (The Star, May 2). The Jakarta Post indicated the economic consequence of the forest fires in the following line: "The fire season of 2015 saw the nation's worst-ever haze crisis, which angered neighboring Singapore and Malaysia and caused Rp 221 trillion in economic losses to the country, an amount equal to 1.9 percent of national GDP in that year" (The Jakarta Post, January 24).The Straits Times highlighted huge economic loss suffered by Indonesian in 2015: "The 2015 fires were among the worst on record, straining ties with neighbors and costing Indonesia an estimated 220 trillion rupiah (S$23.4 billion) in economic losses, or about 1.9 per cent of gross domestic product, Mr Joko's office has said" (The Straits Times, January 25).

Human interest frame showed up only in one story in the Straits Times entitled 'Joint effort results in canal block that helps prevent peat land fires' and it said: "A group of Singaporeans has been digging up dirt with hoes and machetes in a remote Sumatra village to help stop haze from developing. The 13 volunteers from Singapore environmental group People's Movement to Stop Haze (PM.Haze) were in Sungai Tohor, a small coastal village in Riau province, earlier this month". (The Straits Times, May 23).

VI. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Responsibility was the most visible frame in the three newspapers. The Straits Times issued 16 stories (61.5%) pertaining to the responsibility frame during the course of 2017. The Star published 10 stories (38.5%) while The Jakarta Post issued five stories (31%). The second most visible is conflict frame with The straits Times isssued three stories (11.5%); The Star 2 articles (7.6%) but The Jakarta Post came with no stories on conflict frame. The last visible frame is economic consequence and the three newspapers published stories using this particular framing. The Star reported two stories (7.7%) on forest fires and it portrayed the issue using economic consequence framing while The Straits Times and The Jakarta Post issued one story respectively on the issue. The three newspapers published no stories on morality frame.

Tabel 1: Summary of Newspapers Framing on Forest Fires

Media	Conflict frame	Responsi-bility frame	Human-int. frame	Economic Cons.frame	Morality frame	Objective frame	Total
The Straits Times	3 (11.5%)	16 (61.5%)	1 (3.8%)	1 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	5 (19.2%)	**26 (100%)**
The Star	2 (7.6%)	10 (38.4%)	0 (0%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	12 (46.1%)	**26 (100%)**
The Jakarta Post	0 (0%)	5 (31.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	10 (62.5%)	**16 (100%)**

The three newspapers also published stories considered objective since the framing motives either conflict, responsibility, human interest, economic consequence and morality frames in the three newspapers were hard to detect. Thus, the three newspapers publish enough objective news that is difficult to be categorized into one of the existing framing. This research found 10 objective stories (62.5%) in The Jakarta Post, 12 stories (46.2%) in the Star and five stories (19.2%) in the Straits Times. Thus The Jakarta Post is the most objective newspaper in reporting the issue of forest fires throughout 2017. Table 1 presents a summary of news framing of the three newspapers. The human interest frame is used only on one story published by The Straits Times while the morality frame was not present in the three newspapers.

This study provides results that are not too different from previous research such as studies by An & Gower (2009) dan Valentini & Romenti (2011) on business crisis news coverage which highlighted a visibility of attribution of responsibility, economic consequences and conflict frames, and also a study by Coman andCmeciu (2014) on Chevron Protests in National and International Press that also highlighted attribution of responsibility and conflict. The findings also indicated that the three media imply that haze and forest fires are human intention not a natural disaster. The news of this intended natural disaster dominated all the news pertaining to haze and forest fires. The press generally imply that the appearance of a hotspot is purely occuring because it is deliberately burned or purposefully inflicted.

Based on the secondary data, there are several notes to be considered as the following. First, haze caused transportation disruptions in Southeast Asia region as well as widespread health problems, visibility and other socioeconomic issues. With varied intensities, transboundary haze pollution affects about half of the countries in this region and on an almost annual basis (Varkkey, 2017). The fires and haze have been an environmental issue in the region since the late 1990s. Efforts to prevent forest fires and haze from returning in the years to come have been an important agenda for the Indonesian government.

Second, within the context of environmental issue, fires and haze can be viewed through the broad lens of national interest. There is a strong connection between the severity of haze and the burgeoning agribusiness sectors in the region, which of oil palm in particular. Palm oil is a very important commodity in the region with Malaysia and Indonesia making up almost 90% of total global output. Hence, national interest and business theories have frequently been utilized as research frameworks in this region, with plantation companies frequently being the unit of analysis (Varkkey, 2017).

This study reveals three frames as the most visible in the three newspapers under study: attribution of responsibility, conflict and economic consequences. These results are much in line with previous studies on business crisis news coverage that highlight a visibility of attribution of responsibility, economic consequences and conflict frames (An & Gower, 2009; Valentini & Romenti, 2011). Other study indicated attribution of responsibility and conflict as the most visible frames in the Romanian and UK news articles (Coman & Cmeciu, 2014).

Newspapers in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have framed the haze issue that befall the three countries. The result of the research shows that there is no tendency of each media to defend their country's interest. This indicates that each medium is mature enough and professional without any effort to display a positive image for its own country and blame other countries. The newspapers of the three countries agreed to recommend the need for cooperation between countries in overcoming the haze.

In the case of Indonesia, of course, the framing by The Jakarta Post on forest fires and haze issues in 2017 cannot represent other media in Indonesia. The other media use different framing in presenting forest and land fires. For example, some media highlighted the figure of Forestry and Environment Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar in their framing. This can be seen from some of the news collected, for example, from the page metrotvnews.com, Metro TV's official website. The results showed that the majority of the news published upon the case of forest fires and haze accentuated the figure and the role of Siti Nur Baya Bakar as minister of forestry in the era of President Joko Widodo. The figure of the forestry minister adorns the news with a positive image considered responsible and assertive in the issue.

Another thing to note is that the media in Indonesia, including The Jakarta Post, are more likely to report forest fires and haze from Riau Province than from other areas that are also experiencing forest fires (Nursanto, 2016). This is of course not solely due to accessibility to news sources in Riau more widely than other regions, such as West Kalimantan which has a landscape surrounded by forests and rivers, making it difficult for journalists to reach the site. The main reason is that forest and land fire smokes in Riau lead straightly to the heart of Singapore and Malaysia, in contrast to the smoke coming from West Kalimantan that leads to the less populated area of Sarawak or the South China Sea.

The Government of Indonesia for a variety of reasons gives special attention to Malaysia and Singapore. This special attention is shown by President Yudhoyono's apology to both countries. "I as the President of the Republic of Indonesia apologizes and ask for understanding of our brothers in Singapore and in Malaysia" (Kompas 24 June 2013). President Yudhoyono also asked all state officials not to give an undue statement, such as mentioning the presence of plantation companies from Malaysia and Singapore that burn to clear the land in Riau (Kompas 24 June 2013).

The attention shown by the country's highest leader has given enough reason that the fire in Riau has more news value than in other areas. Based on these reasons it can be concluded that the incessant coverage of forest fires in Riau cannot be separated from its higher news value compared to other provinces. The strategic position of Riau Province in relation to its neighbors and the attention of the country's supreme leader is a factor that has a major influence.

Another important thing to note is that the three newspapers tend to talk more about countermeasures than prevention (Nursanto, 2016). Framing like this can lead to the public opinion that countermeasures are more important than prevention so that people will focus more on countermeasures efforts than prevention. This condition is likely to allow forest and land fires reoccur because the public (the community) is more oriented to prevention after a fire occurs than prevention efforts to prevent the fire from occurring.

The three newspapers also reported how to deal with forest fires by demonstrating efforts to extinguish the fire. Fires extinguished manually by using fire trucks. Firefighting took place not only on the soil but also in the air including water bombs and making artificial rain. There are also efforts to utilize the surrounding environment to prevent fires from spreading by making trenches and burning bulkheads. Water bombs were carried out to speed up firefighting, especially at certain points with bigger fires and are difficult to reach by using helicopters or planes. Artificial rain is not much different from water bombs, artificial rain is done by

helicopter or plane.

The smoke haze resolution recommended by the three online newspapers in the three countries is to build cooperation between ASEAN countries. Malaysia and Singapore have stated that they are willing to provide direct assistance in overcoming haze in Indonesia. But Indonesian was not too eager to accept the offer. Indonesian newspapers prioritize law enforcement efforts in an attempt to overcome forest fires by plantation companies or other parties involved.

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