

## When Media Owning Sports Club: *Republika* Editorial Policy in News Coverage about Inter Milan and Satria Muda

Fadlan A. Ramadan and Narayana M. Prastya

*Communication Science Department, Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences, Universitas Islam Indonesia*  
[narayana@uui.ac.id](mailto:narayana@uui.ac.id)

### Abstract

This paper aims to know about content of the news and editorial policy in *Republika*, when the media coverage news about Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina. Both of the sport teams are owned by Erick Thohir, the boss of *Republika*. Based on literature, the interest of mass media owner and newsroom policy often difference. Because mass media owner have their goals, meanwhile the newsroom should obey the professional journalism standard. At the practice, the newsroom make usually make a compromise.

This paper uses qualitative research methods. The data collecting technique are using documentary research and interviews. The documentary research held by collecting and analyzing news about Inter Milan and Satria Muda in *Republika* daily newspaper (print edition). The time period for Inter Milan news is August 2014 to October 2015 while Satria Muda in January to June 2016. At the time frame, both club did not win any competition that they were participated. So, at that time the club was in the negative period. The interviews held with the representative of the *Republika* sport section editor to confirm the result from text analysis.

As the findings from text analysis, *Republika* always brings good news to Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina, although both team was not winning the competition, and there were relatively much negative results in the single season. *Republika* explained that they have direct access to news sources from Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina directly. So *Republika* will gain more information from both club than the other media. Not only in sporting theme (e.g. match results, preview, review), *Republika* sometimes deliver the news about the figure of Erick Thohir.

**Keywords:** *editorial policy, media ownership, sport journalism, sport communication*

### INTRODUCTION

Mass media ownership will always become interesting issue to discuss, because sometimes a conflict arises in the relationship between the media owners to the newsroom. Conflicts that occur because media owner wants their interest to be reported, while the newsroom should obey the journalism ethics values

Interventions of media owners is very strong, especially in a profit-oriented media. Owners profit-oriented media have tremendous power toward the media contents, and can ask the editor to or not to coverage particular issue, in accordance with the interest of the owner. To achieve these objectives, the inevitable media owners then make policies, rules to be followed by its media workers. In addition, the pressures sometimes come in informally and indirectly on

certain issues relating to the media owner (McQuail, 2010: 291).

In Indonesia, a study about the influence of media ownership to the editorial policy, often talking about political themes (e.g. Souisa, 2017). This paper will discuss on a different issue, about the sport themes. Because the number of owners (and corporate) media also owning a sport institution.

This paper discusses the editorial policy of *Republika* in delivering news about the Italian football club Inter Milan and the Indonesian basketball club Satria Muda. All three entities owned by the same people, Erick Thohir. He is the owner of Inter Milan from November 2013 to October 2018. While in the basketball club Satria Muda, Erick Thohir is president of the club (writers note : at least until June 10, 2019, as of this writing is done – writers).

This paper uses qualitative research methods. The data retrieval technique are using documentary research and interviews. The documentary research held by collecting and analyzing news about Inter Milan and Satria Muda in *Republika* daily newspaper (print edition). The time period for Inter Milan news is August 2014 to October 2015 while Satria Muda in the month of January to June 2016. The reason for choosing that time frame is when the two clubs did not win any competition. With zero-achievement (count from the title that the club win) conditions, the authors assume there are problems at both clubs. It will be interesting to know how the news about both club is being delivered and and the editorial policy in *Republika*.

We use frame Robert N. Entman model for the news analysis. According to Entman (2007: 164-165), framing is a process to select some elements of reality, giving the salience toward certain fact, and then collect a narrative that shows the interrelationship between these realities. The goal is bring a particular interpretation. This makes framing can be a tendency of news (news slant), the news reports were more likely to favor one thing and pulled the other stuff in the latest issue or things that might potentially be a problem ,

Furthermore, framing influence the media agenda setting (Entman, 2007). Agenda policy settings related to the media, so it needs confirmation to the media after making a text analysis. The results from news analysis later

confirmed by interviews with representatives from *Republika* sports section editor, Mr. Abdullah Sammy. The interview took place in *Republika* Office in Jakarta, the time is May 29, 2017.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part, writers will describe several literatures that discuss mass media company owning sport organization, or have an indirect interest in the sport organization. Sport organization consists of: sports club, organizers of the competition, and the federation. All literatures that being described here are discussing case in Indonesia

The first literature discusses football club Persiba Bantul owned by Idham Samawi. He also become the owner of *Kedaulatan Rakyat* Daily Newspaper. In news coverage about Persiba, *Kedaulatan Rakyat* not only give information about the results, fixtures of the game, but also provides information aimed at forming a positive image for the owner. The owner has big influence in spreading the club nicknamed "Laskar Sultan Agung". The researcher found that there is a indirect pressure toward the KR newsroom to deliver the good news about Persiba (Pasopati, 2012: 123).

The second literature discuss about relation between *Java Pos* newspaper and competition organizer for teenagers named Deteksi Basketball League (DBL). The position for Director of *Java Pos* and DBL Commissioner held by the same person, Azrul Ananda. These conditions make the practice of journalism ethics in *Java Pos* becomes faded, because the media coverage has become less objective, less independent, and less balanced. News about DBL in *Java Pos* are so massive and presents only the positives aspects, because it will give the message more to promote DBL (Dharmawan, 2013: 76-80).

The third literature discusses about ownership of broadcasting rights for sports competitions influencing the news coverage. The case is the dualism of Indonesian football competition (between the Indonesian Premier League and Indonesia Super League) in 2011-2012. Television stations broadcast rights holders to protect their business interests. *MNC TV* is official broadcasting channel of LPI, and *ANTV* become the official broadcasting station for ISL. In the era of media convergence, it is

becoming increasingly widespread bias, as is also done by the media that the media holding company with rights holders. As a result, all the media are under the corporation MNC Group presents the news in a positive LPI. The same condition happened in Viva Media Group. One of Viva Media Group members, *ANTV* television channel, is the official broadcaster of ISL. So all the media company under Viva Media Group give positive tone toward the news about ISL (Putra, et.al., 2016)

The fourth literature discusses about media owner that also have an interest in sports federations. This happened when the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) led by Nurdin Halid, who also member of Golkar Party. There is also the media in question is *tvOne*, which is owned by the Bakrie, chairman of the Golkar party (at that time). In 2011, the PSSI in trouble. But once *tvOne* news tend to support the PSSI. This is caused by the conflict of interest at the level of ownership of *tvOne*, the Bakrie Group, to the management of PSSI. In news gathering activities, *tvOne* choose news sources that give information that favorable to the interest of Bakrie / PSSI. In the news processing activities, many interventions that accommodate the interests of the media elite. So, the news from *tvOne* is inaccurate and unbalanced. (Wibowo, 2014 : 60-63).

From the literatures that already mentioned above, there is one common thing : problems relating to the ethics of journalism, when the media owner is also the owner of a health institution. A finding from Souisa (2017 : 47) research stated that mass media has a strategic position, so that can be easily used as instrument to achieve owner's interests.

The question of journalistic ethics practice has indeed been raised in the era of the sports industry. Coakley (2003 : 440) reveals that sports journalists confront sensitive issues. In the one side, the demands of the profession make journalists must remain critical; but in the other side should not damage the reputation of a resource. This condition make the sports journalists are in a "grey area" where the guidelines on ethics sports journalist is not clear. These conditions make the sports journalists only occasionally, or even very rarely have the opportunity to do investigative reporting to uncover specific cases in sport.

In another literature, Oates and Pauly (2007: 336-339) stated that in particular, critics fault the ethics of sports reporting because of its powerful commitment to narrative, its blurring of distinctions between news and advertising, and its acceptance of promotional stunts. Sports journalism's acceptance of narrative invention also challenges another foundational ideal of journalism by ignoring the professional ideology that wishfully and inaccurately separates editorial and business interests. To separate the business from the editorial function is quite evidently not in place for most sports journalism, which is foundationally promotional of itself and its corporate partners (the teams and leagues) in its coverage.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1 News analysis for Inter Milan

Analysts on the findings of *Republika* text frame by selecting Inter Milan *Republika* highlight the issue and how the issue, researchers divided into two categories: news Inter Milan linked with Inter Milan competition and news related to Erick Thohir. At the news Inter Milan linked with competition *Republika* framing the news of the proclamation lack of consistency in the game Inter Milan is a natural thing because of the change of the coaching chair Inter Milan are now taken care of by Roberto Mancini and optimism Inter Milan framed by *Republika* as define problems, then Roberto Mancini as diagnoses causes because it can not give the victory,

The next category is reporting Inter Milan linked with Erick Thohir. *Republika* framing the issue of Inter Milan is still owned by Erick Thohir for their purchases rumors back to Inter Milan Moratti and *Republika* framing act improperly from Sampdoria president Massimo Ferrero has mengina Erick Thohir as define problems of this category. Then *Republika* framing Massimo Ferrero mengina Erick Thohir as diagnoses causes, Massimo Moratti to support the policy Erick Thohir and *Republika* illustrates that Erick Thohir have a good quality as a make moral judgments, to finish define problems, in every news *Republika* write treatment Recommendation that Moratti leave a response.

**Table 1. Frame Summary for news about Inter Milan**

<b>Category</b>	<b><i>define Problems</i></b>	<b><i>Diagnoses Causes</i></b>	<b><i>Make Moral Judgment</i></b>	<b><i>treatment Recommendation</i></b>
<b>Competition</b>	<i>Republika</i> framing lack of consistency in the match Inter Milan is a natural thing. And <i>Republika</i> framing optimism Inter Milan in the running of the competition.	<i>Republika</i> figure includes Roberto Mancini because it can not provide a victory for Inter Milan.	<i>Republika</i> describe Erick Thohir as club president who supports Mancini and Roberto Mancini have quite a long time to reach the target.	<i>Republika</i> see Erick Thohir give chance to Mancini and their purchasing and loaning players to repair squad Inter Milan.
<b>Erick Thohir</b>	<i>Republika</i> framing tends to accentuate that Inter Milan is still owned by Erick Thohir and act improperly carried out by the president of Sampdoria.	<i>Republika</i> accentuate the figure of Massimo Ferrero for insulting Erick Thohir.	<i>Republika</i> illustrates that Massimo Moratti support policies and Erick Erick Thohir are people who have a good quality.	<i>Republika</i> see that Moratti respond, then denied Inter Milan will buy back and Ferrero penalties and fines imposed by FIGC and Calcio.

## 2 News analysis for Satria Muda

Later in the text analyst findings Satria Muda Pertamina researchers divided into four categories on reports Satria Muda Pertamina in the newspaper *Republika* ie 2015-2016 season Satria Muda news related to the preparation IBL Pertamina, Pertamina's Satria Muda news related to the regular season, the news Satria Muda related Pertamina the play-offs, and peberitaan Satria Muda associated with Erick Thohir Pertamina. In the category of Pertamina's Satria Muda associated with the preparation of *Republika* IBL framing how Satria Muda Pertamina optimistic in the absence of foreign players in the mat IBL 2015-2016 as define problems for the 2015-2016 season is the only team that does not use a naturalized basketball player is just Satria Muda, then researchers noticed that the *Republika* frame on naturalized players or foreign regulations as diagnoses causes. *Republika* presented three consecutive news related to the new regulation of naturalized players in the IBL 2015-2016.

Satria Muda Pertamina became the only team with local players and Satria Muda Pertamina prefer local players from the foreign players as a make moral judgments, the senior players who will give guidance to junior players and the professional attitude of the players as a treatment Recommendation.

Furthermore, the second category, Satria Muda Pertamina news related to the regular season. Satria Muda framing *Republika* Games Pertamina still not consistent is a natural thing as define problems. The lack of a chemistry and transition players Satria Muda Pertamina is diagnoses causes which have been framed by *Republika* in this category, then Satria Muda Pertamina is the team under-dog for the whole skuatnya inhabited by local players the make moral judgments framed by *Republika*, and provide the exercise menu for to improve the game and using the Satria Muda style as part of the treatment recommendation.

In the third category, Satria Muda Pertamina news related to the play-offs. *Republika* framing one point as define problems, namely Pertamina Satria Muda lost two players when the round over time in both games against CLS Kinghts. Satria Muda *Republika* displays that Pertamina failed to advance to the final round of the diagnoses causes. Satria Muda stiff resistance from Pertamina and the promise of better suit Satria Muda slogan Pertamina as a make moral judgments, and appreciation of Satria Muda coach Pertamina as a treatment Recommendation.

Then the latter category, news coverage about Satria Muda associated with Erick Thohir Pertamina. After passing through several challenges Satria Muda Pertamina cruised into

the play-offs are defining problems are in the frame by *Republika*. Researchers looked *Republika* framing that there are two points to be diagnoses are some pemin core causes injuries and their players who are already retired. then season the toughest Satria Muda Pertamina and

Erick Thohir proud of the achievement of the Satria Muda Pertamina as a make moral judgments, and treatment Recommendation that has been framed by the leadership of *Republika* namely senior players in Satria Muda Pertamina.

**Table 2** Frame Summary for News about Satria Muda Pertamina

<b>Category</b>	<b><i>define Problems</i></b>	<b><i>Diagnoses Causes</i></b>	<b><i>Make Moral Judgment</i></b>	<b><i>treatment Recommendation</i></b>
<b>preparation for IBL competition</b>	Satria Muda <i>Republika</i> Pertamina optimistic frame without any foreign players.	<i>Republika</i> highlight how nanturalisasi players or foreign regulations.	Satria Muda <i>Republika</i> illustrates that Pertamina as the only team with local players and Satria Muda Pertamina prefer local players of the foreign players.	<i>Republika</i> look professional attitude of the players Satria Muda and the senior players who provide guidance to junior players.
<b>regular season</b>	<i>Republika</i> tend framing Satria Muda Games Pertamina still not consistent is reasonable	<i>Republika</i> highlight how the transition has not been established chemistry and the players Satria Muda Pertamina has not been formed.	<i>Republika</i> illustrates that the Satria Muda remain optimistic The next in-game action and Satria Muda Pertamina is the under-dog team for the entire skuatnya inhabited by local players.	<i>Republika</i> notice provides exercises to improve your game menu and use the Satria Muda style.
<b>Play-offs</b>	<i>Republika</i> framing this category namely Pertamina Satria Muda lost two players when the round over time.	<i>Republika</i> highlight how Satria Muda Pertamina failed to advance to the final round.	<i>Republika</i> describe Satria Muda gave a tough fight, presenting an attractive game and promise to play better suit the team slogan.	<i>Republika</i> see their appreciation of Satria Muda coach Pertamina.
<b>Erick Thohir</b>	<i>Republika</i> framing Satria Muda Pertamina cruised into the play-offs after going through some challenges.	<i>Republika</i> highlight that the core players were injured and several players who have already retired.	<i>Republika</i> illustrates that Erick Thohir proud with Satria Muda achievement Pertamina and this is the toughest season Satria Muda Pertamina.	<i>Republika</i> illustrates the leadership of the senior players in the Satria Muda Pertamina.

### 3 Discussion

As the findings on an analysis of how the text of *Republika* always brings good news to Erick Thohir, Satria Muda, and Pertamina. In this case *Republika* in presenting news and information, especially sports news Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina featuring news Inter Milan during the 2014-2015 season and for Satria Muda Pertamina in the 2016 season. *Republika* explained that they have access to news sources from Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina directly. So *Republika* will gain more information from both club than the other media. Not only in sporting theme (e.g. match results, preview, review), *Republika* sometimes deliver the news about the figure of Erick Thohir, when he leads both club.

In sum there are 150s news about Inter Milan in *Republika* (in this time period). Sometimes, news about club nicknamed "La Benemata" appeared in the economic and business section of *Republika*. In 2014-2015 season, Inter Milan face trouble. For example, *Republika* twice use theme "first defeat for Inter Milan", on December 2, 2014 and January 27, 2015 edition. If we check the fact, the defeat came in a single season. How come a team suffer their "first loss" twice in a single season? But, the media can create a meaning through the language that being used in the text.

When the club facing the trouble, then the interests of the club owner (who also owns the media) tried to be maintained. In 2014/2015 season, Inter Milan face the internal problem that force the management of club nicknamed *Nerazzurri* to make a replacement for the coach position, from Walter Mazzarri to Roberto Mancini. At the news Inter Milan factors that influence media content one of which factors influence the organization of the content. *Republika* assume that if there were issues relating to Erick Thohir and Inter Milan, *Republika* will soon ask the club for clarification because Inter is a club that is linked to the image of Indonesia.

The selection process of the various aspects of reality that a certain part of the event is more prominent than in other aspects. Protrusion certain aspects of an issue closely related to the writing of the facts. This process relates to the use of language in reality write to be read by the audience, the choice of certain

words used are not just technical but a political journalistic language (Eriyanto, 2002: 236).

We find the same pattern in news coverage about Satria Muda Pertamina. The basketball news in *Republika* just informed about Satria Muda Pertamina. This is the practice of *Republika* editorial policy, because *Republika* has full access to news sources from this basketball club. In 2015-2016 season, Satria Muda Pertamina suffer 12 defeats, but *Republika's* just deliver the news for five defeats. *Republika* claimed they can not cover all the Satria Muda game especially when the game is being played on the outside Jakarta city (Jakarta is the headquarter of *Republika*).

There are several factors that potentially affect or news-making context. In this case, we conclude that ownership become the factor that influence the *Republika* newsroom in delvier news about Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina. This findings also confirmed with literatures that stated mass media is being used by the owner to accommodate their (the owner's) interest (Souisa, 2017).

What *Republika's* done confirmed that when media companies also owning sport teams, it will affect the media content. The pressure from owner can come directly by the company rule or indirectly (McQuail, 2010; Pasopati, 2012). From our findings, we conclude that pressure does exist. It can be seen from the news theme and how *Republika* give salience towards both club. But, we admit we did not get the data about the pressure, whether is directly or indirectly. This is the handicap of our research.

In giving salience for particular theme, the mass media will choose the news sources or information sources that support their (the media's) interest, in this case is the owners interest (Wibowo, 2014). *Republika* use their access toward both clubs to gain information. So *Republika* can deliver the news that different than other media. In the one side, this access assist the media to deliver "exclusive news". The exclusive will attract more reader, and will help the media to gain more profit.

But the access, that come from the owners factor, can have a risk toward journalism practice. As cited before, sport journalism operate in grey area because the guidelines on ethics sports journalist is not clear (Coakley,

2003). The condition make more complex in this convergence era, because mass media companies also have another / non-media business (Souisa, 2017: 38).

When *Republika* try to "hide" the fact for seven times loss that suffered by Satria Muda Pertamina (only delivered the news about five times loss from 12 loss), it could be said that the act was against journalism ethics. But this condition is happened when the media owning sport organization, it will be difficult to practice journalism ethics in ideal way (Dharmawan, 2013). But in the other side, news bias in inevitable because mass media is being used by the owners to keep their business interest (Putra, *et.al*, 2016). The practice of journalism ethics become tricky, because to separate the business from the editorial function is quite evidently not in place for most sports journalism, which is foundationally promotional of itself and its corporate partners (the teams and leagues) in its coverage (Oates and Pauly, 2007)

Our findings show that the media tend to always give positive aspects for Inter Milan, Satria Muda, and Erick Thohir. *Republika* claimed their effort to keep the journalism ethics and standard with keep criticize team when the team is in positive trend. Meanwhile, when the team is in negative trends, *Republika* will support the team with constructive news. From this fact, we conclude that whether the owner's influence come in direct or indirect way, the media always delivered the news in the good sake of the owner's interest. In mass media company owning sport organization case the news content is about positive aspects and promotional aspects of the sport organization (Dharmawan, 2013; Oates and Pauly, 2007; Putra, *et.al*, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

From our research and discussion, we conclude that ownership factor influence the news content and editorial policy in *Republika* sport section. *Republika* tend to give salience about positive aspects from Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina, whatever the result the both teams gained. When the teams face negative period (e.g winless streak, did not qualify in the next round of the tournament, no title no silverware at the end of the season), *Republika* give a news in positive tone, in order to keep the positive image of the team.

Our research result has no significant difference if we compare with the previous research. When mass media also owning a sport organization, or have indirect interest toward sport organization, the news from the mass media will be bias. The content of the news will keep the media owner's interest. This condition will trigger problem toward the journalism ethics such as objectivity, balance, neutrality, etc.. Because to "create" a bias condition, mass media will decide whether information will be or will not be delivered.

The difference is on the sport organization that being owned. Inter Milan is an Italian football team. It different with previous research that discuss about local (Indonesian) football team. Although Italian football has many fans in Indonesia, but the fanaticism of Italian (and foreign) football club is lesser than local football team. Satria Muda Pertamina is basketball team. Basketball popularity in Indonesia, we assume as not as high football and or badminton. The popularity, the rivalry of basketball maybe as not as hype football.

We admit that this research have limitation(s). From the data collecting technique, we use formal interview to get information from *Republika* sport section editor. So the information is limited. We can not get the feel (of the pressure) in producing news about Inter Milan and Satria Muda Pertamina, because we did not conduct participatory observation technique in news producing process.

We admit that there is room for improvement to study and discussion about this theme. So, we give several advices for further research. *First*, research can use quantitative content analysis toward the news. From the quantitative content analysis, we can make a mapping to the issue, or we can measure the objectivity of the mass media when it coverage the news about club that owned by the media owner. *Second*, research can use participatory observation technique, in order to get direct experience about the news production process. But it is worth noting that this second advice is depend on the mass media, whether they give/or not give permission to the researcher. *Third*, it is also interesting to conduct the audience research. For example, how Inter Milan fans in Indonesia and/or Satria Muda fans seek information about their favorite team? Are they also looking for information about Inter Milan and/or Satria Muda by reading *Republika*?

Or how they response, evaluate, the quality of news about Inter Milan and/or Satria Muda, that being delivered by *Republika*?

## Reference

- Coakley, J. 2003. *Sports in Society Issues and Controversies, Eighth Edition*. New York : McGraw-Hill
- Dharmawan, A. 2013. "Komodifikasi Ruang Publik Pemuda: Tenggelamnya Generasi Muda dalam Bingkai DBL di Koran Jawa Pos" in Filosa Gita Sukmono (Editor). *Ekonomi Politik Media : Sebuah Kajian Kritis*. Yogyakarta: Lingkar Media
- Entman, R. 2007. "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power". *Journal of Communication* 57, pp.163-173 (doi : 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x), Date of access : June 1, 2019
- Eriyanto. 2002. *Analisis Framing*. Yogyakarta: LKiS
- McQuail, D. 2010. *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. London: SAGE
- Oates, T.P. and Pauly, J. 2007. "Sports Journalism as Moral and Ethical Discourse" *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 22 (4), pp.332-347. Retrieved from: [www.staff.vu.edu.au/syson/2002/ethicsandsports.pdf](http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/syson/2002/ethicsandsports.pdf) , Date of access : June 3, 2019
- Pasopati, I.G. 2012. "Insider Friendship dan Pemberitaan Persiba Bantul dalam Surat Kabar Harian Kedaulatan Rakyat". Retrieved from: <http://e-journal.uajy.ac.id/246/>, Date of access : June 1, 2019
- Putra, A.M., Nugroho, H., Budiawan. 2016. "Ekonomi Politik Pemberitaan Konflik Persepakbolaan Indonesia" *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 13 (2), pp. 213-232. Retrieved from: <https://ojs.uajy.ac.id/index.php/jik/article/view/673/769>, Date of access : June 1, 2019
- Souisa, H.Y. 2017. "Regulating Convergence: Challenges for Contemporary Media in Indonesia". *Asian Journal of Media and Communication*, 1 (1), April, pp. 35-50. Retrieved from: <https://journal.uui.ac.id/AJMC/article/view/7584/6579>. Date of access : June 6, 2019
- Wibowo, N.F.S. 2014. "Konstruksi Wartawan Olahraga terhadap Tren Pemberitaan TvOne Tentang PSSI (Studi Kasus 2011-2013)" *Jurnal Humanity*, 9 (2),pp.57-64. Retrieved from: <http://ejournal.umm.ac.id/index.php/humanity/article/view/2393/2746>, Date of access : June 1, 2019