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## Assymmetric communication between media and stakeholders and its influences to the ineffectiveness of forest fire risk management in Indonesia

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**ABSTRACT**

There were several asymmetrical perspectives between media discourses and stakeholder's perceptions about causes of fires and solutions to combat forest fires in Indonesia. Stakeholders perceived that forest fires were mostly caused "intentionally". In contrast to stakeholders' perceptions, many causes of forest fire according to global media discourses were identified as "accidental", due to natural factors. Although both media and stakeholders pointed to "praxis" as the most important solution in addressing forest fire, they emphasized different matters. Stakeholders usually emphasized on application of "zero burning" in land clearing activities and promoting community participation in forest management as the most effective solutions in fire risk management. Global news media, however, pointed out the direct efforts to address forest fires, such as extinguishing fires with water shooters or spraying water by using airplanes as the most frequent solutions. There were also some asymmetrical perspectives between stakeholders' perceptions and media discourses in defining the problem of forest fires. Stakeholders perceived that forest fires were closely related to "economic problems", but media usually discussed forest fires on the perspective of "ecological concerns". This study concluded that the asymmetric communication between media and stakeholders created ineffectiveness of forest fire risk management.

Key words: asymmetric communication, forest fire, media discourse, risk management

**INTRODUCTION**

Forest fire is one of the most important issues discussed in media both at international and national levels because of its large human and environmental impacts. It is commonly known that forest fires had a large scope of event and also caused serious trans-national boundaries' problems in social, economic, and ecological issues. The issue of forest fire is more relevant to be discussed by focusing on the highly relevant countries experiencing forest fires, such as Indonesia. However, reliable information on forest fire, especially in the media, has to be understood for further policy making process to manage and combat fires effectively. Therefore, understanding asymmetrical perspectives between media and stakeholders is important to measure the potential influence of media in directing public opinion as well as policy-making processes, in order to define the effective Indonesian forest management.

**RESULTS**

**1. The causes or problems in forest fire media discourse and stakeholder's perception**

Level of Importance	Media		Stakeholders		
	International	National	International	National	Province
Very Important	Accidental	Intentional	Intentional	Intentional	Intentional
Important	Inadvertent	Inadvertent	Inadvertent	Inadvertent	Accidental
Moderately Important	Intentional	Accidental	Mechanical	Accidental	

Note: "Very important" refers to the most frequent statements on causes of problem; "important" for the second preference for the causes of problem and "moderately important" for the third preference, by excluding the unidentified and other causes.

Stakeholders perceived that forest fires were mostly caused "intentionally", International media discourses were identified as "accidental", due to natural factors.

**2. The instruments of solution in forest fire media discourse and stakeholders' perception.**

Level of Importance	Media		Stakeholders		
	International	National	International	National	Province
Very Important	Praxis	Praxis	Praxis	Praxis	Praxis
Important	Economical	Regulative	Regulative	Regulative	Regulative
Moderately Important	Regulative	Informational	Planning	Informational	Informational

Note: "Very important" refers to the highest preferences on the instruments of solution; "important" for the second preference and "moderately important" for the third preference.

Although both media and stakeholders pointed to "praxis" as the most important solution in addressing forest fire, they emphasized different matters:

Media Discourses	Stakeholders' Perceptions
Direct efforts such as water shooters, spraying water by using airplanes. "...we must conduct early prevention of fire cases and we have used a fleet to extinguish the fire..." (Kompas, November 28, 1994) "...the Indonesian...had deployed 8,437 fire fighters... Indonesian officials had also announced that Japan had offered to contribute 300 high-powered water shooters to help extinguish the fires and that France had offered to send advisers" (HT, September 26, 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero burning in land clearing activities</li> <li>• Community participation in forest management</li> </ul>

**METHODS**

**Scope/ity of the Study:**

- Indonesian forest fire issue
- Causes and solution of forest fire
- 10 years news media publication

**Data Collection :**

- Literature Reviews (International & National Media)
- key persons interviews (in-depth interview, snowball method)

**Analysis :**

- Content
- Compilation
- Comparative

Asymmetric information influence to ineffectiveness Indonesian forest fire management.

1. Selecting forest fire articles from 10 years international & national media (International media: International Herald Tribune & Times Magazine; National Indonesian media: Kompas & Rajawali)
2. Content Analysis
3. Developing Category System
4. Stakeholder Interviews (local, national, international)
5. University, Forest Company, NGO, Government
6. Comparative Analysis
7. Media and stakeholder perspectives, international & national level

**Category system**

Unit of Analysis	Category	Sub-category
Articles	Formal Information	Color, articles number, case number, newspaper source, date, and author
Statements	Speakers	Scientific: forest science; non forest science Non-scientific: politicians, administrations, media, NGOs, organizations, entrepreneurs, others
	Causes of Problem	Accidental causes; inadvertent causes; mechanical causes; intentional causes; others
	Solutions of Problem	Economic instruments; informational instruments; procedural instruments; planning instruments; regulative instruments; praxis; others
	Frame	Diagnostic frame: causal interpretation of forest fire between human and natural factors Prognostic frame: solutions of forest fire's problem between economy and environment.

**3. The problem definitions of forest fire in media discourse and stakeholders' perception.**

Level of Importance	Media		Stakeholders		
	International	National	International	National	Province
Very Important	Ecological	Ecological	Economical	Economical	Economical
Important	Economical	Economical	Ecological	Ecological	Ecological
Moderately Important	Regulative	Regulative	Regulative	Regulative	Regulative

Stakeholders perceived that forest fires were closely related to "economic problems", but media usually discussed forest fires on the perspective of "ecological concerns".

**CONCLUSION**

This study concluded that the asymmetric communication between media and stakeholders created ineffectiveness of forest fire risk management. The role of media to influence policy-making depends on the similarities of media perspectives and stakeholder perceptions. In the forest fire discourse, it could be concluded that the higher the asymmetrical perspectives between media and stakeholders in certain matters e.g. causes or solutions of problem; the lower the role of media to influence policy-making processes related to those matters. The asymmetrical perspectives between media and stakeholders on causes, solution, and problem definition of forest fire could be potential influence for the ineffectiveness Indonesian forest fire risk management.