

# **Media Reconstruction of Brawl Between Residents in Belawan**

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## **Abstract**

The city of Belawan in the province of North Sumatra, Indonesia is a port city inhabited by the urban poor. In this city fighting between residents has been going on for decades so that damage and injuries are frequent. This brawl behavior is inherited from parents to their children so that Belawan residents consider fights between residents a normal thing. The purpose of this study is to find out how the mass media reconstruct the events of fights between residents in the city of Belawan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Using a communication management approach, this case study research presents information that was not reported in the incident of fighting between residents in Belawan. The results of this study indicate that mass media reports on the reality of fights between residents in the city of Belawan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, have experienced a focus bias between the reality of the media and the reality that occurs in the public.

## **Keywords**

Fights Between Citizens; Communication Management; Media Focus

## **1. Introduction**

The mass media in broadcasting information in the form of reconstructing events in the form of words and pictures have freedom in the era of press freedom in Indonesia. However, there is a set of press laws that regulate and at the same time limit the freedom of the press. In the implementation of press law, violations of the law that occur in the news in the mass media have consequences according to the legal instruments that are violated. (Sahputra, 2020). However, the practice of journalism, especially in online media or cyber media, is not as simple as the formulation of the press law (Nurlatifah, 2018).

Separating and carrying out the function of the press between carrying out social control and economic functions requires maturity in its implementation. Because it encourages the public to be involved in all public affairs so that all decisions or policies issued by the government can be carried out through a deliberative democratic process. (Supriadi, 2017). The press is an intermediary between the community and the government even though it takes a neutral attitude in reporting, in the sense of channeling the aspirations of the community on all matters related to the interests of the community so that the government as the bearer of the mandate of state administrators can accommodate. No exception in terms of law enforcement such as in the case of drug abuse.

Mass media is believed to be a means for people to actively participate in public discourse, which is one of the important pillars of democracy. Therefore, the media must provide itself with a forum for public discourse and deliberation (Lesmana, 2017). This means that the press must be independent and stay away from intervention efforts and avoid all forms of pressure from the authorities. This also includes the freedom of the press to dig up information with the various innovations and tools it has.

Journalists must be equipped with adequate legal knowledge and understanding and have reliable human resources. However, scholars note that in producing journalistic work, the tendency of journalists to use social media is high, so the influence of social media on journalists' work patterns can also be said to be high. (Suraya, 2019). In the current era of digitalization, social media has given color to the form of mass media, including the news content that is presented. Researchers have also examined the relationship between social media and mass media. (Sahputra et al., 2020; Jati, 2016; Johansson, 2016). Meanwhile, Hallinan et.al further investigated the influence of culture on communicative practices used in social media. (Hallinan et al., 2021). Because of this relationship, social media is also related to the political dynamics that occur. (Sahputra, 2016; Umar et al., 2014).

In this regard, it is interesting to note that there are many facts in the field that are newsworthy and can serve as prevention efforts but have not been explored by journalists. (Rahman, 2018). In the case of the discourse on drug trafficking in Belawan, a sub-district in the city of Medan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Every time there is news of brawls between residents in the Port Area, in the community there will be issues of drug trafficking entering by sea. The brawl between residents is considered a diversion of the entry of large amounts of narcotics through Belawan Port. This paper wants to find out how the mass media in Medan reconstructed the events and discourses in the news that was broadcast.

In the city of Medan, North Sumatra, traditionally, the circulating mainstream mass media is divided into three print media with a distinctive segmentation. First, is the Waspada daily with the character of the readers consisting of the majority of Muslims and nationalists. Second, Analysis daily with the majority of its readers are businessmen who come from ethnic Chinese and are Buddhists. Third, is the daily Sinar Indonesia Baru (SIB) with readers dominated by ethnic Batak and Christian. The three mainstream media in the city of Medan have both equipped themselves with online versions, namely alert.id, analysisdaily.com, and dailysib.com. In addition to the online versions of the three media, the objects of research are two online media that have a relatively high readership rating, namely Medan.tribunnews.com and digtara.com.

## **1.1 Objectives**

This research is a media study that examines how the mass media present information in a case study of news of brawls between residents in the Medan Belawan sub-district, Medan city, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. This study aims to conclude the information behind the news of the brawl in Medan Belawan by using a communication management approach.

## **2. Literature Review**

At the level of communication science, scholars have developed communication discussions from the point of view of communication management as an important discussion (Schafer & Fahnrich, 2020; Khemesh, 2017; Besley, 2020; Ihlen, 2020; Ströh & Jaatinen, 2002; Sahputra et al. ., 2021; Taleb et al., 2017). The discussion of communication management develops in a broad sector, both in the organizational context (Schafer & Fahnrich, 2020, Besley, 2020), in the corporate context (Khemesh, 2017; Sahputra et al., 2021), in the health sector (Ihlen, 2020), in organizational communication (Ströh & Jaatinen, 2002), and industrial construction (Taleb et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, mass media is understood as involving public participation as a source of information that cannot be separated from technological developments (Ritonga & Syahputra, 2019; Schafer, 2011; Badara & Jamiludin, 2020;

Martini, 2014; Manan, 2016). Mass media is considered as a fading dominance along with the emergence of social media with the power of disseminating information to motivate and influence. (Susanto, 2017). On the other hand, the mass media are also considered to have the power of propaganda (Bensa and Wijaya, 2017). However, Indonesia's press freedom has faced threats from media owners. (Lesmana, 2017).

### 3. Methods

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach by analyzing news from five online media in the city of Medan which reports on brawls between residents in the Medan Belawan sub-district, Medan city, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Data were also obtained from interviews with residents regarding the discourse of drug smuggling through Belawan Port. This qualitative approach will produce descriptive data in the form of written and verbal words from observable objects (Ricko & Junaidi, 2019).

This study examines brawls between residents in Belawan and public discourse on drug smuggling in Belawan Harbor as a case study (Table 1). Case study research consists of a detailed investigation, often with empirical material gathered over some time to provide an analysis of the context and processes within a phenomenon. The phenomenon is not isolated from its context (as in positivist research) but is interesting precisely because of its relationship to context. (Rashid et al., 2019)

Table 1. Ranking of Online Media in Medan City

No	Media Name	Alexa Ranking (As of October 24, 2021)
1.	medan.tribunnews.com	72
2.	waspada.id	190,003
3.	analisadaily.com	349,115
4.	hariansib.com	599,575

### 4. Data Collection

Four online mass media based in the city of Medan have reported massive brawls between residents in the city of Belawan. Every time a brawl occurs, the online mass media report it, not only when the incident occurred but also broadcast follow-up news such as legal proceedings in the police and news of interviews with certain figures to comment on the brawl events. For three months, namely, July, August, and September, the duration of this research were at least 27 news articles that were broadcast by the four online mass media (Table 2).

Table 2. Title of Medan City Online Media News as of July – September 2021

Date	Media Name				News Focus
	medan.tribunnews.com	waspada.id	analisadaily.com	hariansib.com	
	Title and Edition				
September, 30 2021	Anticipating Brawls and Thugs in Belawan, Polda Deploys a Platoon of Brimob Personnel		Clashes in Belawan Often Occur, Observer: Police Must Be Firm		brawl incident
September, 26 2021		The Police Chief and the Sector Police Head Alternately, The Brawl in Belawan Can't Stop			Features of brawl events
September, 24 2021				Two Groups of Residents Fight	brawl incident

				Again in Belawan	
September, 23 2021	Brawl breaks out again in Belawan, youths throw stones at each other and bring kelewang The Seconds When Two Youth Groups Fight in Belawan, Throwing Stones at Each Other and Bringing Saja		Two Youth Groups in Belawan Throw each other	2 Groups of Citizens Fighting in Belawan	brawl incident
September, 21 2021		Brawl Action Welcomes the New Belawan Harbor Police Chief	Brawl Between Youth in Belawan Unsettled Residents		
September, 6 2021				Two Groups of Residents Fight Again in Medan Labuhan	brawl incident
July, 25 2021		1. Dr. Alvi Sahri, SH, M. Hum: Belawan Police Reveals Provocateurs of Brawl 2. Brawls in Belawan have been around for 40 years			interview brawl events
July, 22 2021	1. The Belawan Clash with Molotov cocktails, the Chief of the Police Reveals Facts about the Burning House of Worship 2. Owners of Refill Mineral Water Businesses become Victims of Belawan Brawl, Damaged Shops, and Lost HP 3. Brawl and Looting in Belawan, Officers, and Residents Repair Damaged Houses and Clean Rocks				brawl events, interview brawl events
July, 26 2021				Police North Sumatera Involved in Fighting in Belawan, GAMKI Overcome Issues of Burned Church	Follow-up, brawl events

July, 23 2021				Riots Between Residents in Belawan, No Churches Are Burned * Members of DPRD Request Arrest and Action for Brawlers	Follow-up, interview brawl events
July, 22 2021				The commotion due to the brawl in Belawan, the Marihot Siahaan workshop was burned by the masses	Follow-up, brawl events
July, 21 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Kiosks Burned and 5 Ruko were Destroyed looted by Residents During Inter-Village Brawls in Belawan</li> <li>MIRIS, Klewang stabbed a resident's ear while looking for their child in the middle of a brawl in Belawan</li> <li>6 perpetrators of throwing Molotov cocktails and looting during the brawl in Belawan arrested</li> <li>BELAWAN is GREAT, Houses of Worship are Almost Burned, Residents Attack Each Other Witnessed by Belawan Police Chief</li> <li>Brawl in Belawan Breaks during Emergency PPKM, Member of Commission I DPRD Urges Police to Completely Investigate Perpetrators</li> </ol>	<p>Belawan Harbor Police Capture 6 looters and brawlers in Belawan</p> <p>Every day the brawl in Belawan is getting more violent</p>		6 Suspected Perpetrators of Looting Residents' Houses Arrested by Police	Follow-up, interview brawl events

## 5. Results and Discussion

The brawl between residents in the Medan Belawan sub-district, Medan city, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia has been going on for 40 years. In a year they rarely stop brawls involving tens or even hundreds of residents. In this brawl, several people have been injured by sharp objects or blunt objects, and some have even died. The perpetrators of brawls are usually teenagers who are still in school or post-school age. Brawls occur usually because of trivial things, such as staring at each other, fighting over girlfriends, or fighting over the location of the burial ground, which is crowded with visitors every month of Ramadan, so local youths quote parking fees. This brawl between residents has become a tradition because it is passed down by parents to their children. Even now when there is a brawl, parents help their children to do the brawl.

This inter-citizen brawl becomes a detrimental action because the community will always be the victim. stalls and places of business will always be closed when a brawl occurs, even the businesses of many residents are damaged during a brawl. However, from year to year, this condition cannot be corrected, and the fighting continues. This has led to speculation in the community that this condition has something to do with the circulation of narcotics suspected of having entered by sea into the city of Medan. And as a diversion of the distribution of these drugs, a brawl between residents was designed. At first, this brawl did take place naturally, but over time, the brawl was no longer considered rational because it was only triggered by trivial things that didn't make sense. The discourse in the community about the existence of a drug network that is behind the brawl between residents. This speculation found its momentum because cases of abuse in the city of Medan never subsided from time to time. The arrests carried out by police officers only increased the number of prisoners in prison in drug cases without reducing the number of drug cases that occurred. However, the residents of Belawan city also admitted that the issue of the existence of a drug network behind the brawl between residents was speculative, but so far this has not been proven true. But that the discourse exists in the Belawan community and is a matter of word of mouth that is undeniable.

The local mass media in broadcasting the news of this brawl always focused on reporting about the brawl between residents, only focusing on reporting about the brawl incident. During the three-month duration of this research, there were several news interviews, but the contents did not mention the issue of the drug mafia behind the brawls between residents. This means that journalists have ignored the issues that are developing in the community about the existence of the drug mafia behind the brawls between citizens. Journalists do not dig up information from the community, or at least broadcast the issue of the drug mafia behind the brawls between residents that have never stopped since 40 years ago. In reporting news events, every journalist will be bound by the policies of the mass media where he works. But on the other hand journalists and press companies have freedom guaranteed by Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning the Press and by the Journalistic Code of Ethics (JCE), which is the code of conduct for Indonesian journalists.

Journalistic products in the form of news are the work of journalists who are rigid in terms of presentation, that is, they do not mix opinions and facts. News is a reconstruction of facts in the form of words, pictures, sounds or words, and pictures and sounds. Due to these restrictions, journalists will not have the opportunity to include personal opinions when writing stories. However, journalistic products in the form of features can be displayed more flexibly compared to news presentations. Journalists can insert opinions into the writings they make. This shows that journalists have the opportunity to explore issues that develop around an event so that it becomes a report that is not only interesting but also important as a form of carrying out the function of the press as social control. Communication management in the management of mass media is a measure of the ongoing functioning of the press in a democratic country. Mass media has a function to inform, namely conveying verified information to its audience. Mass media also has the function to entertain audiences in the form of entertaining information. Then the mass media also has a function to educate, namely with information that is disseminated, it will provide educational content to the public. The next function is the function of social control and economic function. These two functions must be carried out in a balanced manner to create a healthy press climate. Because the tendency of the press is only on an economic function compared to a social control function, it will give birth to a partisan and impartial press to the community. On the other hand, if the social control function is compared to the economic function, what happens is that the press has difficulty developing because it is difficult to finance themselves, such as paying journalists properly or having information technology facilities that are very much needed in the press in the digital era like today.

## 5.1 Numerical Results

Number and Content of News is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Number and Content of News

media name	number of news	content of brawl	drug content	news	feature
medan.tribunnews.com	11	11	0	11	0
waspada.id	6	6	0	5	1
analisadaily.com	3	3	0	3	0
hariansib.com	7	7	0	7	0

## 5.2 Graphical Results

Production Process of Inter-community Brawl News (Figure 1).

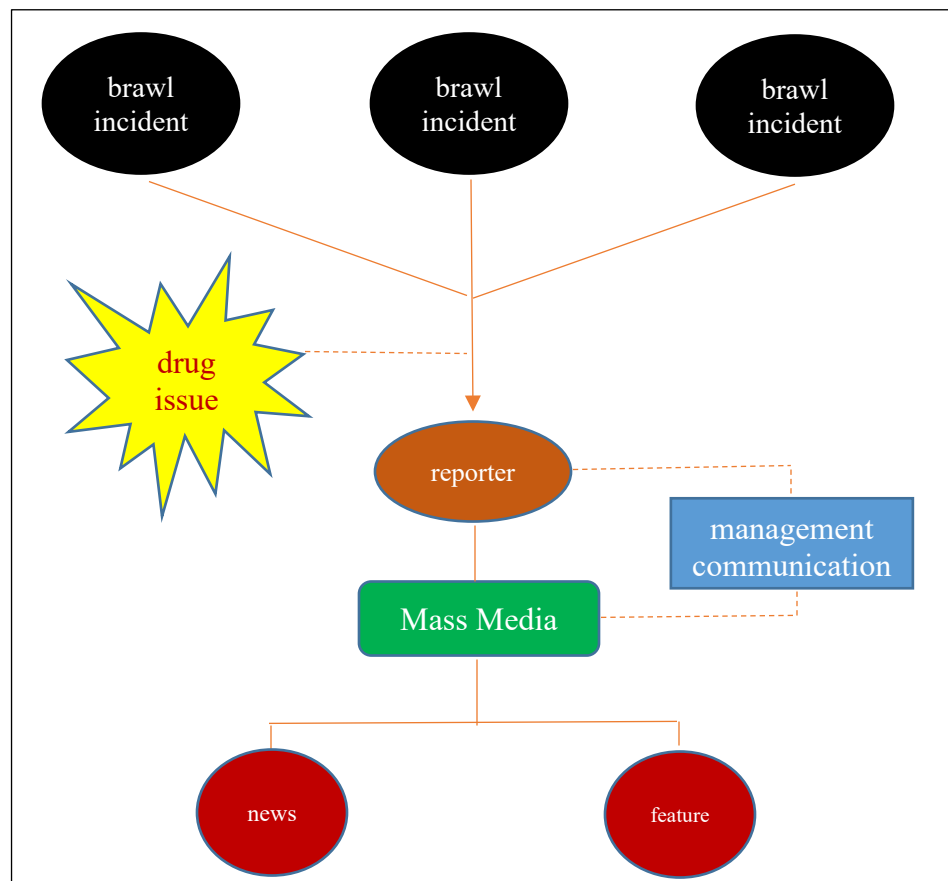


Figure 1. Production Process of Inter-community Brawl News

## 4. Conclusion

Incidents of brawls between residents such as what happened in the city of Belawan are common events because they also occur in various other regions in Indonesia. The unique thing about the brawl between residents in the city of Belawan is that it has been recorded that this event has been going on for about 40 years continuously and is passed down from parents to their children. The security forces seemed powerless to solve this case, causing a growing issue among the people of the city of Belawan that the brawl was masterminded by the drug mafia as a diversion every time drugs entered through the sea in Belawan Port. The issue of the drug mafia behind the brawl between residents is also a fact that has occurred in the community of Belawan city. However, in the news they provide, the mass media only focus on reporting on brawl events without touching on the issue of the existence of the drug mafia, which is also a fact that occurs in the community of Belawan city. In other words, there is a focus bias between the mass media and the public in seeing the reality of the brawl between residents in the city of Belawan.

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