Nationalism in Online Media of Ethnic Minority

Astri Yogatama
Petra Christian University

AUTHOR NOTES

This research is conducted by Astri Yogatama, S.Sos, M,Si

Further contact :
Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Communication Science of Petra Christian University, Jl.Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya, East Java. Indonesia.
Email : astri@petra.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Spirit of nationalism is less interested among Chinese as result of history of discrimination in Indonesia. Nationalism definition separated into civic, cultural, and ethnic nationalism. Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa (INTI) as one of Chinese Organization in Indonesia has mission to built nationalism among Chinese trough external media of ethnic minority, online and offline. They use website as online media because of its characteristic as public sphere for ethnic minority in larger boundaries than offline. The text analysis of main page and message box has discovered spirit of nationalism both in main page and message box. Chinese Indonesian inside and abroad Indonesia, even the indigenous, has involved in reading those online contents and discussing national issues. Contents and comments in INTI's website tend to be civic nationalism, which emphasized in national identity based on citizenship, political activity (participation), political ideology and similarity of territory. Cultural and ethnic nationalism still appear as part of cultural adaptation from "immigrant" to be Indonesian. Overall, the process of nationalism construction in online media of ethnic minority is identical with interactivity principle.

Key word   : Nationalism, Online Media of Ethnic Minority

Nationalism in Online Media of Ethnic Minority

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic Minority and Nationalism

Long history of ethnic discrimination and conflict with the indigenous as has segmented the contribution of indigenous and ethnic minority to nation development. Ethnic minority, mostly immigrant, has usually less number or power than local citizen and stigmatized by bad image. Chinese as one of ethnic minority is stigmatized as major economic controller in Indonesia and does not care of the other thing such as political-social condition. That situation had been conditioned by the new order of government, as tactic to separate people power in order maintaining status quo. Afterwards the ruin of new order (orde baru), did not even erase the image of Chinese ethnic as merchant, live in luxurious life, and do any effort for their own sake (Suhandinata, 2009;301). Stereotyping is part of discrimination which is not comfortable for minority lives. Actually, ethnic minority as immigrant did care about national matters and tried to look for better legitimating from a nation where their lives. (Kylimca, 2002;14). They want to be existed as national assets and put aside bad image. This is the concern of Chinese social-politic organization, to raise the spirit of nationalism among them and build new image of Chinese ethnic among Indonesian. Later on, the changing in democracy in Gus Dur Era, decreases discrimination and empowers ethnic minority, include Chinese society to participate in nation building. It was the monumental moment which raised nationalism spirit of Chinese toward Indonesia INTI (Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa) as one of Chinese Organization in Indonesia has mission to built national identity of Chinese and push them to contribute more to Indonesia as motherland. National identity should be expressed as nationalism, everyday life concern toward the belonging to a nation. Nationalism has been conceptualized as civic, cultural and ethnic. Civic is the principle that nationhood and statehood should be congruent, or the project of actualizing national unity, sovereignty, and identity that follows from this principle (Gellner [1983] 2006; Hobsbawm [1990]1992; Ignatieff 1993; Smith 2001) (Pehrson, 2009;25). Civic nationalism is the unity of a nation which is came from history territory, laws and institution, the legal political equality of members that expresses itself in a set of rights and duties, and a common civic culture and ideology (Shulman, 2002;556). Cultural and or ethnic was defined by Greenfeld (1996) as understands nationalism as *culture,* in the sense of a shared representation of ideal social relations, in which the nation is envisaged as the basic source of sovereignty and object of solidarity (Pehrson, 2009;25). Moreover Shulman (2002) mention some

indicator for each nationalism categories : (1) Civic nationalism is contain of territory, citizenship, will and consent, political ideology, political institution and rights ; (2) Cultural nationalism is contain of religion, language, traditions ; (3) Ethnic nationalism is contain of ancestry and race. All type of nationalism is the reason for each member of a country to be united in a nation.

Ethnic Minority Media

Mass media was born as consequence of modern society as source of identity (McQuail, 2000;76) of the audience. From the perspective of multiculturalism, mass media is produced by majority as dominance media or minority ethnic as ethnic media. The mainstream mass media have tended to ignore ethnic minorities or to present them essentially in terms of the social problems they create for the majority (Riggins, 1992;2). It is very urgent to publish ethnic media, which straightening their roles among society / intra-society. Moreover, even apparently neutral news items have been shown to convey deeply rooted prejudices that have far reaching consequences (Riggins, 1992;9). Ethnic media is refer to 'minority' media (Deuze, 2006;1).

Truly, Chinese people had been participated in the development of Indonesian and also national mass media long time ago. However, it was not published very well in mass media. Along the way, they also produce their own media, which centralized into two, Chinese Republic (Chinese language) and Indonesia Republic (indonesian / Chinese language). Agus Sudibyo (2001) said Chinese mass media tend to be in comfort zone in exploring cultural issues than politics. This is an emotional consequence of ethnic violence toward Chinese, specially the riots on 1998. In the other hand, small part of Chinese people which formed an organization, and has been trying to break the rule of ethnic minority media. They are trying to get out of comfort zone and serve the audience with social-political ideas from Chinese community to be part of national action, spread out nationalism spirit. Organization based Chinese community publishes external corporate media in order to build a dialog among Chinese-Chinese and local community about concept, challenge and opportunity of nationalism. Those ideas have been important since having a national identity is less interested among ethnic immigrant as result of history of discrimination. Among offline and online media, online media is preferable according to these reasons : (1) The Internet can contribute to the strengthening of ethnic and diversity media as ethnic media productions online have access to a larger and more international audience than offline ethnic media; (2) Migrants' concerns can be communicated by migrants themselves online more easily and inexpensively. As migrants seem to feel freer to express their opinions and interests online, these online

activities eventually result in the development of an ethnic media sphere, adding to migrants' self-esteem and empowerment; (3) The Internet's potential for migrants or diasporas lies in improved and simplified communication and information possibilities as well as in an intensified participation in the public sphere (Kissau, 2008;84). Internet was proved as a powerful tool to move society from and to everywhere around the world in pursuing something idealist, which is impossible to do with offline media only. Internet is the public sphere for ethnic minority to speak out their own voices, dreams or needs.

METHOD

Focusing in nationalism on online ethnic minority media, Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa (INTI) as organization has an online media or website since 2007 and continually updates the contents. INTI has been organized very well and they maintain external media continually. Their vision is about best Chinese citizen contribution to the nation development in building unity, democracy, justice, wealthy, international prestige as a peace and prosperous country. This research tried to look for nationalism ideas. Nationalism ideas is separated into three, civic nationalism, cultural nationalism and ethnic nationalism. Using Shulman (2002) categories: (1) Civic nationalism is operasionalized into 5 indicators (territory, citizenship, will and consent, political ideology, political institution and rights) ; (2) Cultural nationalism is operasionalized into 3 indicators (religion, language, traditions) ; (3) Ethnic nationalism is operasionalized into 2 indicators (ancestry and race). The study explores how and how much online website gives readers a chance to think about indicators of civic nationalism, cultural nationalism or ethnic nationalism, then reply it to the website in the message box. The study is descriptive. The unit analysis is text on the whole website. Samples are purposively text on main page and message box. Main page contains of fundamental explanation about the main ideas of the whole content of website, while the message box is the responds and ideas from visitors. Main page contents are:
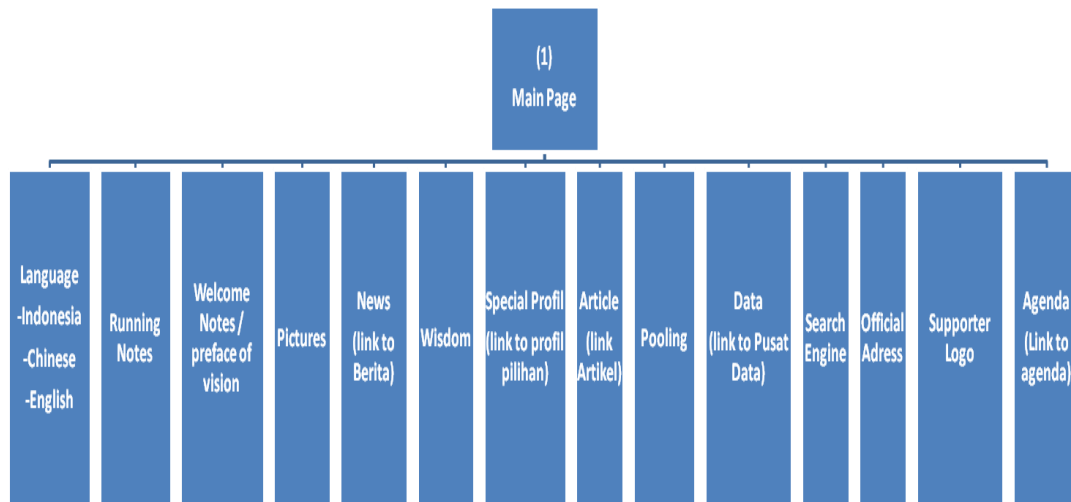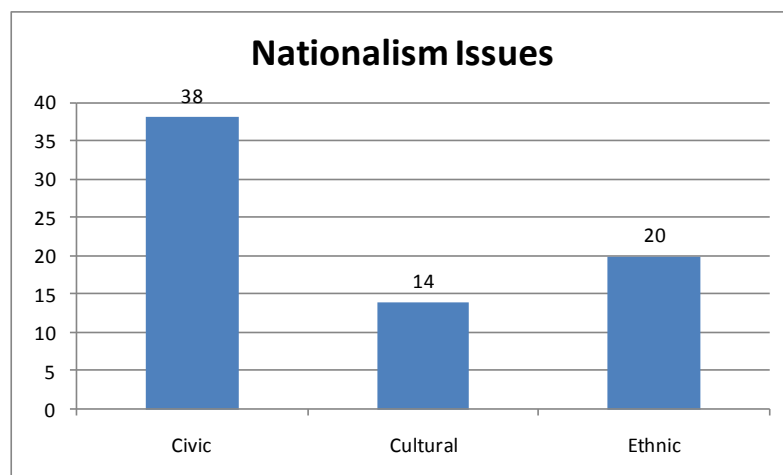
Picture 1
Structure of Main Page

RESULT

Main Page

Identification of indicators has done in each part of main page. The findings is described in graphic bellow ;

Graphic 1
Number of Sub Indicators of Nationalism Issues on Main Page

Nationalism categories above is separated into indicators then sub indicator. Calculation of total sub indicators is 72, while each sub indicators : civic (53%), cultural (19%), and ethnic (28%).
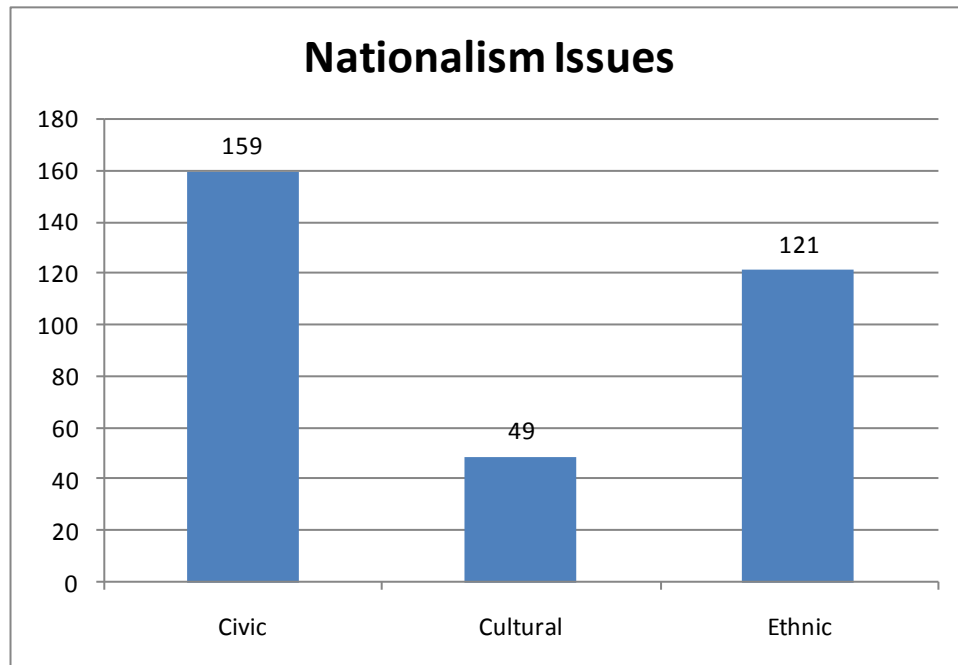
Message Box

Second analysis is in the 182 letters on message box. Visitors identity mostly Indonesian (135), only few mention specific ethnic (Chinese=47), young and adult, ladies and gents, employees/students/unemployment.

Graphic 2
Variation of identity of visitors in message box

Nationalism Issues

Graphic 3

Number of Sub Indicators of Nationalism on Message Box

As respond after visiting the website, the message has various types such as critics, suggestions, questions (to become a member), grudges, information, sharing ideas about nationalism, and ask for information / aid. There are 331 findings for sub indicators : civic nationalism is 159 (48%), cultural nationalism is 49 (15%) and ethnic nationalism is 121 (37%).

DISCUSSION

Discussion will be divided into three parts, main page, visitors identity and message box.

First, civic nationalism takes the biggest part on main page and it becomes the stressed in building nationalism. As mention before, civic nationalism is closed to consciousness of the existence of individual living in Indonesia and its political activities as consequence or right for each citizen.   It means that national identity comes from the territory where we lived, more than local tradition, religion, language, ancestry, and race. The territory brought consequences and rights for citizen, to help the nation, to speak the constructive ideas or needs, to be served by the country, based

on Undang-undang Dasar 1945, as the source of political ideology. Basic of civic nationalism is the construction of political consensus among citizens to build a nation. Smith (2001) said that civic nationalism on the other hand defines nationality in more voluntaristic term, using criteria such as citizenship, as well as the institutional commitments and participation that this entails. A commitment is needed because national civic identity was not ascribed, but achieved as individual effort to be part of a nation. Someone was not born to become Indonesian, but learn and then willingly internalize political ideology of Indonesia. Rational thinking plays an important role in adaptation process then implementation of civic nationalism. Adaptation from cultural/ethnic to civic nationalism has not been very easy for ethnic minority, since the dark history of discrimination / prejudice. The website said the struggle itself. Appearance of cultural and ethnic nationalism indicators show that there is still term "peranakan", "keturunan", "warga tionghoa", in the movement of nationalism. Becoming 100% Indonesia could be an acculturation among ethnic minority and local ethnic. Actually it was against the bound of national group in civic nationalism principle. The bounds of collective sovereignty and equality (Greenfeld (2006) in Pehrson, 2009), is a reflection of the equality for each citizen. Removing terms "keturunan"/"warga tionghoa"/"peranakan", into only "warga Indonesia", will be the sign of equality among ethnic in Indonesia.

Second, mentioning an ethnic minority identity in the mass media is rarely happen before Gus Dur era. Decision of the cabinet presidium no. No. 127 of 1966 demanded assimilation by changing foreign name into Indonesian. Chinese as foreigner must change their names into Indonesian, if they wanted to be citizen of Indonesia. Mentioning ethnic names became forbidden action, especially in public sphere / mass media. Ethnic identity was hidden inside coercion of nationalism. This was not the same with civic nationalism, which need voluntary action and release ethnic identity to become part of individual identity. Barton (2002) wrote that Gus Dur was the first president who had broken the rule and free foreigner in using ethnic name since January 2001. Appearance of Chinese' name in message box is a good tendency for democracy and equality in citizenship.It is a courage action to show the real existence. Additionally the variance of the other identity shows that nationalism is everybody needs. Everybody wants to be united on a country where they are lived. Later on, message box indicates that civic nationalism is still the highest point above cultural and ethnic.

Third, mostly critics on message box has been constructive to encourage INTI and agree about vision to build civic nationalism. One of the critic is cited bellow:

Membaca pernyataan Menkumham sebagaimana diberitakan harian
Kompas akhir Maret 2007 lalu bahwa "stateless" bisa jadi WNI, bagaimana
INTI menyikapinya?
Akankah INTI secara proaktif terjun ke lapangan melakukan pendataan
para "stateless" ini dan memfasilitasi agar mereka bisa memperoleh
dokumen kependudukan?
Atau INTI hanya akan membicarakan ini pada forum seminar di hotel-hotel
berbintang, di ruang nyaman ber-AC sambil makan kue dan minum kopi?
Saatnya INTI melakukan karya nyata, jangan hanya bicara!
Salam,
Source : HS (pseudonym)

Even looks impolite, the letter above was signed as a "dream" of becoming citizen of
Indonesia legally by law. It is one of the example of critic about nationalism. The
other citation information :

Salam kenal,
Secara tidak sengaja saya dapatkan Majalan Inti di Kantor saya. Isinya
menarik, karena menyangkut pokok yang menjadi perhatian saya. China
di Indonesia. Saya sendiri adalah keturunan China yang besar di pedesaan.
Terima kasih untuk bisa **meng-download** bukunya Mas Benny dengan
gratis. Informasi yang saya dapat sungguh membantu saya untuk
'merekonstruksi' peran keluarga saya dalam konteks yang lebih global.
Saya tinggal di Solo, Jateng. Apakah saya bisa dapat kontak email dari
cabang INTI yang ada di Solo?
Maturnuwun sanget,
Source : H (pseudonym)

The word "role construction to global context" is identical with the willingness to
participate in national context as a citizen. "Tionghoa Dalam Pusaran Politik" is
written by Benny G to expose Chinese participation in the development of Indonesia,
something that unknown to most of Chinese in Indonesia. Reading online book, built
willingness to participate equal with spirit of civic nationalism. The other interesting
idea of nationalism is about the participation of Chinese women as follows:

Kartini Tionghoa
………
Bagaimana Kartini Tionghoa apa ada? ……
Sebagian wanita Tionghoa telah menjadi icon kelemahan akibat peristiwa
Mei 98 luka lama yang tidak mudah dan tidak akan bisa dilupakan.
mungkin dengan melalui garis perjuangan yang jelas dapat mengangkat
kembali citra khususnya wanita tionghoa dan umumnya wanita

> indonesia.Dari kejadian dan peristiwa wanita tionghoa sebenarnya banyak
> ide dan kemampuan yang bisa digali karena wanita Tionghoa bukan hanya
> hidup sekedar menjalankan kodrat. justru sensitifitas wanita bisa lebih jeli
> melihat keadaan sosial masyarakat dan masih banyak ………
> Kita harus bersyukur beberapa wanita tionghoa yang layak kita acungi
> jempol seperti EstherPurba SNB, SusyOng MetroTV, Christine CSIS,
> Julia, Rebbeca,Charlotte, Ibu Marie Elka Pangestu dan lain lain di bidang
> masing2. mereka mereka ini adalah asset tionghoa yang layak kita dukung
> dalam karier dan kemajuan perjuangan Wanita Tionghoa semoga akan
> semakin banyak Kartini Tionghoa di hari hari kedepan ………
> Source: J (pseudonym)

Even in everyday life, local women in traditional culture is still in serious effort to be professionally equal with man. Those women have lived as major part of the society. The comment on the message box above is about Chinese women as minority inside their own culture and among local culture. Double burden in discriminate society did not stop willingness to participate in national social-political activities. Using term "Kartini" before "Tionghoa" emphasizes that those woman was Indonesian with Chinese ethnicity. There was a voluntary action in accepting national identity beside ethnicity. Smith (2001) wrote this is a reflection of reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctiveness heritage of nations and the identification of individuals with the pattern and heritage (Chan, 2005;342). Kartini is symbol of national hero, valued higher than other women. Inserting a national symbol from history is a tradition to internalize nationalism itself. It is like reborn into Indonesian. Nationalism spirit was clearly stated as civic nationalism

Finally, is important to underline about sending nationalism messages and getting replies. The process is called interactivity. Nationalism is constructed by interactivity. Interactivity has been the characteristic of communication revolution in new media (Dijk, 2006;8). Internet provides space, time synchrony, control of exercised by the interacting parties, acting and reacting with an understanding of meanings and contexts by all interactors involved. Chinese society or anyone from separated place are able to communicate each other in the same place, time, and sharing ideas to learn nationalism trough internet.

CONCLUCION

The analysis of website's contents, discovered spirit of nationalism in contents and comments in the main page and message box. Chinese Indonesian inside and abroad Indonesia, even the indigenous, has involved in reading those online contents and discussing national issues. Several statements in message box are about as critics, suggestions, grudges, information, sharing ideas about nationalism, and ask for information / aid, critical thinking about Chinese national identity, Chinese Women movement towards Indonesia's problems and the rest about the interest to join or support INTI. Contents and comments in INTI's website tend to be civic nationalism, which emphasized in national identity from the similarity of territory, citizenship, political activity (participation), and political ideology. Cultural and ethnic nationalism still appear as part of cultural adaptation from immigrant to be Indonesian. Nationalism is constructed by interactivity online. Interactivity has been the characteristic of communication revolution in new media (Dijk, 2006;8). Internet provides space, time synchrony, control of exercised by the interacting parties, acting and reacting with an understanding of meanings and contexts by all interactors involved. Chinese society or anyone from separated place are able to communicate each other in the same place, time, and sharing ideas to learn nationalism. Hopefully, the online interactivity in online media of ethnic minority will conclude the best definition of nationalism among society.

References

Barton, Greg, 2002, "*Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President", University of New South Wales,Australia*

Chan, B, (2005), Imagining the homeland : The Internet and Diasporic Discourse of Nationalism, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 29, 336-368, DOI : 10.1177/0196859905278499

Deuze, M, (2006), Ethnic media, community media and participatory culture, *Journal of Journalism*, 7, 262-280, DOI : 10.1177/1464884906065512

Dijk, J.A.G.M, (2006), *The Network Society*, Sage Publication

Kissau, K, (2008), Online spheres of migrants in Germany: How and why migrants use the Internet, *Conference "Media on the Move"*

Kymlicka, W, (2002), *Kewargaan Multikultural*, diterjemahkan oleh LP3ES

McQuail, D., (2007), *Mass Communication Theory*, Sage Publication

Pehrson, S, Vignoles, V,L, Brown, R, (2009), National Identification and Anti Immigrant Prejudice : Individual And Contextual Effects of National Definitions, *Journal of Social Psychology Quaterly*, 72, 24-38, DOI : 10.1177/019027250907200104

Perhimpunan Indonesia Tionghoa (INTI), last retrieved October 15, 2010, from http://id.inti.or.id/

Riffe, D, Stephen, L, Fico, F, G, (2005), *Analyzing Media Messages : Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Riggins, H.S., (1992*), Ethnic Minority Media : an International Perspective*, Sage Publication

Shulman, S., (2002), Challenging the Civil/Ethnic and West/East Dichotomies in the Study of Nationalism, *Journal of Comparative Political Studies*, 35, 554-585, DOI:10.1177/0010414002035005003s

Sudibyo, A, (2001), *Politik Media dan Pertarungan Wacana*, LKiS

Suhandinata, J, (2009), *WNI Keturunan Tionghoa dalam Stabilitas Ekonomi dan Politik Indonesia*, PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama