Marginalized Religious Communities in Indonesian Media: *A Baseline Study*

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A Baseline Study

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Indonesia

Overview

Indonesia has a rich cultural and political history. The archipelago is home to 270 million inhabitants, with over 300 different ethnicities (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, 2010), who speak in 718 native languages (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 2020). Until 2018, the Indonesian state acknowledged six "official religions": Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Indonesia also has 187 indigenous beliefs, estimated to be held by 12 million citizens (*Tirto.id*, 2017).

Since its founding in 1945, Indonesia has been modeled as a unitary state, with a centralized government and political system. The nation's political-economic powers are also geographically concentrated in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital city. This situation reached its peak in the authoritarian rule of the New Order, under the Soeharto presidency (1966-1998). The Asian financial crisis of 1997 hit the Indonesian economy hard and led to the fall of the regime.

Since 1998, Indonesia has been undergoing democratic reforms in various sectors. In 2004, the Regional Autonomy Law was ratified to decentralize economic, political, and cultural powers geographically. The reform also saw a dramatic increase in political parties, which were previously limited to three parties. In the first election after the reform in 1999, there were 48 competing political parties. The number has, however, been decreasing as Indonesian democracy matured. In the latest election of 2019, there were 14 competing political parties.

Although the number of political parties has increased significantly, Indonesian political parties can be organized according to two ideologies: Islamist and nationalist. This distinction is increasingly blurred. At regional and district levels, sharia laws are championed by nationalist parties instead of Islamists due to the populist appeal of such policies (Buehler, 2013). Indonesian post-New Order political culture is dominated by "dynasty politics", in which power transfers from elected officeholders to their own family members. From 2015 to 2018, 117 dynastic politicians won direct elections for regional leadership positions (*Pilkada*), while 85 others lost (Kenawas, 2020).

Besides dynasty politics, Indonesian political life is also hugely driven by economic oligarchism due to the fact that post-reform elections involve significant costs for the candidates. It is estimated that candidates spend around €2.3 million to €4.9 million on political campaigns (*Kompas.com*, 2018). This practice peaked in the 2019 general election. Of 575 seats in the parliament, 262 of them (45.5 percent) were won by shareholders in big industries (*Tempo.co*, 2019).

sejuk.org archive / Serikat Jurnalis untuk Keberagaman

Sunda Wiwitan community lined up in open field during flag ceremony.

Constrained religious diversity

Since the colonial era, Indonesian cultural diversity has often been politicized, resulting in various conflicts. This situation still holds true in the modern era, 74 years after independence. Soon after the New Order's downfall, political turbulence led to the Ambon (1999) and Poso (2000) conflicts. Racial and religious (Moslem and Christian) discourse escalated the conflict further. These conflicts have left behind lasting tensions between the two religious groups, sometimes resulting in smaller conflicts, not only in the region of the conflict, but also in wider areas across Indonesia.

Even after the socio-political conditions stabilized, religious discrimination persisted. According to Setara Institute (*Tempo.co,* 2019), in 2007-2019, there were 2,400 cases of violation of freedom of religion and belief. The highest number of victims is found among the Ahmadi people (554 cases), followed by indigenous beliefs (334 cases), Christians (328 cases), individuals (314 cases), and Shi'ites (153 cases).

The dominant pattern of these conflicts can be divided into three categories: conflicts between officially recognized religious groups, conflicts between Islamic sects, and conflicts between Islam and indigenous beliefs. These conflicts are usually characterized by the imbalance of power between the dominant groups against minority and marginalized groups.

Ironically, state actors play a big role as perpetrators. The police account for the biggest percentage of violations (480), followed by local government (383), the Ministry of Religion (89), courts (71), the municipal police (*Satpol PP*, 71 violations), the prosecutor's office (68), and the military (63). For non-state actors, violations were dominated by citizen groups (600 violations), mass organizations (249), notably the Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) (242 violations), and the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI) (181 violations).

Islam, the dominant religion, also includes a diversity of sects that are prone to conflicts. The most notable conflicts involve the Ahmadi in Cikeusik (2011) and the Shi'ite in Sampang (2012). These conflicts are a result of the Islamic purification movement that sees both sects as heretical. Unlike major religious conflicts, those against marginalized Islamic communities result in intimidation, destruction of property, assault, and the forced eviction of Shi'ite and Ahmadi people.

Indigenous beliefs have a long history of being stigmatized as superstitious and idolatrous, resulting in administrative, social, political, and economic discrimination. As a result, many sacred sites of indigenous beliefs have been destroyed, and rituals have been forcefully stopped by vigilante groups and law enforcers. Due to the lack of administrative acknowledgement by the state, many indigenous believers are forced to embrace one of the official religions so that they can gain access to state benefits.

In 2017, the state intended to administratively stop discrimination against indigenous belief by acknowledging the beliefs on Indonesian ID cards. However, various Islamic leaders have resisted this policy due to a fear of legalizing superstition and idolatry. Local authorities are also complicit in the discrimination. In 2020 for example, the Sunda Wiwitan ancestral tomb in East Java was sealed by local authorities on the pretext of unregistered construction.

Indonesian media landscape

The Indonesian media landscape cannot be separated from the experience and history of press freedom in the country. The media was once under the tight control under President Soeharto in the New Order Era (1966-1998). After the reign of President Soeharto (post-1998), Indonesia gained some press freedom. As of today, no special permission is required to establish media outlets and become a journalist.

This has resulted a proliferation of media sources. By 2017, the Dewan Pers (Press Council) estimated that the number of media source in Indonesia had reached 47,000 outlets. Of these, as many as 2,000 are printed media, 1,166 radio stations, 674 television stations and 43,300 online media sources. However, a verification of media companies conducted by the Press Council found that only 321 print media companies (about 16 percent) qualified as professional media. For online media, those recorded as a professional media only amounted to 211 outlets, 0.5 percent of online media available.

According to Nielsen Consumer Media Review, in 2017, TV penetrated 96 percent of Indonesia, followed by the internet (44 percent) and radio (37 percent). This penetration also affected revenue streams. Still, according to Nielsen, the total advertising expenditure in television, digital, radio and print media reached Rp181 trillion (USD12.4 billion) in 2019. TV dominated, accounting for 85 percent of ad spending and at total of more than Rp143 trillion (USD9.8 billion). Print media ad spending reached more than Rp22 trillion (USD1.5 billion), while radio ad spending was Rp1.7 trillion (USD117 million). Digital advertising expenditure was recorded at Rp13.3 trillion (USD895 million), slowly replacing conventional media.

The printed press in Indonesia has been the medium most affected by the arrival and broad adoption of the internet. In the last five years, between 10 and 20 printed media companies have folded. The main reason has been high printing costs, while it has also been close to impossible for the media to increase their subscription base. As more print media outlets have stopped publishing, online media sources have increased in numbers.

aji.or.id archive / Aliansi Jurnalis Independen

Press identity cards of Indonesian media journalists.

Media concentration

Indonesia is experiencing the emergence of media conglomerations, with 12 major media groups. According to Nugroho et al. (2012), in total, 12 media groups own 60 television stations, 317 print media outlets, 66 radio stations and 9 online media organizations. The largest media groups are Global Mediacomm (MNC), Jawa Pos Group, and Kompas Gramedia Group (KKG). MNC Group has 20 television stations, 20 radio stations, 7 print media outlets and 1 online media outlet. The Jawa Pos Group has 20 television stations, 171 print media outlets and 1 online media outlet. KKG has 10 television stations, 12 radio stations, 88 print media outlets and 2 online media outlets.

The media industry has also become concentrated geographically, consistent with the general economic activity in which 70 percent of all money is circulated in Jakarta (*Detik.com*, 2020). While print media has a foothold—albeit an increasingly weakened one—in local areas, the television industry is heavily concentrated in Jakarta. Four media groups operating in Jakarta controlled 90.7 percent of audience market share in 2014 (Souisa, 2020).

Robertus Pudyanto / Getty Images

A worker staples the Panjebar Semangat magazines using ancient equipment on February 26, 2021 in Surabaya, Indonesia. Panjebar Semangat, Javanese weekly magazine published in Surabaya since 1933, was an important mouthpiece for the Indonesian independence movement.

This landscape has heavily influenced television content. In 2013, Jakarta was the source of 41 percent of news on national television, while the other 35 provinces only contributed 45 percent of TV news (Heychael & Wibowo, 2014). This has resulted in the Jakarta's domination of politics, and social and cultural life in public discourse, since 91.5 percent of the Indonesian population watch television (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, 2018).

The online media ecosystem is also in a similar situation. In 2021, there were 352 online news media sources verified by the Indonesian Press Council. However, the audience share is dominated by media owned by major media groups. *Okezone.com* (owned by MNC Group), *Tribunnews.com* (part of Kompas Gramedia Group), *Kompas.com* (part of Kompas Gramedia Group), and *Detik.com* (owned by Trans Media Group) are consistently ranked in the top ten for audience traffic in Alexa.com rankings.

Media, intolerant Islamism, and polarization

Post-reform mainstream media in Indonesia is largely secular, with only a handful of media outlets focusing on Islamic demography. Although more radical Islamic ideology has an established media tradition, these publications are mostly "underground" and circulated to limited audiences. *Sabili* and *Suara Hidayatullah* continue to be among the most popular titles. Radio is also a popular medium utilized by various Islamic conservative groups in the Java islands (Sunarwoto, 2016). In the late 1980s until the 1998 reform, these media sources were characterized by propagating discontent towards the New Order rule and Islamic puritanism.

In the 2000s, these publications flourished along with the advent of the internet. Prominent sites such as *Arrahmah.com*, *Eramuslim.com*, and *voa-islam.com* received significant readership. However, these sites and their agendas remained on the fringe of public discourse throughout the decade (Abdullah & Osman, 2018).

sejuk.org archive / Serikat Jurnalis untuk Keberagaman

Law enforcement officers and Sintang District Government sealed the Ahmadi mosque in Balai Harapan Village.

Secular media platforms have also seen opportunities in this conservative turn. Various secular media outlets have over the years adopted dominant Islamic values to cater to a growing Islamic market, leading to the commodification of Islam in the media industry (Rakhmani, 2016). Since the early 2000s, national broadcasting TV stations have utilized Islamic identities and tropes in their soap operas to reach Muslim audiences (*CNNIndonesia.com*, 2021). These adoptions are largely related to morals and surface values. Mainstream media outlets are careful not to incorporate the more extreme or controversial teachings.

The situation changed during the 2014 presidential election. In the election, the Jakarta governor Joko Widodo (Jokowi) ran for Indonesian president, and left Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), the Chinese Christian vice governor, as Jakarta leader. The Front of Islam Defenders (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI), and many other vigilante groups launched campaigns to thwart the ascendence of a *kafir* (non-believer in Islam) as the Indonesian capital city leader. The conflict resulted in Ahok's imprisonment in 2016 on the pretext of blasphemy.

In the 2014 and 2019 elections, Islamic vigilante groups—which were previously only active in social & cultural activities—became involved in formal-practical politics, by endorsing Prabowo Subianto, a former military general, for presidency. The 2019 election presented a fierce contestation of discourse between Islamic hardliners in the Prabowo camp, and the relatively secular Jokowi camp, resulting in a polarization of Indonesian socio-political life that has lasted until today.

Media ownership concentration, paired with the active political activities of media owners, has plunged Indonesian media into blatant political partisanship. This phenomenon can be clearly observed in television broadcasting. *tvOne* and *ANTV*, under Viva Group, are owned by Aburizal Bakrie, a politician that supported the Prabowo candidacy. MNC Group (*RCTI*, *MNC TV*, and *Global TV*) is owned by Harry Tanoesudibjo, who also supported Prabowo's candidacy. Meanwhile, *Metro TV*, under Media Group, is owned by Surya Paloh, a politician that supported Jokowi and continues to do so to this day. This distribution of ownership has a direct influence on all the outlets' news products (Heychael, 2014). Due to high concentration of media ownership, polarization occurs across major media platforms.

The amalgamation of political contestation and media conglomeration serves to provide momentum for the Islamic conservative movement to meet a wider audience. *tvOne*, a supporter of Prabowo presidency, also caters to more radical Islamic views. The outlet is known to promote violence towards marginalized groups, for example by broadcasting condemnation of Shi'ites as heretical and illegal (*tvOne*, 2020), or airing conservative Islamic preaching stating that, "in Islam, homosexuals are punishable by death" (*tvOne*, 2020).

Similar situations also persisted in the 2019 election with a different twist. The rampant growth of digital marketing over the last decade has provided a new battleground for political contestation. Fed with misinformation and smear campaigns generated by political buzzers, social media users are increasingly polarized. Marginalized group identities, such as LGBTIQ, religious minorities, Chinese-Indonesians, or communists came to be used as ammunition to delegitimize political opponents.

The rift brought about by the political campaign grew beyond the election. The second term of Jokowi's presidency is clearly haunted by polarization. Indonesian social life has become increasingly conservative, with preachers who advocate discrimination achieving a degree of celebrity status. Meanwhile, "radical Islamist" also has also become a pretext for Jokowi's regime to curb freedom of speech and expression and implement authoritarian policies to silence dissent and democratic reform.

About the study

This research is intended to examine the Indonesian media landscape through the lens of religious diversity and conflict. The landscape of this study is defined by mapping two areas: media content production and audience behavior. In brief, the baseline study consists of two separate studies:

1. A content analysis, analyzing the coverage and framing of religious minorities in Indonesia.

2. An audience study assessing the media habits, news and media understandings, trust levels and perception of the coverage of religious minorities among selected audiences in Indonesia.

September 2021

Chapter 2:

Methodology

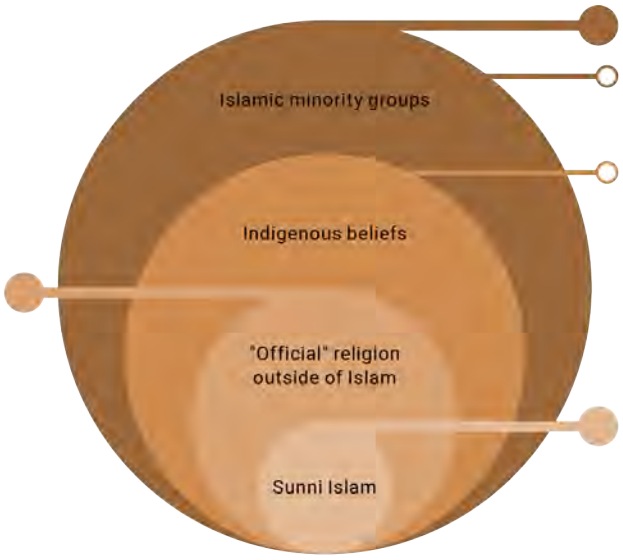
Indonesia

How do we define religious groups in Indonesia?

The question of religious violence and discrimination is tightly linked with the discourses of majority and minority groups. However, these categories are inadequate in capturing the dynamics of religious conflicts in Indonesia.

Majority-minority categories are a question of numbers. While numbers do matter, discrimination and seclusion are more a question of power relations. For example, IJABI (Indonesian Shi'ite organization) claims to have 2.5 million followers, making it larger than Buddhist groups. However, the levels of persecutions of Shi'ites is significantly higher than for Buddhists. To make matters worse, Shi'ites are also part of Islam, the majority religious group in Indonesia.

Therefore, instead of majority-minority categories, we will employ dominant-marginal categories to highlight interreligious power relations. These categories are based on the degree of state and social recognition and protection of a religious/belief group. The typology is illustrated in the diagram below:



Minority groups

Sometimes discriminated against, but are politically and socially recognized and celebrated as symbols of diversity.

Marginalized religious groups

Heavily persecuted for being "impure" or "deviant" forms of Islam.

Discriminated against socially as "occult" or "heresy," and politically considered as "invalid" belief.

Dominant group

Politically, socially, and culturally dominant religious groups and discourse in Indonesia.

Scope of the study

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world, with approximately 275,122,131 inhabitants, distributed over 5 major islands and 30 smaller groups of islands. The Indonesian press is also a diverse and vibrant ecosystem, with 47,000 mass media outlets, including print, radio, TV, and online media (*Tempo.co*, 2018). Conducting baseline research on such a large country poses challenges both in methodology and in practical data collection.

This study does not claim to be representative of the entire Indonesian population, but instead intends to provide indicative insights on how media content relates to audience behavior and perception of religious minorities. Therefore, this study limits its scope in both content analysis and audience study.

Scope of the content analysis

The media content analysis part of this study is limited to **television** and **online news media**. These platforms have been selected due to their wide access and preference in Indonesia. According to the Katadata survey (2020), TV is the second most preferred information source (59.5 percent) after social media (76 percent), while online media is ranked third (25.2 percent).

From 523 TV outlets broadcasting in Indonesia, we selected only free-to-air outlets who **broadcast nationally** and **focus on news broadcasting**.

We also limited online news media outlets based on the quality of their reporting on marginalized religious groups. This assessment is based on our previous Inclusivity Media Index (IMI) study (2020) that ranked the 10 most widely accessed Indonesian online news media based on their inclusivity towards 4 marginalized groups.[1] In this study, we sampled the top three and bottom three outlets in the IMI rank.

The news outlets that we studied are as follows:

Online Media	
Tirto	Top ranked in 2020 Inclusive Media Index
CNN Indonesia	
Kompas	
Republika	Bottom ranked in 2020 Inclusive Media Index
Okezone	
Tribunnews	
Television	
Kompas TV	
iNews TV	
Metro TV	
tvOne	

1 These groups are: marginalized religious communities, disabled communities, LGBTIQ communities, and women subjected to violence.

The content analysis section looks at news coverage on both minority and marginalized religious groups. The list of subjects is as follows:

Minority religious groups
Christian
Catholic
Hindu
Buddhist
Confucian
Marginalized religious groups
Shi'ite
Ahmadi
Indigenous belief

Scope of the audience study

Unlike the content analysis, which surveys all religious groups' typologies, the audience study is limited to dominant and marginalized groups. This limitation has been implemented to address two issues. The first is technical: having a similar scope to the content analysis would demand a much larger sample, additional resources and time, considering the large number of religious groups and the geographical challenges of the Indonesian archipelago.

The second issue is the focus of the study. By limiting the focus to dominant and marginalized groups, we will be able to gain deeper insight into how media practices and culture play a part in the groups' dynamics. While minority groups in Indonesia do face their share of discrimination and persecution, marginalized groups are the most vulnerable due to the lack of state recognition and protection. This condition results in systematic discrimination, in which state apparatuses also play a role in criminalizing and perpetuating discrimination against marginalized religious groups.

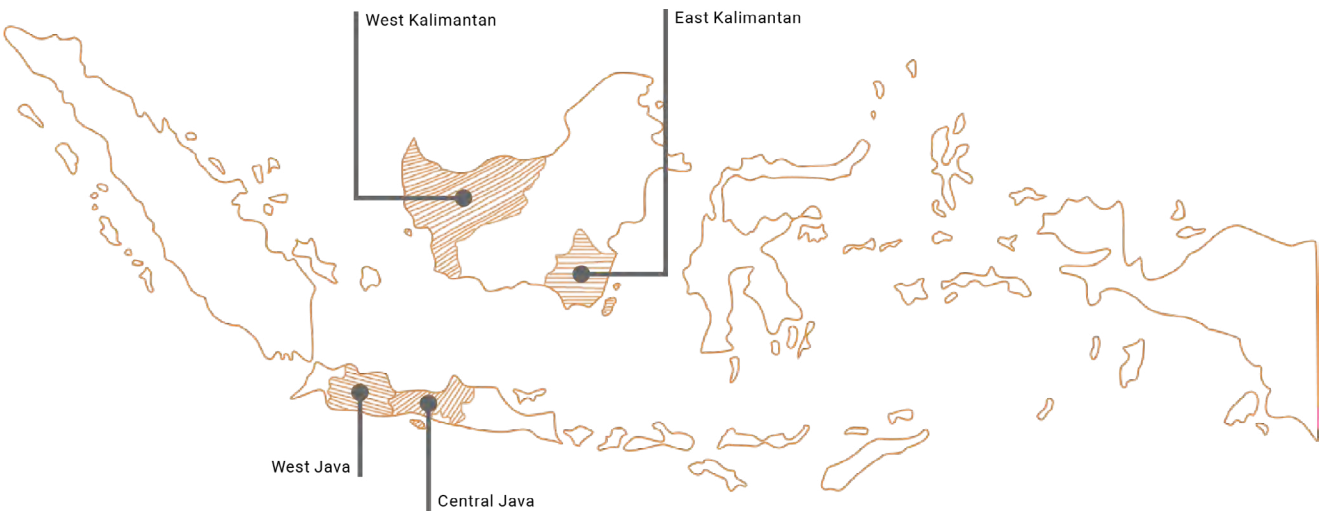
Activity	**Non-Marginalized Religious Group Informants**												**Total**
	Urban						**Rural**						
	Male			**Female**			**Male**			**Female**			
	Young	**Adult**	**Elderly**	**Young**	**Adult**	**Elderly**	**Young**	**Adult**	**Elderly**	**Young**	**Adult**	**Elderly**	
Survey	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	192
IDI	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	48
FGD	11	12	11	11	11	11	11	13	12	13	10	11	137
Total age	31	32	31	31	31	31	31	33	32	33	30	31	Grand total
Total gender	94			93			96			94			377
Total rural/ urban	187						190						

Activity	Marginalized Religious Group Informants												Total
	Urban						Rural						
	Male			Female			Male			Female			
	Young	Adult	Elderly	Young	Adult	Elderly	Young	Adult	Elderly	Young	Adult	Elderly	
Survey	0	12	9	2	4	0	1	7	5	3	3	2	48
IDI	0	4	1	1	2	0	0	2	3	2	1	0	16
FGD	0	11	7	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	0	24
Total age	0	27	17	3	6	0	2	10	9	5	7	2	Grand total
Total gender	44			9			21			14			88
Total rural/ urban	53						35						

The audience study of this research is focused on four provinces in Indonesia: West Java, Central Java, West Kalimantan, and East Kalimantan. These provinces were chosen due to the high occurrence of religious persecution of marginalized groups in these regions between 2015 and 2020. Although it is difficult to generate a definitive count of believers, marginalized religious groups in these provinces have active and vibrant events, such as *pengajian* (religious sermon) or gatherings.

We further limited the area of the study by randomly selecting two rural and two urban regions from each province. We also selected research participants to represent gender (men and women) and age (young 18-24 years old; adults 25-45 years old; elderly >45 years old). We strived to maintain a balance between these compositions in our survey, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions.

However, due to the precautious nature of the marginalized groups towards strangers, we experienced difficulties in achieving gender and age balance. Therefore, the findings of the research should be approached with an element of caution: there is a slight overrepresentation of adult males in our sample as they play a structural role in marginalized religious group organizations and were therefore more available to participate in the study. Although we have taken this into account in the data collection process, there are still potential biases in the research data due to this composition.



Research questions

The research questions that guided the research are as follows:

- RQ1: What characterizes the coverage of religious minorities in Indonesia?
  - What are the most dominant frames in the coverage of religious minorities in Indonesia?
- RQ2: How are religious minorities represented in the media in Indonesia?
  - How are the sources used to cover religious minorities in Indonesia distributed?
- RQ3: How do people in West and Central Java, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan understand the concept of news?
- RQ4: Where do people in West and Central Java, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan get their news and information from?
- RQ5: Which sources do people in West and Central Java, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan trust when they seek out news and information?
- RQ6: How do people in West and Central Java, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan evaluate news coming from different news sources?
- RQ7: What do people in West and Central Java, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan think about the way religious minorities are covered by the media?

RQ1 and RQ2 will be addressed by the content analysis, while RQ3 to RQ7 will be addressed in the audience study.

How did we conduct media content analysis?

To gather relevant and comprehensive data for the study, we employed a three-step data collection strategy:

1. *Initial keyword search.* In this step, we listed a number of keywords relevant to each subject religious group. We utilized the Binokular media monitoring service to collect both online and TV data. To make sure we captured as much relevant data as possible, we also conducted keyword searches on Google, YouTube, and TV online websites.

2. *Thematic mapping.* In this step we cleared irrelevant data and mapped the topic (i.e. specific issue/event/incident) from each subjects' stories. We also grouped each topic into wider thematic categories. In the research, we identified three themes: conflict, religious celebration, and others.

3. *Sample selection.* This step involved the selection of topics and samples for our content analysis study.

Our research instruments were developed to monitor two aspects:

1. **News source**. In this aspect, we coded each story using three coding categories:
   a. *News source type.* The background or identity of the news source. We identified 10 news source types: (1) marginalized groups, (2) government officials, (3) law enforcement agencies, (4) NGOs, (5) common citizens, (6) experts, (7) independent commissions, (8) legislators, (9) news media, and (10) others.
   b. *News source gender balance.* Each news story has been coded by the number of male and female news sources, whether the news sources have (1) more men than women, (2) more women than men, or (3) an equal number of men and women.
   c. *News source role.* Each news source has been coded by its role in the story. We identified 5 role categories: victims, witnesses, allies, villains, and others.

2. **News frame**. In this aspect, we coded each story according to two coding categories:
   a. *Marginalized groups frames.* Each news story has been coded based on how it frames the subjects through narratives and visual aspects. We identified 8 frames: (1) religious minorities as a threat, (2) religious minorities as victims, (3) religious minorities as diverse groups, (4) religious minorities as a resource, (5) religious minorities as a political issue, (6) religion as the root problem with religious minorities, (7) neutral representation of religious minorities, and (8) other frames.
   b. *Balance of point of view.* Balance of viewpoints was calculated by scoring each statement by a news source as positive (1), neutral (0), and negative (-1) towards the marginalized group. The sum score of a story is indicative of the balance of the story, 0 being balanced, <> 0 being unbalanced.

How did we conduct the audience study?

The audience study was designed to assess the following aspects:

1. Media habits. This aspect includes media consumption patterns, platform and channel preferences, and more specific media habits relating to religious information.

2. Trust in the media. This aspect includes perceptions on media bias, media relevance, and the role of the media.

3. Media literacy. This aspect aimed to investigate the audiences' ability to distinguish fact and opinion, information and misinformation, and source of biases.

4. Perception of the coverage of marginalized religious groups. This aspect investigated the audiences' opinion on coverage of marginalized groups, their agreements, and their preferences on the issue.

To probe the research areas, the audience study was designed with both a qualitative and a quantitative component. The combination of a qualitative and a quantitative component makes it possible to get both deep insights into audiences' consumption habits and news concepts, and to test hypotheses on a representative sample of a given population. The audience study utilized three data gathering methods with the following focus:

- Survey. The survey consisted mostly of closed questions aimed at gathering general information on the four aspects that we studied.

- In-depth interviews. These aimed to gather deeper insights from the survey data, to explore reasonings, thought patterns, and discourses underlying individual informants' media habits.

- Focus group discussion. These aimed to elaborate on both survey and in-depth interview findings by setting the discussion within community settings, in which the participants are able to discuss and construct common understandings of their media practices.

September 2021

Chapter 3:

Findings

Indonesia

Content analysis

Overview

Initial data collection

In our initial data collection, we found 11,424 online news articles and 181 TV news reports on minority and marginalized religious groups. Christianity and Hinduism consistently have the most reports, both in online and TV news. Online searches on Shi'ites resulted in quite a large amount of data. However, a large portion of this data was irrelevant to our study. News reports on the Syiah Kuala University, a well-known university, were mixed in our initial search due to a partial keyword match (the Shi'ites are known as "Syiah" in Indonesia).

Initial Data Collection on 6 Online Media and 4 TV Channels							
Platform	Minority religious groups				Marginalized religious groups		
	Christianity	Hinduism	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shi'ite	Ahmadi	Indigenous beliefs
Online	4,850	3,124	890	22	2,378	129	31
TV	94	51	15	5	14	1	1

There are two points of interest worth noting in our early observations. The first is the stark disproportion of reports among the minority religious groups. The media is heavily focused on Christianity and Hinduism, while other groups are significantly under-reported. Despite gaining state recognition in 2000, there were fewer reports on Confucianism than some of the marginalized religious groups. Indigenous beliefs are also clearly under-reported, compared to the 187 beliefs practiced in the archipelago.

The second point to note is that the topics of the reports have limited themes. Most of the news that we observed fell within the themes of conflict and religious celebrations.

Thematic Distribution in Online and TV News Reports								
Online news theme								
Theme	Christianity	Hinduism	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shi'ite	Ahmadi	Indigenous beliefs	Total topics
Conflict	5	2	2	1	2	1	1	14
Celebration	2	2	2	1	1	-	-	8
Others	2	2	1	1	2	1	-	9
TV news theme								
Conflict	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Celebration	2	2	1	2	1	-	-	8
Others	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	4

There are several problems in this coverage trend. Reports on conflict, while important in informing citizens on religious freedom conditions in Indonesia, might, if not conducted properly, perpetuate and worsen the conflict. Meanwhile, reports on religious celebrations accentuate a problematic portrayal of "artificial diversity" that has dominated Indonesian media culture since the New Order regime. This practice reduces diversity to physical markers (clothing, buildings, symbols and ornaments) to construct an image of peaceful coexistence (religious leaders congratulate other religious groups' celebrations), while downplaying social and cultural problems that potentially breed interreligious conflicts. This trend does not provide information for the wider audience to build mutual understanding on a more substantial level. The audience also lacks references on how religious diversity and coexistence are built and practiced in normal, day-to-day situations.

Sampled data

To narrow down the data to be analyzed, we sampled one topic from each religious group. To achieve more consistent analysis across all groups, we sampled topics with conflict themes. Focusing on conflict themes would also be beneficial in the context of the growing inter-religious tensions in Indonesia, as it could give indications and insights on how the media may contribute to conflict resolution.

We selected seven topics to represent each religious group. All of these topics are found in online coverage. However, two of them were not present in TV news. Buddhism and Confucianism share one common topic, regarding the internal conflict of the Kwan Sing Bio pagoda management. Aside from reports on each religious group, we also sampled reports on the controversial statement by the Minister of Religious Affairs Yaqut Cholil on the protection of marginalized religious groups. Although the statement did not concern a particular group, it was an important point in history in which human rights protection for marginalized religious groups was endorsed openly by a public official.

We sampled all news found for each topic, except for online coverage of terror in Sigi (Christian) due to the large amount of data (285 news articles) and implemented a quota sampling method by randomly selecting 80 articles.

The topics that we selected are as follows:

Religious group	Topic	Description	Number in sample	
			Online	TV news
All	Yaqut Cholil controversy	One day after being appointed, the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs stated that every religious group (particularly the Shi'ites and Ahmadis) are Indonesian citizens and that their rights are recognized and should be protected by the state. The statement is widely misunderstood as the minister acknowledging the teachings of Shi'ites and Ahmadis.	32	47
Christianity	Terror in Sigi	On 27th November 2020, the East Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) terrorist group murdered a family of four and set houses and a church on fire in Sigi, Central Sulawesi.	81	24
Buddhism and Confucianism	Kwan Sing Bio Dispute	Internal dispute within the Kwan Sing Bio pagoda in Tuban, East Java, that halted religious activities on the premises. The pagoda is a house of worship for both Buddhism and Confucianism.	9	2
Hinduism	Blackpink controversy	Blackpink, a K-Pop girl band, released a music video that featured a Ganesha statue. The girl band's fans in India criticized the video as disrespecting Hinduism. The case was widely reported in Indonesian media due to the popularity of Blackpink and Hinduism as one of the major religious groups in Indonesia.	13	0
Shi'ite	Forced eviction in Sampang	In 2011, a Shi'ite community in Sampang, East Java, was forcefully evicted from their hometown, and faced various discrimination and violence in the years after. In 2020, the Shi'ites were allowed to return to their hometown if they vowed to correct their mistakes and uphold Sunni teachings.	8	6
Ahmadi	Forced shutdown of an Ahmadi mosque	In 2008, an Ahmadi mosque in Sukabumi, West Java, was attacked by Islamist vigilante groups. In 2016, the mosque was closed by local authorities. In 2020, the Ahmadis intended to repair the mosque. The effort was halted by local authorities.	9	0
Indigenous belief (Sunda Wiwitan)	Forced shutdown of an ancestral tomb	In July 2020, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and municipal police (Satpol PP) closed the Sunda Wiwitan community's ancestral tomb in Kuningan, West Java, claiming that the tomb was a source of blasphemy and heresy.	28	1
Total sample			180	80

Dominant narratives on marginalized religious groups

The terror in Sigi and Yaqut Cholil's controversial statement received disproportionately more coverage than the other issues sampled, and were the only topics reported by all media outlets studied. This data is useful in understanding how the media set their agenda on inter-religious issues.

The terror in Sigi tragedy fits perfectly into the "threat on religious tolerance" narrative, in which the villain and victims are clearly defined. The East Indonesian Mujahidin's status as a terrorist group is well-established. The group was involved in the Poso conflict and has committed numerous killings of Christians since 1999. The group also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014. The Sigi tragedy is a model narrative on the threat of religious radicalization on inter-religious relations and state sovereignty.

On a different note, public reception of Yaqut Cholil's statement was not at all unified. However, his position as newly elected Minister of Religious Affairs and the highly polarizing nature of the issue was a magnet for the media. TV reports on Yaqut were centered on an idealized portrayal of how religious tolerance is celebrated. Yaqut, a prominent Islamic figure, was covered as he attended Christmas mass and called for the importance of inter-religious coexistence.

TV Editorial Piece on Minority and Marginalized Religious Groups		
TV outlet	**Editorial title**	**Topic**
Kompas TV	A family is murdered in Sigi, the perpetrators are allegedly EAM group from Poso	Terror in Sigi
iNews TV	After Ali Kalora's terror, the government is striving for reconciliation in Sigi	Terror in Sigi
Metro TV	Combating criminal movements in Central Sulawesi	Terror in Sigi
Metro TV	Pseudo-recognition of indigenous belief	Indigenous belief
Metro TV	Religion is inspiration	Yaqut Cholil statement

These narratives are accentuated further by the news type. Of 5 TV editorial pieces, 3 responded to terror in Sigi, and 1 to Yaqut's statement. Editorials in online news outlets were much more uniform: all of the 19 editorials that we gathered them are responses to the terror in Sigi.

Male and state actors dominate the discourse

News sources are one of the main indicators of how the media cover an issue. By selecting and highlighting news sources, the media is constructing a narrative around an issue, to direct the way audiences perceive and ultimately react to the news. The media can also select and highlight certain parts of a source's statement and combine it with other sources to cast roles for the parties involved, thereby influencing the audiences' evaluation of the story and various actors.

Both online and TV news stories that we studied consistently accentuated the same news sources: government officials, law enforcement agencies, and marginalized groups—albeit in a slightly different order. Government officials are the most quoted source on TV, while law enforcement agencies are the most quoted sources in online news.

The roles of the sources are also consistent throughout the studied platforms. Government officials are most often cast as allies, while the marginalized groups are dominantly cast as victims.

Law enforcement agencies have ambiguous roles. On the one hand, they have a role as impartial law enforcers that investigate and provide detailed information on inter-religious conflict cases (categorized as "others"). On the other hand, law enforcement agencies are also the sources most frequently cast as villains in online news. The villain role is not assigned to law enforcement agencies in TV coverage; instead they are cast as impartial law enforcers ("others") and allies.

This discrepancy can be explained by the topics covered by both platforms. TV generally only produces sparse news reports on marginalized religious groups, and in this study there was no TV coverage on the forced shutdown of the Ahmadi mosque and the Sunda Wiwitan ancestral tomb, for instance. Law enforcers were depicted as villains in online media in both cases, due to their role in enforcing the shutdowns. Law enforcers often become collaborators of discriminative groups in persecuting marginalized religious groups.

In TV coverage, the role of the villain is taken up by Islamic organizations, i.e., the Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI), which objected to Minister Yaqut Cholil's intent in confirming marginalized religious groups' human rights. The MUI was worried that this protection might become state recognition and approval of Islamic heresy.

Online News Source						
Source	Role					Total news sources
	Victim	Witness	Ally	Villain	Others	
Marginalized groups	43	2	-	-	20	65
Government officials	-	-	29	3	37	69
Law enforcement	-	-	-	10	73	83
NGOs	-	-	11	9	18	38
Citizens	-	-	3	1	10	14
National experts	-	-	10	-	3	13
Independent commissions	-	-	18	-	-	18
Legislative agencies	-	-	8	1	8	17
News media	-	-	13	2	30	45
Others	-	-	9	-	17	26
Total	43	2	101	26	216	388

Online News Source						
Source	Role					Total news sources
	Victim	Witness	Ally	Villain	Others	
Marginalized groups	7	2	2	-	-	11
Government officials	-	-	41	-	12	53
Law enforcement	-	-	2	-	35	37
NGOs	-	-	1	-	1	2
Citizens	-	-	6	-	-	6
National experts	-	-	3	1	1	5
Independent commissions	-	-	3	-	-	3
Legislative agencies	-	-	-	1	-	1
Islamist organizations	-	-	6	-	-	6
Others	-	1	14	-	8	23
Total	7	3	78	2	57	147

Besides “official” government and law enforcement sources, reports on conflicts involving minority and marginalized religious groups are also dominated by male sources: 90.5 percent of the news stories quote men more than women. Only 4.6 percent of the stories quote an equal number of men and women, and 4.3 percent quote more women than men.

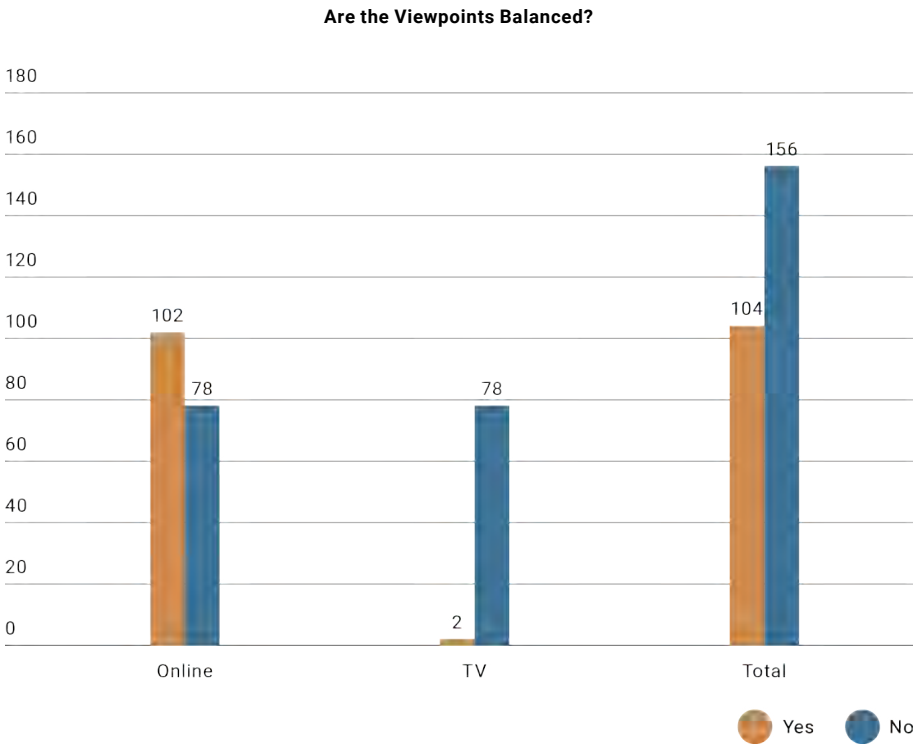
Comparison of Men and Women as News Sources in a News Story			
Platform	**Women > men**	**Women > men**	**Women > men**
Online	10	159	11
TV	3	76	1
Total	13	235	12
	260		

This gender imbalance in new sources might downplay and detract public attention from the impact of conflicts on women and the much-needed discussion on how to protect women and children from harm during conflict.

This finding also illustrates the general lack of gender-sensitive reporting in Indonesian media. A study by Tempo Institute and Pusat Data dan Analisis Tempo (2018) found that women accounted for only 11% of news sources in coverage across seven outlets during August-September 2018. Women also accounted for only 18% of journalists in Indonesia (Luviana, 2012). The lack of gender sensitivity in the newsroom promotes stereotypes that, among other things, objectify women as sexual objects in news reporting and leads to victim blaming of female sexual abuse victims (Remotivi, 2020).

Victimization of marginalized religious groups

Based on our findings, representatives of marginalized religious groups are the third most quoted news sources both in online and TV news coverage on religious issues. The relatively large proportion allocated to marginalized groups' representation might be a good indication of the media's commitment to erasing discrimination. Our analysis on the balance of viewpoints, however, found that a large proportion of the news stories are biased towards a certain group. However, this stance is not necessarily harmful for religious minorities.



The high number of unbalanced viewpoints can be explained by two factors: the high proportion of reports on the Sigi terror provides an "obvious" common villain, i.e. the East Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) militia, hence "obvious" media alignment in deterring terrorism. The other factor is the relatively high number of news sources portraying marginalized groups as victims, therefore driving the stories to a more sympathetic stance.

Further analysis on the news frames shows that the media adopts a degree of sympathy towards minority and marginalized groups. Only 1.5 percent of the stories frame minority and marginalized groups as a threat. The overwhelming majority, 49.2 percent, frame them as victims of the conflicts.

How are Minority and Marginalized Groups Framed in the Stories?							
Platform	**As a threat**	**As victims**	**As diverse groups**	**As a resource**	**As a political issue**	**Religion as a root problem**	**Neutral**
Online	4	90	6	5	0	6	69
TV	0	38	16	3	4	2	17
Total	4	128	22	8	4	8	86
	260						

While sympathetic, the dominance of the "victim" frame in depicting minority and marginalized groups also promotes victimization narratives. The narratives are problematic since they paint the marginalized groups as weak and passive, waiting for other groups (mainly the government or law enforcers) to mitigate the conflict, and not striving to resolve conflict and build peace on their own.

Some news stories utilize more subtle semantics to frame the marginalized groups that are unidentifiable with our research tools. This occurred in the coverage of Shi'ite refugees' conversion to Sunni prior to their return to their hometown. Some news stories wrote about this conversion poetically as "*kembali*" ("returns") to Sunni, in parallel to their return to their hometown (*Detik*, 2020; *Republika*, 2020). This choice of word implies that the Shi'ites had strayed and then returned to the right path. Although the reports acknowledge the rights of the Shi'ites who refuse to convert to Sunni, the reports quote statements to frame them as obstinate sinners (*Tribunnews*, 2020).

Highlights on media journalism practices

The impact of TV polarization on minority and marginalized religious group news coverage

After the 2019 election concluded with the re-election of Jokowi, TV polarization continued to persist. *tvOne*, a supporter of the Prabowo camp, is popular among conservative Islamic groups, while *MetroTV*, a supporter of the Jokowi camp, represents a more secular-to-moderate and liberal audience. During the period of our research, this polarization crept further into coverage of minority and marginalized religious groups. Below are two topics to illustrate this point.

The first topic is the return of Sampang Shi'ite refugees to their hometown. While *MetroTV* covered the topic in a neutral frame, *tvOne* did not cover it at all. Instead, the *tvOne* program, FAKTA ("Fact") broadcast reports on Shi'ite teachings in its episode, "Despite Rejections, The Shi'ite Still Operate" (*tvOne*, 2020). Although the report was seemingly balanced by proportionately interviewing the community's proponents and adversaries, as the show progressed it led the audience into condemnation of the Shi'ites.

The show's discussion focused on two Shi'ite teachings, *mut'ah* marriage (contractual marriage) and *taqiyah* (deception to protect the faith).

While the Shi'ite sources tried to clarify these controversial issues, their opposition used them to mobilize negative sentiments by alluding to the immorality of these practices. The opposition constantly stated that any good words or defense from the Shi'ites were *taqiyah* (lies). The show concluded with a statement by Babe Hasan, a prominent adversary of the Shi'ites, calling for all Islamic organizations to convene and study all Shi'ite teachings word by word to determine whether Shia is part of Islam. This scrutinizing "tribunal" was deemed necessary to avoid deception by the Shiites.

The second point is on indigenous beliefs. *MetroTV* is the only TV station that broadcast a report on indigenous beliefs. This single report was broadcast as an editorial, titled "False Recognition on Indigenous Belief" (*Metro TV*, 2020). As an editorial piece, the report is indicative data that points to *MetroTV*'s position on the issue. In the piece, *MetroTV* criticized the state's administrative recognition that does not extend to protection and programs to eliminate discrimination. The piece also stated that the state had been "defeated by the pressure of intolerant masses." This editorial piece was prompted by the forced shutdown of the Sunda Wiwitan ancestral tomb following pressure from conservative Islamic groups.

Statement journalism, online community bubble, and sensationalism

Indonesian online journalism has evolved and developed a distinct journalistic culture in the last decade. Unlike broadcast or print media, digital media is unrestricted by broadcasting times or print space and therefore offers a virtually limitless stream of information. Online news sites have become a preferred platform, with their speedy updates and easy access through smartphones. However, online journalism also harbors various problematic journalism cultures.

The priority of speed encourages short and partial news reports. Online journalists often dub this as "running stories," in which journalists write a news article on an issue/incident from one or two sources; one source typically used as an anchor to tie the article to the context and one as a new piece of information, verification, or commentary. This holds true to our findings that, on average, a news story contains 2.2 news sources.

Average Number of News Sources in Online News Stories			
Media	**Number of news sources**	**Total news stories**	**Average sources per story**
CNN	32	15	2.1
Kompas	89	37	2.4
Okezone	27	21	1.3
Republika	46	28	1.6
Tirto	29	11	2.6
Tribunnews	165	68	2.4
Total	388	180	2.2

This "serial" approach to news writing largely depends on statement journalism practice, in which journalists rely on statements by public figures or officials as a way of obtaining information. This results in a news frame driven by its sources' statements. For example, in response to Minister Yaqut Cholil's statement on

the protection of minorities' rights, *CNN* published a story quoting a PKS legislator, who stated that the declaration was dangerous since it did not recognize the rights of the Islamic majority to be shielded from the incompatible Ahmadi and Shi'ite ideologies (*Republika*, 2020). Similar statements also came from an MUI chairman (*CNN Indonesia*, 2020). Incomplete and one-sided news articles reinforce confirmation bias and create an information bubble in communities due to Indonesia's heavily polarized digital culture.

The online journalism culture that prioritizes speed and over-reliance on official statements also comes with a major risk: misinformation. During the early reports of terrorism in Sigi, there was confusion over the objects burned by the terrorist group. There were three conflicting narratives on the issue. The first narratives were adopted in pieces quoting the Fellowship of Churches in Indonesia (*Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia*, PGI), which reported that the group had burned a church (*CNN Indonesia*, 2020). The second narrative quotes the regional police chief, who stated that no churches had been burned during the incident (*Tirto*, 2020; *CNN Indonesia*, 2020). The third narrative stated that the burned building was a house that was utilized as a place of worship (*Okezone*, 2020; *Tribunnews*, 2020).

Online news media also have serious and persistent problems with sensationalism. *Tribunnews*, one of the largest online media networks, is often criticized for its rampant use of sensationalism. This practice can be observed in its coverage on the day following the Sigi terror attack. Due to the fact that the murders happened in a remote village, when the case first surfaced in the media, who the perpetrators were remained a mystery. In this context, *Tribunnews* published an article using a comical, yellow, journalism-style title: "A Family is Killed, the Body is Neglected for Hours, because the Neighbor Ran to the Jungle in Fear" (*Tribunnews*, 2020). This report also referenced a murder in Bogor, West Java, which had no relation to the Sigi murder except for the sensational treatment of both incidents. While the Sigi murder was exploited as "comical," the murder in West Java was exploited due to the victims' homosexuality.

Conclusion of the content analysis

The content analysis findings can be summarized in four main points.

First, minorities and marginalized groups are severely under-represented in coverage related to religions and beliefs. Although Christians are widely covered, this might be bloated by coverage of the terror attack in Sigi, which touched on nationalist and terrorist sentiments, and also received international attention.

Second, news coverage of religious minorities and marginalized groups is dominated by narratives of victimization, which position the minorities and marginalized groups as weak and passive victims, unable to help and empower their own communities, and independently strive to resolve conflicts. The news positioned government agencies as allies and saviors that have the power to save helpless minorities. This narrative downplays the minorities' efforts and initiatives; hence placing them in a more vulnerable position.

Third, news coverage on religious minorities is trapped in "artificial" diversity narratives. These narratives revolve around coverage focusing on religious celebrations, accentuating physical and visible markers of religious identity, and elite-level discourse of diversity. Artificial diversity narratives do not touch on more substantial and much-needed dialogues, or reference on how the communities negotiate, navigate, and celebrate their differences.

Fourth, political polarization has a lasting impact in driving the conservative agenda into the media. This is particularly apparent in TV due to the clear polarization of the two biggest TV news outlets: the more liberal *Metro TV* and the more conservative *tvOne*. However, online journalism culture also has a

similar effect due to statement journalism practices that result in news stories driven by a single source's statements and opinions.

Audience study findings

The data analyzed in the Audience Study was obtained through three data collection techniques, namely surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Data from the three studies will be synthesized to jointly provide explanations of significant findings in the research project. Each analysis will consider demographic factors, age, and gender, although not all aspects of these three variables will be outlined. This report will mainly focus on the religious group factors, and will highlight demographic, age, and gender factors if they have any significant influence on results.

The findings from the Audience Study are arranged in five sections: Media Habits and Consumption; Media Trust and TV Outlet Polarization; Perception of Media Bias, Habits and Perceptions of Religious Information in the Media; Media and Information Literacy; and Perceptions of Marginalized Group Representation in the Media.

To respect the privacy of the participants in this study, all names are anonymized. Only general categories such as religious affiliation (marginalized/non-marginalized), gender, age, and demographic area are included.

Media habits and consumption

Media habits

The survey on media access frequency reveals that there are no significant consumption differences between marginalized and non-marginalized religious groups. Internet media is the form most accessed by the respondents, followed by television. The following table shows survey data on how often participants access each media platform:

Media Access Frequency								
Frequency	Television access		Internet access		Radio access		Newspaper access	
	Non-marginalized	Marginalized	Non-marginalized	Marginalized	Non-marginalized	Marginalized	Non-marginalized	Marginalized
Every day	61.42%	77.08%	92.71%	89.58%	9.38%	6.25%	4.17%	10.42%
4-6 times/ week	5.73%	6.25%	1.56%	0.00%	1.56%	0.00%	1.04%	2.08%
1-3 times/ week	6.33%	6.25%	1.56%	8.33%	4.69%	0.00%	5.73%	2.08%
1-3times/ month	0.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.56%	2.08%	3.65%	2.08%
<1-3 times/ month	24.96%	10.42%	2.60%	0.00%	35.42%	35.42%	41.6%	58.33%
Never	1.04%	0.00%	1.56%	2.08%	47.40%	47.92%	42.67%	22.92%
Don't know/have no access	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	1.04%	2.08%

As part of the survey, we asked an open question on how often the respondent accessed different media types. We coded the answers into 7 categories.

Total sample size: 240
Marginalized religious groups: 48
Non-marginalized religious groups: 192

The popularity of the internet and television is related to one common trait: the ability to present information with visual aids. This conclusion can be illustrated by the following two interview excerpts:

> "I prefer TV because the news is clear and reliable, since they broadcast it nationally. They also contain data, facts, and visuals." (Non-marginalized elderly male, rural West Kalimantan)

> "I prefer obtaining information from social media, since the information is short and contains pictures" (Marginalized adult female, East Java)

However, the two forms of media are utilized for different purposes. Despite being one of the most preferred information sources, the participants primarily use TV for entertainment and not for information. Most participants rely more on social and online media for information, as stated by the following interview excerpt:

> "I look for information in the morning through online and social media. I also do it in my spare time. I don't watch TV as much. When I watch it, I am not always looking for the news, only entertainment." (Non-marginalized elderly male, rural West Java)

There are three key aspects noted by the informants to justify their preference of the internet to obtain information: information diversity, easy access, and information speed. These aspects are elaborated by the following excerpts:

> "I prefer the internet because you can find anything there; all you have to do is type the keywords, and it will give you what you want." (Non-marginalized elderly female, urban East Kalimantan)

> "I prefer social media. It is simple, I can sit or lay down to access information, whenever, wherever." (Non-marginalized adult female, urban West Java)

> "Social media has up-to-date news. It is way faster; they can inform you about an event as it happens." (Non-marginalized adult female, urban East Kalimantan)

The participants also have different consumption patterns in accessing both TV and internet. The participants' TV news consumption habits can be described as casual and passive, as they can "listen" to it while multitasking, and let TV "tell the news."

> "I can consume TV without looking at it, I can understand the news by listening to it while doing other things" (Marginalized Elderly Male from West Kalimantan)

> "I prefer TV to get information. Because it's immediate, I don't have to look for it. When I turn it on, I immediately get the news." (Non-marginalized Elderly Female from Rural West Java)

In contrast, the participants define internet use as more active. The participants use the technology to obtain current news, job vacancies, and educational content. As stated by two of the participants:

> "Using the internet makes us more active, we are looking for news, instead of just accepting the news as we usually do when watching TV or listening to radio" (Non-marginalized young female, urban Central Java)

> "I use the internet to obtain information and as a tool to learn about the information

> I seek about nation development, education, the economy, events, and recent disasters." (Marginalized elderly male from rural Central Java)

Unlike TV and the internet, radio and newspaper consumption is low. The majority of survey respondents access these media less than 1-3 times per month. Around 47% of respondents never access radio. Those who listen to the radio mostly come from Central Java and West Java, and no respondent from West or East Kalimantan stated that they listen to the radio. During the in-depth interview sessions, participants did not identify radio as a relevant source of information.

Those who access radio tend to use it as a source of entertainment during leisure time and often when driving. Several informants who were housewives also stated that they utilized radio as a companion in doing house chores.

> "I usually listen to the radio only when I'm in a car to listen to music, local news, and commercials." (Non-marginalized young female, urban Central Java)

> "Radio can be consumed while cooking or doing chores, simultaneously with listening to information or entertainment. The way radio delivers its message is also easy to listen to and understand." (Non-marginalized adult female, urban Central Java)

Even though newspapers are not a popular media source and are generally not deemed relevant by the participants, there is an important point to note from the survey data. Marginalized religious group respondents who consume newspapers on a regular basis represent a significantly larger proportion (10%) than non-marginalized groups (4%). Of the respondents from marginalized groups, 58% use newspapers at least 1-3 times a month.

Unlike radio, newspaper consumption is more deliberate and focused. During an in-depth interview session, one participant noted that she trusted newspapers more than other media types because, "Newspapers require you to be more attentive and thorough in consuming the news" (Marginalized Adult Female, West Kalimantan).

The main reason for the limited interest in newspapers as a main source of information is the level of difficulty in terms of getting access to a physical newspaper. Participants stated that they read newspapers from institutional sources, such as the office or campus library.

> "My office is subscribed to *Solo Pos*, so I often read that to avoid boredom." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural Central Java)

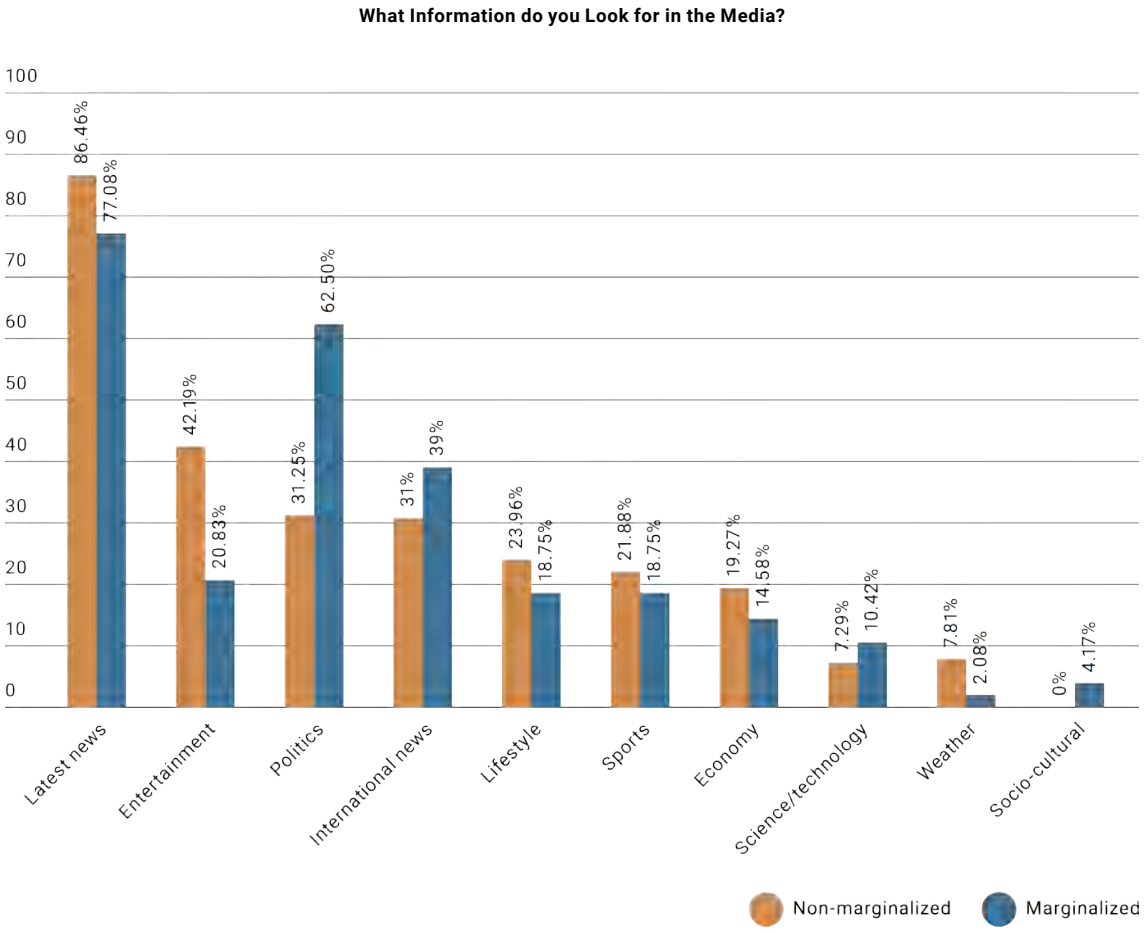
> "Yes, I read newspapers on campus every day." (Non-marginalized young female, urban West Java)

Types of information

The main types of information accessed by non-marginalized and marginalized groups tend to be similar. Each stated that they are looking for the latest or viral information that can provide and enrich their knowledge of current local, national and international situations. The most recent event that can describe the participant's activities in seeking information is related to the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants routinely looked for case developments and the status of their area of residence, the information obtained was then used as a reference in deciding which activities to do, as stated by a participant from rural Central Java as follows:

> "We need the latest information, like now we want to know the status regarding covid-19 that can be used as references when leaving the house." (Non-marginalized young male, rural West Java, obtained from in-depth interview)

However, there is a significant difference. Whereas marginalized groups tend to pay more attention to political issues compared to non-marginalized groups, non-marginalized groups tend to seek information with entertainment themes. In general, the findings show that marginalized religious adherents use media with a more serious purpose compared to non-marginalized religious adherents. The following are the results of the survey regarding the type of information participants were looking for in the media:



The preference of marginalized groups in accessing more serious news is representative of how they, as a minority group who are vulnerable to persecution, tend to be wary of the latest political issues. Political issues greatly affect their existence as a minority, especially in the current situation in which and increasing wave of Islamic conservatism has escalated into a political commodity, as has been observed since the events of the 2014 General Election.

In the 2014 election, there were competing claims between the two competing presidential candidates, Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto. On one occasion, the Deputy Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Gerindra Party, the party represented by Prabowo Subianto, namely Hasyim Djojohadikusumo stated that he would protect the Ahmadiyya and Shia (*Tribunnews*, 2014). On another occasion Joko Widodo received support from the international Shia community because he was considered to have a pluralist character (*Bisnis.com*, 2014).

Joko Widodo's victory was at first perceived by many as a great hope for Indonesian democracy and providing a broader vision of freedom (Mietzner 2014; Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014).

Even though hopes for the vision of democratization and freedom that would affect these marginalized groups have not been realized and these areas are considered by many academics to have regressed (Power, 2018; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019), the hope that Joko Widodo can protect minority groups continues to rise. During Joko Widodo's second term, the Minister of Religion, Yaqut C. Qoumas, who was recently appointed by Joko Widodo, stated that he would continue to oversee the affirmation of the religious rights of Shia and Ahmadiyya citizens. Yaqut's decision was a breakthrough after he was appointed to replace the previous Minister of Religion, Fachrul Razi, who came from the military. Joko Widodo's political decision to appoint of the minister plays a significant role in the protection of Shia and Ahmadiyya citizens. Political changes and dynamics are variables that greatly affect marginalized groups, so it is understandable that political issues have become a matter of great concern for them compared to their non-marginalized counterparts.

Information sharing culture

The increasingly deep penetration of the internet has given rise to a vibrant sharing culture in Indonesia. Social media, especially WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, are used by almost all of the respondents. People tend to make specialized private groups through WhatsApp or Facebook to connect with family members, colleagues, and communities of various interests. These groups have become a prominent source of information for the members. Most of the respondents in the in-depth interviews stated that they were members of such groups and actively receive, share, and discuss relevant information through these groups.

> "When a disaster happens, I will often find the news on social or online media. After that I will ask friends or family that live in the affected area. If the news is accurate, I will share it with my family through WhatsApp to tell them the situation." (Non-marginalized young male, urban East Kalimantan)

In general, information sharing culture is seen as a mode of socializing to develop stronger bonds with friends, family, and community, as shown by the following interview excerpt:

> "In social media, I can share information with my family, while also doing "silaturahmi" [strengthening social relations]." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural East Kalimantan)

Marginalized groups appear to prefer sharing information in person with their group or closest friends. *Pengajian* (Islamic study groups) held by Shi'ite and Ahmadi groups tend to be small and closed groups, which makes them more likely to see each other more often. In addition, data from the in-depth interviews also show that some of the marginalized group have a tendency to be more selective in sharing information that they consider too sensitive to be shared outside of their community, as stated by the following excerpt:

> "I talk with my close friends about problematic arguments on religious affairs that

> I find on the internet. For example, if there are arguments stating that Shi'ites are evil. I discuss economic affairs with my family. I also talk to my children about the 1965 event [the mass killing of Indonesian communists during a coup], which is not widely known to the public, while we watch a G30S movie [New Order anti-communist propaganda movie], so they know that there are counter-narratives." (Marginalized adult male, urban East Kalimantan)

> "I discuss economic matters with my university alumni friends, religion with fellow Ahmadi, and social affairs with close friends through WhatsApp." (Marginalized elderly male, rural West Kalimantan)

During the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, hoaxes and misinformation became a major social problem following the rise of social media and private messaging networks. The hoaxes mainly used race and religion to sway voters on the competing candidates, and to incite political and social turbulence. The government, media, and NGOs have developed programs to mitigate the issue, one of the most notable campaigns being "*saring sebelum sharing*" (filter before sharing), to stop distribution of hoaxes.

The campaigns are quite successful, at least according to our in-depth interview results. Most participants from both groups were more active in seeking information on their own than receiving information from others or recommendations from the media. Meanwhile, if the information is provided by other people or seen in media posts, participants still tend to verify the information by comparing it with information they have obtained themselves. Searching for information on their own is believed to improve their understanding of an issue or of previously obtained news, and determines their next decision of whether to share the information with others or not:

> "I usually obtain information by talking with friends, or from WhatsApp chat groups, or the radio. After that, I will make sure the information is valid by browsing online media." (Non-marginalized adult female, urban Central Java)

> "I tend to look for information by myself. Information from other people is not always reliable or relevant to what I'm looking for." (Marginalized young female, rural West Kalimantan)

However, this research found a deeper problem: awareness of the need to filter out information is not accompanied by information literacy, therefore facilitating biases in judging the information itself (the will be elaborated more in the "Media and Information Literacy" section).

Trust in the media

To measure the participants' trust towards the media, we asked about the respondents' agreement with five aspects of media trust. In the survey, we asked the respondents whether they agreed that the media is trusted by the public, is professional and unbiased, provides relevant information, satisfies information needs, and is independent from powerful elites.

During the survey, we also asked the respondents to rank the most and least trusted media outlets. The findings of the survey were elaborated further in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

This section will be divided into five sub-sections. The first four will focus on the general perception of trust towards the media, while the last two will focus on trust based on media platforms and outlets.

General findings on trust in the media

In general, the findings show that the respondents neither strongly trust nor distrust the media, as shown by the following table:

General Media Trust	
Variable	**Average score**
Indonesian media outlets are generally professional and unbiased	3.01
Indonesian media outlets are generally trusted by the public	3.22
Indonesian media outlets generally provide relevant and reliable information	3.19
Indonesian media outlets generally satisfy my information needs	3.24
Indonesian media outlets are not controlled by powerful elites	2.55
Indonesian media outlets are generally able to represent all groups in society	2.90
Total average score	3.15

* Total respondents: 240

* Scores are scaled from 1-5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree

One important finding to note is that respondents on average perceive the media as being controlled by powerful elites. During the focus group discussions, when asked what they thought of the news, participants were quick to point out that the media is influenced by power structures, as shown by the following excerpts:

> "All news coverage is always driven by the interest of a group of people." (Non-Marginalized Adult Male, Urban West Java)

> "The news is like manipulation. The information that we receive is oftentimes manipulated." (Marginalized Adult Male, Rural West Java)

However, this perception of power influence does not stop the participants from using the media, as the media has grown to be inseparable from their daily lives. On average, respondents have the highest confidence in the media's ability to satisfy their information needs. This is illustrated by a focus group discussion participant in West Kalimantan:

> "We need to know what's going on in our city, or other places, it's a daily need. If there is no news, we will not have knowledge on religion, medicine, or how to deal with Covid-19—we get them all from the news. The media can also answer most of our questions." (Non-marginalized adult male, West Kalimantan)

Of all the sample variables, gender does not influence media trust. In other words, both men and women appear to share similar perceptions of the media, as can be seen in the following table:

Media Trust Based on Gender Groups		
Variable	**Average score**	
	Male group	**Female group**
Indonesian media outlets are generally professional and unbiased	3.03	2.98
Indonesian media outlets are generally trusted by the public	3.19	3.25
Indonesian media outlets generally provide relevant and reliable information	3.19	3.19
Indonesian media outlets generally satisfy my information needs	3.25	3.24
Indonesian media outlets are not controlled by powerful elites	2.62	2.62
Indonesian media outlets are generally able to represent all groups in society	2.86	2.95
Total average score	3.15	3.13

* Total respondents: 240 (130 male respondents, 110 female respondents)

* Scores are scaled from 1-5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree

Trust in the media based on religious group

Compared to the non-marginalized groups, the marginalized groups have a poorer perception of the media in all categories. This perception can be attributed to the poor representation of marginalized groups in the media, as shown in the content analysis part of the study. Significant variance in the variables are highlighted in the following table:

Media Trust Based on Religious Groups		
Variable	**Average score**	
	Marginalized group	**Non-marginalized group**
Indonesian media outlets are generally professional and unbiased	2.92	3.03
Indonesian media outlets are generally trusted by the public	3.15	3.23
Indonesian media outlets generally provide relevant and reliable information	3.04	3.23
Indonesian media outlets generally satisfy my information needs	2.94	3.36
Indonesian media outlets are not controlled by powerful elites	2.35	2.60
Indonesian media outlets are generally able to represent all groups in society	2.31	3.18
Total average score	3.00	3.18

* Total respondents: 240 (192 non-marginalized, 48 marginalized)

* Scores are scaled from 1-5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree

Based on the findings of the focus group discussion, this distrust towards the media among marginalized groups is largely related to underrepresentation and stigmatization of the groups' faiths and communities, as shown by the following excerpts:

> "News coverage is often discriminatory and stigmatizes my belief. I also rarely find news coverage [on my religion], and when I do, it tends to have less variety and is very biased." (Marginalized young female, rural West Java)

> "When the news covers us, they are also unfair, the media only takes 'their' statement [intolerant groups] without asking for statements from Ahmadi people." (Marginalized adult female, rural West Kalimantan)

Although the survey data showed that marginalized groups have a general distrust of the media, they also have a relatively higher confidence in the media's ability to "gain public trust" and "provide relevant and reliable information to the public." These data can be interpreted as marginalized groups separating their "religious" identity from their "public" identity and information needs due to their experience of being stigmatized and underrepresented by the media. This is also evident from the in-depth interviews. When asked whether they look for religious information in the media, a substantial number of marginalized groups participants stated "no." Instead, they rely on more traditional ways to satisfy their religious information needs.

> "I don't look for religious information from the media. I get it from Ustaz Jalaludin [Jalaludin Rahmat, a prominent Shi'ite preacher]." (Marginalized adult female, urban West Java)

> "No, no. I only look for religious information through the Ahmadiyya Mission House" (Marginalized elderly male, West Kalimantan)

Trust in the media based on demography

Our survey findings suggest that urban respondents have lower trust in the media than their rural counterparts. Significant variance is particularly observed within the groups' perceptions of professionality and bias, as well as the media's ability to represent all groups in society.

Media Trust Based on Demographic Groups		
Variable	Average score	
	Rural group	Urban group
Indonesian media outlets are generally professional and unbiased	3.12	2.90
Indonesian media outlets are generally trusted by the public	3.27	3.17
Indonesian media outlets generally provide relevant and reliable information	3.22	3.16
Indonesian media outlets generally satisfy my information needs	3.28	3.21
Indonesian media outlets are not controlled by powerful elites	2.56	2.55
Indonesian media outlets are generally able to represent all groups in society	3.07	2.75
Total average score	3.21	3.12

* Total respondents: 240 (123 urban respondents, 117 rural respondents)

* Scores are scaled from 1-5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree

This finding is consistent with previous studies on public perception on corruption in Indonesia (Lembaga Survei Indonesia, 2020) that state that urban citizens tend to have more skepticism towards democratic institutions compared to their rural counterparts. The study attributed this discrepancy to education level; urban groups tend to have higher levels of education and are therefore more critical of democratic institutions and processes. However, there was no significant difference in educational background between rural and urban groups in this study.

Education Level Based on Demographic Group									
Demography	**Post-graduate**	**Graduate**	**Vocational**	**High school**	**Junior high**	**Elementary school**	**Religious education**	**Unschooled**	**Grand Total**
Rural	-	20	12	79	6	3	-	-	120
Urban	4	20	15	74	5	-	1	1	120
Grand total	4	40	27	153	11	3	1	1	240

Media access frequency also does not seem to be a contributing factor, since both demographic groups share similar media consumption patterns. The qualitative portion of the audience study also does not provide any explanation of this discrepancy due to the nature of the study, which focuses on the religious groups. The relation of demographic groups to perceptions of trust in the media remains an area that needs further research.

Average Media Access Frequency Based on Demographic Groups					
Demographic group	**Newspapers**	**Television**	**Radio**	**Online media**	**Social media**
Urban	1.93	5.00	2.05	5.64	5.79
Rural	2.06	4.75	2.05	5.89	5.83

* Total respondents: 240 (123 urban respondents, 117 rural respondents)

* Scores are scaled from 1-6, 1 meaning they never consume the media and 6 meaning they access it daily

Trust in the media based on age group

Our survey findings suggest that adult respondents tend to have greater trust in the media than young and elderly respondents. Significant variance was identified within the groups' perceptions of professionality and bias, and the media's ability to represent all groups in society.

Media Trust Based on Age Groups			
Variable	**Average score**		
	Adult group	**Elderly group**	**Young group**
Indonesian media outlets are generally professional and unbiased	3.12	2.90	2.99
Indonesian media outlets are generally trusted by the public	3.20	3.19	3.26
Indonesian media outlets generally provide relevant and reliable information	3.16	3.22	3.21
Indonesian media outlets generally satisfy my information needs	3.28	3.26	3.18
Indonesian media outlets are not controlled by powerful elites	2.56	2.56	2.56
Indonesian media outlets are generally able to represent all groups in society	3.28	2.92	2.85
Total average score	3.16	2.99	3.02

* Total respondents: 240 (70 young respondents, 90 adult respondents, 80 elderly respondents)

* Scores are scaled from 1-5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree

Similar to demographic groups, media access frequency and education level do not contribute significantly to this data, since there was no significant variance in these categories (see appendix 2). The qualitative portion of the audience study also does not provide any explanation of this discrepancy. The relation of age groups to perceptions of trust regarding the media remains an area that needs further research.

Polarization of trust: the case of TV

Our survey findings suggest that there is a stark polarization of trust when it comes to TV outlets: marginal groups tend to trust *Metro TV,* while non-marginalized groups place higher trust in *tvOne*. This is most likely related to the political contestation of the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, in which *Metro TV,* owned by Nasional Demokrat party chairman Surya Paloh, supported Jokowi's presidency, and *tvOne*, owned by then-Golongan Karya party chairman Aburizal Bakrie, supported Prabowo.

Five Most Trusted TV Outlets Based on Religious Group			
Marginalized group		**Non-marginalized group**	
Metro TV	47.92%	tvOne	40.10%
tvOne	14.58%	RCTI	15.30%
RCTI	10.42%	Trans TV	7.29%
Kompas TV	8.33%	Trans 7	6.25%
TVRI	4.17%	SCTV	4.69%

Marginalized groups, whose interests are aligned with the Jokowi campaign, believe that *Metro TV* broadcasts accurate, impartial, and non-provocative information, especially broadcasts that are related to their faith. This was clearly expressed by the following focus group discussion participant from urban Central Java:

> "The news [*Metro TV*] is quite good, Ahmadiyya is not cornered. The time they give for dialogue is balanced and not provocative—they clearly filter out what they air." (Marginalized adult male, urban Central Java)

However, *tvOne* is still trusted by marginalized groups, mainly as a reference and comparison for their main trusted news sources, as stated in the following account:

> "I think it [*tvOne*] is good. People can compare their news with other news outlets. People will indirectly be educated, they will look to find out which news is accurate and which is not." (Marginalized Adult male, Central Java)

Similarly, the non-marginalized groups also believe that *tvOne* is accurate and impartial. *tvOne* is also trusted for its ability to address various national issues, particularly through its most popular talk show, "Indonesian Lawyers' Club," which has been airing since 2008. This is reflected in the following statement by a focus group discussion participant:

> "*tvOne* broadcasts relevant news on the Indonesian state of affairs, particularly politics. My favorite program is 'Indonesian Lawyers' Club' [a talk show program hosted by veteran journalist Karni Ilyas], because it talks about important stuff regarding the state." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

The least trusted TV outlets from both groups are also consistent with their political leanings: the marginalized groups distrust *tvOne,* while non-marginalized group distrust *Metro TV.*

Five Least Trusted TV Outlets based on Religious Group			
Marginalized group		**Non-marginalized group**	
tvOne	37.50%	Metro TV	17.19%
Metro TV	8.33%	tvOne	11.46%
RCTI	6.25%	ANTV	9.90%
Indosiar	4.17%	Indosiar	9.38%
ANTV	4.17%	SCTV	5.73%

One interesting finding to note is that both groups use the idea of "neutrality" and "partisanship" as their justification to trust or distrust one of the outlets—despite both outlets being equally partisan, as shown by the following excerpt during the focus group discussion session:

> "*Metro TV* broadcasts are loaded with the owners' political agendas. *tvOne*'s broadcasts are far more accurate, daring, and neutral. 'Indonesian Lawyers' Club' is one example." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

Similarly, marginalized groups distrusted *tvOne* for its political leanings:

> "The outlet of the [government's] opposition. The news is not objective."

(Marginalized adult male, West Kalimantan)

However, there are still substantial non-marginalized groups who are critical of *tvOne* due to its journalistic practices, as stated in the following focus group discussion excerpt:

> "Whenever I watch *tvOne*, they always air different stories from the rest of the media. For example, they air different results of the election [in 2019, *tvOne* notably reported that Prabowo had won the election, while all other news media reported his defeat to Jokowi]. The outlet's credibility is subject to doubt." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural Central Java)

The expansion of business and trust: the case of online legacy media

Our survey findings suggest that trust in online media outlets is not as divided as for TV outlets. Kompas.com and Detik.com are generally the most trusted outlets across all variables.

Five Most Trusted Online Media Outlets based on Religious Group			
Marginalized group		**Non-marginalized group**	
Kompas.com	45.83%	Detik.com	28.65%
Detik.com	25.00%	Kompas.com	27.50%
Solopos.com	6.25%	Tribunnews.com	11.46%
Maula TV	2.08%	Liputan6.com	2.08%
Seword.com	2.09%	CNNIndonesia.com	2.08%

Trust in online media outlets is influenced by several factors. One of the major influences is name brand. Of the 10 most trusted outlets in the table above, 7 are legacy media outlets, named brands derived from old and established media companies. *Kompas*, for example, originated from print newspapers operating since 1965, while *Detik* is a well-known tabloid published since 1990. Meanwhile, *CNN Indonesia* is a franchise brand from a US media company. This trust of old brand names is shown in a participant's statement during a focus group discussion session:

> "Sites like *Kompas.com*, or *Tribunnews.com* can be trusted because they are old and trusted names." (Non-marginalized young male, urban West Kalimantan)

Maula TV and *Seword* are the only brands that are native online outlets, and are only trusted by the marginalized group. It is interesting to note that their trust of these outlets are closely related to their religious identities and political leanings. *Maula TV* is an outlet that focuses on Shi'ite information needs, while *Seword* is a user-generated media platform that publishes strong opinion pieces to support the Jokowi government's policies and actions.

Another significant factor is the technological environment. Legacy media outlets are endowed with accumulated capital from their well-established parent companies, both in resources and brand recognition, that might have eased their entrance into the digital media market. Unsurprisingly, these outlets are also able to integrate with the wider digital environment and are thus seemingly omnipresent in Indonesian digital lives, from smartphone notifications, search engine algorithms, and massive social media presence. This ubiquitous presence of legacy media influences the participants' perception of trust, as indicated by

the following excerpts:

> "I trust *Detik.com*. Their news updates are frequently found on Twitter." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

> "I trust *Detik*, because it often appears on my smartphone notifications" (Non-marginalized adult female, urban East Kalimantan)

> "*Tribunnews* stories often appear on web search, and they seem accurate." (Non-marginalized adult female, rural East Kalimantan)

Local news coverage is also an important factor influencing participants' trust. Two of the most trusted media sources are focused on local news. *Solopos.com* (trusted by the marginalized group) has a network of news organizations focusing on various local news in the Javanese islands. Similarly, Tribunnews.com (trusted by the non-marginalized group) owns local news networks—albeit with a wider area of coverage—that encompass almost all major regions in Indonesia. The significant impact of local news on the participants' trust is reflected in the following excerpt:

> "I trust *Tribunnews*. Their news often appears on my smartphone notification, and the stories are relevant to my local context." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

As described in the content analysis part of the study, major online media outlets generally focus on short, hard news on current affairs. The lack of in-depth and critical news stories, accompanied by the generalized running news that relies on official statements, make the outlets more appealing to the masses across political leanings.

This type of journalism explains both trust and distrust in various media outlets. A majority of the survey respondents stated that they have no distrust of particular online news outlets.

Five Least Trusted Online Media Outlets based on Religious Group			
Marginalized group		**Non-marginalized group**	
No distrust towards online media	60.42%	No distrust towards online media	58.85%
Tribunnews.com	10.42%	Detik.com	8.33%
Detik.com	6.25%	Tribunnews.com	6.25%
Vivanews.com	4.17%	Kompas.com	5.21%
Sindo	2.08%	Okezone.com	4.17%
Salafinews.com	2.08%	Vivanews.com	3.13%

The most significant factor for distrust noted by the participants during the focus group discussion sessions was journalistic practice. Online news outlets are often criticized for their bombastic and sensational news writing. Online journalism culture, which relies more on speed than accuracy, often produces misinformation. These criticisms are reflected in the following excerpts:

> "Many of the news articles they [*Okezone.com*] produce contain distorted information." (Non-marginalized adult female, urban West Java)

> "I dislike *Tribunnews.* Their writing style is too hyperbolic." (Non-marginalized young female, urban West Java)

> "*Detik* and *Tribunnews* have no relevance for me. I think their news is mostly clickbait, the title is often different from the news content." (Non-marginalized young male, rural West Java)

Another interesting finding to note is that nationality has an influence on distrust. During the focus group discussion sessions, some respondents expressed their distrust of *CNN Indonesia* due to its affiliation with an international news organization, which leads them to doubt the outlet's credibility and ability to assimilate with Indonesian culture:

> "This news outlet has international coverage, so the credibility is still in doubt." (Non-Marginalized Adult Female, Urban West Java)

> "The delivery method is not in accordance with Indonesian culture." (non-marginalized adult male, urban West Java)

The absence of *Tempo.co*, one of the major online legacy media outlets, from both the five most trusted and least trusted media outlets is also important to note. The participants associate *Tempo.co* with its sister company, *Tempo Magazine*, which frequently publishes critical news reports on the government and other powerful entities. This heavily critical stance of the magazine was highlighted as a source of distrust by the participants. One particular comment addressed the magazine's well-known caricature tradition:

> "The caricatures on *Tempo* are vulgar and provocative. Once I look at the cover page, I am no longer interested to read the stories." (Marginalized elderly male, rural Central Java)

The blurring line: speed and trust in media platforms

To gain deeper insights into how the informants chose their media, we ask stratified questions during the in-depth interview sessions. The first question was whether the informants trusted one media platform more than the other. If they did, we would ask the following questions: "What media platform do you trust the most?" "Why do you trust that platform?"

In general, both religious groups trust social media more than other media platforms. Speed of information is the most noted factor for this choice, as explained in the following excerpt:

> "Social media is faster than other media and the possibility of fake news is very small." (Non-marginalized young male, rural East Kalimantan)

This statement might sound counterintuitive, since the general sentiment is to the contrary, that social media's speed of information makes the platform more vulnerable to hoaxes and misinformation. However, another feature of social media serves as both a major attraction and also a solution to this problem: the interactive nature of social media enables users to intervene and interact with social media posts that they deem to be misinformation.

> "If the news is not accurate or a hoax, we can immediately comment to point it out, in contrast to other media where we cannot comment directly." (Non-marginalized elderly male, urban West Java).

However, some of the marginalized religious group respondents place more trust in television than other media platforms. Television is deemed more trustworthy due to its gatekeeping role, whereby it curates the quality of its content, as shown by an interview excerpt:

> "I trust television more, because it is national in nature and has filtered the news. Therefore, TV news is not a hoax; there are laws and policies to convey true and accurate news." (Marginalized, elderly male, rural West Kalimantan)

This finding also reflects the marginalized religious groups' ambiguity towards the media. On the one hand, they have noted that television has a history of under- and mis- representing their faith. On the other hand, marginalized religious groups are also active users of social media, and utilize the platform to communicate, to share information and their opinion. This ambiguity is consistent with the marginalized religious group's tendency to separate their general trust of the media from how their faith is represented by the media, as shown in the previous section (see "Media Trust Based on Religious Group").

Habits and perceptions of religious information in the media

Media habits in religious information consumption

The frequency of religious information consumption across variables is quite similar, although the marginalized group's frequency tends to be higher. The majority of the participants in both religious groups consume religious information daily.

How Often do You Look for Religious Information?						
Frequency	**Everyday**	**4-6 times/week**	**1-3 times/week**	**1-3 times/month**	**Infrequently**	**Never**
Non-marginalized	31.77%	9.38%	24.48%	5.21%	27.60%	1.56%
Marginalized	37.50%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%	22.92%	2.08%

The intense need for daily religious information among the non-marginalized group is consistent with previous studies that indicate a rise of Islamic conservatism. A previous study by Fossati, Yew-Foong & Dharma (2017), for example, found that 82% of surveyed respondents agreed that women must wear a *hijab*; 67% of them agreed that Indonesia should implement *sharia* law to strengthen Indonesian morality.

When looking at the data from the audience study, there appears to be significant variance in the type of religious information people are interested in. In general, information on religious practices and rituals is deemed important across all groups, followed by Information on establishing a religious family, and information on different religious branches.

What Type of Religious Information do You Look for?										
Religious information	General	Religious group		Gender		Age			Demography	
		Non-marginalized	Marginalized	Male	Female	Young	Adult	Elderly	Urban	Rural
Religious practices and rituals (for example, how to do prayer, how to do fasting, how to dress, halal/haram)	66.30%	67.19%	56.25%	62.31%	68.18%	75.71%	57.78%	63.75%	69.11%	60.68%
Establishing a religious family (how to raise a child, how husbands and wives interact)	47.08%	50.52%	33.33%	37.70%	58.18%	47.17%	44.44%	50%	39.83%	54.70%
International religious politics (for example, Palestine-Israel conflict, ISIS)	19.17%	17.71%	18.75%	22.31%	12.72%	24.28%	12.22%	18.75%	19.51%	16.24%
Religious branches (Sunni, Shia, Ahmadiyya)	20%	13.54%	37.5%	26.92%	8.18%	14.29%	15.56%	25%	20.35%	16.24%
Application of religious norms in legislation (Alcoholic beverages, LGBTIQ, etc.)	11.67%	10.94%	18.75%	14.61%	10%	21.43%	10%	7.5%	13.01%	11.97%

This finding reflects the religious information-seeking behavior of each category. Non-marginalized groups tend to be more closed, only interested in information related to their own faith and family, while the marginalized groups are more active in looking for a wider scope of information. This attitude might derive from their history of structural discrimination that makes them more sensitive to socio-political changes.

Gender norms seem to be at play in information-seeking behaviors. Men tend to be more interested in socio-politics (regulation, international affairs) and theoretical issues (religious branches), while women appear to show higher interest in domestic issues (family building). This finding is consistent with what is typically found in audience studies, with women having a higher attention to issues pertaining to the well-being of the family and men having higher attention to socio-political matters.

The rise of Islamic conservatism noted at the beginning of this section has also inspired various movements campaigning for "youth marriage." The movement normalizes the marriage of women young ages. In 2018, 20% of married women were between 16 and18 years old, and 3.73% were below the age of 15 years. In contrast, only 6.41% of married men were 16-18 years old, and 0.36% were below the age of 15 years (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, 2018).

Compared to other age groups, young people display significant interest in religious information. This finding is consistent with the study by Alvara (2019), who found that puritan-conservatist Islamism is prevalent among the youth. The study found that young people (aged 18 to 24) are more likely to be sensitive to Middle Eastern religious conflicts and support Islamic *sharia* law.

Demography does not seem to indicate any significant pattern of information needs, except that people living in more rural areas tend to seek more information on religious family establishment than their urban counterparts. This data might be attributed to the relatively more communitarian and family orientedness of rural communities, compared to the more individualistic and career-oriented urban population.

Media preferences for religious information

TV is a popular choice among the non-marginalized group. When asked about their preferred TV program for obtaining religious information, "*Damai Indonesiaku*" (Peace in My Indonesia) was consistently mentioned by participants.

Broadcast since 2008, the program is formatted as religious sermons delivered by various celebrity *ustadz* (Islamic religious teachers), that endears the show to its audience. This interview excerpt illustrates what piques the audience's interest:

> "'*Damai Indonesiaku*' sermons are delivered by *ustadz* that resemble the deceased KH Zainudin MZ [a popular ustadz active in the 1980-2000s], the sermons are stylish and humorous." (Non-marginalized adult female, rural Central Java)

The popularity of this program might contribute to the growing political polarization. Throughout its broadcasting history, "*Damai Indonesiaku*" has broadcast the controversial *ustadz* Abdul Somad, who has been criticized for his harsh views on non-Muslims. Most notably, in 2016, in the run-up to the Jakarta gubernatorial election, the show aired *ustadz* preaching to its audience to not vote for *kafir* (non-Muslims) as leader. Abdul Somad, one of the show's recurring *ustadz,* stated that, "we, as the people, should not act like prostitutes [by electing a non-Muslim leader]. The leader can be the pimp, and the people would be the prostitute" (*Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia,* 2016).

In contrast, marginalized religious groups do not rely on television to obtain religious information, and seem indifferent to religious content in television. As stated by an adult female from urban West Java, who only watches religious shows, "in a fleeting moment, I don't even remember the program's title".

This response is understandable, given that Islamic programs broadcast on television focus heavily on conservative Islamism and overlook—or at times, condemns—marginalized religious groups. An informant summed up the marginalized experience in his statement:

> "I watch no specific television program [for religious information], because our religion has never been covered in the media." (Marginalized elderly male from urban, West Kalimantan).

The rapid growth in internet use in Indonesia has given rise to a new information landscape. During our in-depth interview sessions, informants noted that the new technology offers a much wider variety of information than traditional media, and has quickly become a major source for daily information needs.

Digital audio-visual platforms are highly popular among the informants. Instagram is the fourth most used social media platform, accessed by 79% of Indonesians aged 16-64 (We Are Social, 2020), and provides a myriad of religion-related social media accounts. The informants that we interviewed stated that they follow social media accounts to obtain religious information.

Yet perhaps the most significant platform is YouTube, the most accessed social media channel in Indonesia. YouTube seems to be the most popular choice for specific searches to obtain religious information among the research informants. Informants from Central Java, for example, utilized YouTube for Quran reading technique reference:

> "I look for the correct way to read the Quran through YouTube, because I can find the experts while I look for a daily prayer guide through online media." (Non-marginalized adult female, rural Central Java)

The participants have preferred YouTube channels for obtaining religious information, mostly based on

ustadz figures. Abdul Somad, Hanan Attaki, Ali Jaber, Haikal Hassan, Mamah Dedeh and Abdullah Gymnastiar are among the most preferred figures. Most of these figures are openly known as proponents of, or made positive public statements regarding, Prabowo during the 2019 presidential election. These *ustadz*'s conservative views are channeled through Prabowo, therefore obtaining a political platform for their more violent and discriminative views.

Similarly, YouTube is also popular among marginalized religious groups, albeit with completely different channel preferences. Channels developed by marginalized group members, such as *MTA-Indonesia* (Ahmadi), or *Majulah IJABI* (Shi'ite) were mentioned as preferred channels. Some respondents from the marginalized groups also mentioned the more public channel *Cokro TV* as their preferred choice.

> "*Cokro TV* YouTube channel contains a lot of information related to indigenous beliefs, and has diverse content." (Marginalized young male, rural West Java)

The *Cokro TV* channel is hosted by figures known to be Jokowi proponents, such as Denny Siregar, Ade Armando, and Eko Kuntadhi. The channel consistently publishes provocative attacks on conservative Islamists, based on arguments of "nationalism" and "religious tolerance."

The antagonism of opposites, between "purist Islamism" on the one hand, and "religious pluralism" on the other, has resulted in a polarized digital space. Each camp is trapped within its own digital bubble, with little to no effort made to build bridges and find common ground.

Perception of religious representation

During the in-depth interviews, we found that there was a significant difference in how the marginalized and non-marginalized groups saw news coverage of their religion. Most of the non-marginalized group stated that the media had done fairly well, while the marginalized group think that their religion is misrepresented by the media. The general sentiment of the marginalized group can be summarized in the following statement:

> "There is much discriminatory news coverage, with stigmatization of my belief. I also rarely find news coverage (on my religion), and when I do, it tends to have less variety and be very biased." (Marginalized young female, rural West Java)

This finding is consistent with the content analysis that we conducted, and which has been elaborated further in the "Media Bias" chapter. The important finding to note in this section is that while the non-marginalized religious group is generally satisfied with how they are represented by the media, the participants have two common themes. The first relates to the status of Islam as the majority religious group.

> "On the aspect of fair news coverage, the media does report unfairly, there should be more news about Islam considering Muslims are the majority in Indonesia." (Non-marginalized elderly male, urban West Java)

This line of argument appears in several other informants' statements, formulated as a "fairness" and "logical" contention that, since Islam is the majority religious group, it is therefore only reasonable that it receives more media coverage.

The second theme related to media representation of non-marginalized groups is that there is too much negative exposure of Islam, as summarized by the following interview excerpt:

> "The amount of news on Islam is not enough because the positive things are rarely exposed. The topics are not varied, they only seem to be in one direction and have

> not been reported fairly because the reported news is often not appropriate and corners Islam." (Non-marginalized elderly male, urban Central Java)

Some participants from non-marginalized religious groups also think that the issue of radicalism is too attached to Islam in general. This is represented by the following statement:

> "It is not good because Islam is considered as a radical religion, as if Islam is a coercive religion." (Non-marginalized adult female, urban East Kalimantan)

These comments are related to the growing number of violations of religious freedom and expression perpetrated by conservative religious groups. International conflicts and tension following the founding of ISIS and the global call for *jihad*, which resonates with Indonesian *jihadists*, also influence this sentiment. Both phenomena garner a lot of media attention that highlights the violent methods that are justified by some Islamic teachings.

Media and information literacy

Perception of the news

During the opening of the focus group discussion sessions, we asked participants to mention three words from the top of their head that they associated with the word "news." The most recurring words concerned the intrinsic value of news for the audience: "information," "fact," "knowledge," and "*wawasan*" (horizon). When probed further to understand the meaning of the words, the participants were quick to relate the concepts to the normative role of the news, as reflected by this excerpt:

> "Accurate and accessible information is what we are supposed to consume. There are many types of "*wawasan*," be it on religion, nation building, economics; it can also be about the potential for development, be it about automotive, or other things." (Non-marginalized adult male, urban East Kalimantan)

Other participants put more emphasis on how tightly related news is to their daily life:

> "We need to know what's going on in our city, or other places, it's a daily need. If there is no news, we will not have knowledge on religion, medicine, how to deal with Covid-19—we get all of this from the news. The media can also answer most of our questions." Non-marginalized elderly male, urban East Kalimantan)

To the participants, the discussion of news is also inseparable from the discourse of hoaxes, as most focus group discussion panels we conducted had at least one participant pointing out the issue. The indispensability of news is also accompanied by the growing concern of information "validity" and "disinformation." Some even further pointed out the machination of a powerful group that influences the news, thus creating disinformation. This idea of news manipulation was held by both marginalized and non-marginalized group participants:

> "All news coverage is always driven by the interest of a group of people." (Non-marginalized young male, urban West Java).

> "The news is like manipulation. The information that we receive is oftentimes manipulated." (Marginalized adult male, urban West Java)

This finding shows that the audience is able to negotiate, put at a distance and evaluate the information they

receive in daily life. However, this ability does not mean that the participants are capable of objectively reviewing the information they receive, or of distancing themselves from their own biases.

The ability to identify fact and opinion statements

According to a study conducted by the *Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika* (2020), Indonesia has relatively low levels of information and data literacy (with a score of 3.17 out of 5). The study also found that respondents were prone to distributing misinformation, and that only a handful of them were able to identify hoaxes.

This section of the study intends to investigate further whether politico-religious identities have a contributing factor in the judgement of information. During the survey, we asked respondents to assess two statements and identify whether they thought each statement was stating fact or opinion. The statements were as follows:

> **Statement A (opinion)**: Indonesia is threatened by sectarianism supported by radical religious interpretation, expressed through political attitudes, religious activities, acts of terrorism, hate speech, intolerant behavior towards fellow citizens, and intimidation against other groups with different opinions or political choices.
>
> **Statement B (fact)**: Alvara Research Center survey found that some millennials agreed to the concept of a caliphate as a form of state. The survey was conducted on 4,200 millennials, consisting of 1,800 college students and 2,400 high school students in Indonesia. The majority of millennials chose Negara Kesatuan Indonesia (NKRI) as their form of state. However, 17.8 percent of college students and 18.4 percent of high school students idealized the caliphate as the form of the state.

In general, a large number of respondents were unable to distinguish between facts and opinion statements: 3 out of 10 participants were unable to identify statements of fact, while 4 out of 10 were unable to identify statements of opinion.

Evaluation of Statement A (Opinion)									
Answer	**Marginalized**	**Non-marginalized**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Adult**	**Elderly**	**Young**	**Male**	**Female**
Fact	41.67%	37.50%	37.07%	39.52%	37.08%	35.90%	42.47%	38.46%	38.18%
Opinion	58.33%	62.50%	62.93%	60.48%	62.92%	64.10%	57.53%	61.54%	61.82%
Evaluation of Statement B (Fact)									
Answer	**Marginalized**	**Non-marginalized**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Adult**	**Elderly**	**Young**	**Male**	**Female**
Fact	70.83%	71.88%	65.62%	77.42%	68.54%	66.67%	80.82%	68.46%	75.45%
Opinion	28.17%	28.13%	34.48%	22.58%	31.46%	33.33%	19.18%	31.54%	24.54%

Based on the data, the participants seem less capable of identifying statements of opinion than fact. This might be caused by statement A's substance that might ring as true, or be a reflection of their daily experience or discourses. This might explain why the marginalized group is slightly more inclined to identify statement A as fact. However, in general, there is no significant difference between the two religious groups' ability to identify statements of fact and opinion. From this data, it can be inferred that religious identity does not

necessarily predict the ability to identify fact and opinion statements.

The data also shows that urban, youth, and female groups were more capable of identifying fact and opinion statements. Wibowo, Rahmawan & Maryani (2019) also found that younger people in general are less prone to distributing misinformation. Similarly, Nadzir, Seftiani & Permana (2019) found that urban populations are more exposed to misinformation compared to rural populations, which might explain the higher levels of information literacy among urban groups.

The ability to identify misinformation

During the focus group discussion sessions, the facilitator guided a discussion on how participants discerned misinformation in the following manner: the facilitator showed two social media posts commenting on one news report. The news report that was chosen for this study covered Minister of Religious Affairs Yaqut Cholil's clarification of his statement on religious minority protection. The first social media post spun the news with misinformation, while the second social media post commented with a reasonable interpretation of the news. We asked participants to discuss whether the posts contained accurate information and also to elaborate on how they assessed the content. We also showed participants the news report commented on by each account prior to commencing the discussion.

@MuhFahriUsman / Twitter

Caption social media post A:
"This minister of religious affairs has planted the seeds of "*perpecahan*" (lit: disunity, conflict). Maybe he is an agent of the Zionists to turn NKRI (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*, The Unitary State of the Indonesian Republic) into another Syria. Minister of Religious Affairs Yaqut will protect the Ahmadi and the Shi'ites."

While the participants from both marginalized and non-marginalized groups were quick to point out that the first statement contained misinformation, the reasoning behind their evaluation was interesting to note.

The participants from the marginalized group panels tended to relate their evaluation to the news source embedded in the post: the commentary was disinformation because it drew a conclusion that cannot be inferred from the news source. On the other hand, the evaluations in the non-marginalized groups indicated that participants did not assess the post based on the accuracy of the statements, but instead based it on the effect of the statement. This is evident from these two short excerpts:

> "The post contains hatred, and can lead to '*perpecahan agama*' (religious division, conflict between religion)." (Non-marginalized young female, urban East Kalimantan)

> "The information is dangerous, and contains negative views." (Non-marginalized elderly male, urban West Java)

A non-marginalized participant in East Kalimantan even related the content to the government, stating:

> "It's misguided and provocative. This is a media that hates the government, easily provoked by false information. Whoever made this must hate '*persatuan*' [lit: "unity," refers to unity in national identity]." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural East Kalimantan).

Although in the minority, there were participants who judged the post as accurate and containing true information. The judgement largely drew on their sentiments towards the marginalized group. These statements were uttered by rural adult males from West Java and East Kalimantan:

> "First, I would click the like button for the post, because I think the Shi'ites have different teaching and rituals (from Islam). And I believe they are part of the Zionist agenda, and I believe in this story." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

> "I would 'like' this news, because the Shi'ites should not exist in Indonesia" (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

> "I would read and share this. I am fanatical about my religion. I don't want Islam threatened, especially by those Shi'ites." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural East Kalimantan)

The reactions to the second social media post largely corresponded with reactions of the first post, with most participants appreciating the tone and accuracy of the post.

@Rahman_Nashir / Twitter

Caption social media post B:
"It is clear now… The position of Gus Yaqut on the 'Shi'ite and Ahmadi' issue. He is protecting them as Indonesian citizens, not protecting their organizations. 1. Protecting the citizens. 2. Inviting the public to maintain tolerance between religious communities."

The participants that reacted positively to the misinformation post consistently reacted negatively towards the second post. The following excerpts illustrate this finding:

> "I think protection of the citizens is not the responsibility of the minister of religious affairs. It is the role of the police or the army. The minister of religious affairs should stick to religious matters." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

> "This post is just '*cari aman*' (timid, afraid of speaking out harsh truth)" (Non-marginalized adult male, rural West Java)

> "This person is a proponent of the minister, it is just a repetition of his excuse. I will only read it, I will not share it." (Non-marginalized adult male, rural East Kalimantan)

Perception of marginalized group representation in the media

The last part of the focus group discussion was aimed at exploring participants' responses towards positive media representations of marginalized groups. In this session, the facilitators presented a news story broadcast on *tvOne* titled "The Sunni and Shia are Coexisting Peacefully in Jepara " (2013). The facilitators probed the participants' responses by asking them how they felt about, and agreed on, the content. The facilitators also asked the participants whether they had seen similar content in the media.

The responses from the marginalized groups were unanimous: the content presented educational value in celebrating diversity and promoting peaceful coexistence. Such a response is to be expected, considering the marginalized group's history of under- and misrepresentation in the media.

The majority of responses from the non-marginalized groups were of caution. They neither felt happy nor angry about the coverage, however they seemed to suspend their judgement on the issue, some in a more roundabout way. This stance can be illustrated by the following two statements:

> "For me, the media is free to cover anything, and it is up to us to be smart enough to filter the content, whether it is good or bad for us. The story does not show the bad side, only the good side, that is inter-religious tolerance. The media is only reporting what happens, that there is this thing that happens in this place. The point is, the question of good or bad is up to us to decide." (Non-marginalized elderly male, urban West Java)

> "It's still unclear to me. It is up to the audience to interpret." (Non-marginalized adult male, urban Central Java)

When asked about their agreement with the news report, most of the non-marginalized group participants expressed their approval of the situation:

> "I agree, it disproves the assumption that Muslims cannot coexist peacefully with them." (Non-marginalized adult female, rural West Kalimantan)

However, there were a considerable number of participants that disagreed with the report, most of them were adult males from West Java and West Kalimantan.

> "I disagree. Indonesia only recognizes five religious groups, and the Shi'ites do not want to be registered as an indigenous belief but instead as a religion. Meanwhile the ministerial decree has stated that the Ahmadis and Shi'ites are forbidden in Indonesia. This media blow up on the Shi'ites in Jepara might inspire similar situation in Bandung, or Jakarta, and makes more and more Shi'ites appear in Indonesia. The media should know what news needs to be covered, and what news will make the people angry." (Non-marginalized adult male, urban West Java).

> "The media should not pay attention to these religions. If they want to show religious diversity and coexistence, they should not do so by covering controversial groups." (Non-marginalized young female, rural West Java).

> "I don't want the media to cover them. We are the majority, and we tolerate them. If they were the majority, we would be massacred." (Non-marginalized elderly male, rural East Kalimantan).

Conclusion of the audience study

In general, television and the internet are the most accessed media types across religious, age, demographic, and gender variables. The internet is significantly more popular than television. Newspapers and radio are not considered as significant news sources for the participants. During the in-depth interview and focus group discussion sessions, the participants attributed this popularity to the speed and diversity of information provided by online and social media platforms. The respondents also noted that mobile devices, through which they access the internet, are compact and easy to use, which contributes to the generally high level of internet access.

The marginalized groups consume more information on politics than the non-marginalized groups. This preference might relate to the fact that political conditions have significant influence on their vulnerable position in Indonesia, especially in the context of the growing religious tensions and puritanism in Indonesia.

Non-marginalized groups prefer television as a source of religious information, while marginalized groups rely to a higher degree on online group chat services (most notably, WhatsApp) reserved for only specific marginalized group communities. The marginalized groups also tend to be more selective in sharing information: they only share sensitive and religious information with their close relatives and friends due to their marginalized identity.

In general, trust in the media is moderate (on a scale of 1 to 5, the average general trust is 3.15). Marginalized religious groups place less trust in the media than their non-marginalized counterparts, especially in the media's ability to represent all groups in society, provide professional and unbiased information, and satisfy their information needs. This low level of confidence in the media could be explained by their history of discrimination and stigmatization in the media. The marginalized group also tend to delineate their religious identity from their more "public" information needs when accessing the media, due to their awareness that they do need information provided by the media, which explains the marginalized groups' relatively higher trust in the media in other areas. Urban and youth groups also place less trust in the media than the rural, adult, and elderly groups. Gender variables do not influence trust in the media.

The popularity of the internet and television also correlates with the high trust both platforms enjoy among participants. During the in-depth interviews, social media platforms were often identified as the most trusted source of information across all respondent groups. The main reason given for this was the platforms' abilities to offer news in almost real time as well as the diversity of information available. The participants also noted that the interactivity of social media enables them to directly comment and point out misinformation. Television is more trusted by the marginalized group due to its national broadcasts and gatekeeping mechanisms.

Trust in TV outlets is starkly polarized. Marginalized groups trust *Metro TV* and distrust *tvOne*, while non-marginalized groups trust *tvOne* and distrust *Metro TV*. Political leanings and religious identities seem to be the major factors at play in this division of TV preference. Historically, *tvOne* has been known to cater to more puritan Islamic views and stigmatizes the marginalized groups. *tvOne* also championed Prabowo, who received major support from Islamic puritan groups during the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections. In contrast, *Metro TV* is known for its more liberal coverage of religious issues and championed Jokowi, who is often portrayed as moderate, during the elections.

Trust in online media is less divisive. Legacy online media that carry an already established media brand name are deemed as trustworthy among participants across all groups. Presence on social media and web search engines are also important factors driving trust: the participants tend to trust media that frequently appears in their smartphone notifications, social media posts, and/or turns up in web searches. Participants also tend to trust online outlets that focus on providing information on their local areas. However, the major factor that determines distrust of online media is journalism practices that rely on sensationalism, misinformation, and clickbait. The nationality of online media is also seen as an important factor for a fraction of the participants: outlets that carry international brand names (for example, *CNN Indonesia*), are deemed untrustworthy due to their international affiliations.

In general, the survey participants' abilities to identify fact and opinion statements are alarmingly low: 38.4% of the respondents were unable to identify opinion statements, and 28.33% were unable to identify fact statements. There were no significant differences between the marginalized and non-marginalized groups when it comes to distinguishing fact and opinion statements. Urban, young, and female respondents are more likely to be able to identify fact and opinion statements correctly. Further studies are required to investigate these findings and provide some additional explanations for the low levels of media literacy in Indonesia.

September 2021

Chapter 4:

Conclusion and Recommendations

Indonesia

Conclusion

This study finds that the Indonesian media ecosystem is not a safe space for marginalized religions. As explained in the conclusion to the content analysis, the space given by the media for news coverage of marginalized religious groups is still very small. Although non-Islamic official religions enjoy enough coverage space, they are only ceremonial in nature. Most of the coverage is given to things like religious holidays. Even if the news coverage of Sigi was quite extensive, this was made possible by the presentation of the issue as part of a national and global discourse: terrorism. In other words, issues related to the marginalized religious groups have no inherent news value unless they are placed in the context of a "big narrative" such as "against terrorism." This leads to the depiction of marginalized religious groups as "victims." They tend to be treated as objects rather than subjects who can narrate their own point of view.

When it comes to news consumption, the internet in Indonesia (as well as in the rest of the world) has become a crucial medium in obtaining news and information, while printed media and radio are gradually losing their relevance. Television, however, remains a popular choice for people's news consumption. The data shows that this is common across all participants regardless of religion, gender and demography.

Significant differences can be seen in the utilization of the internet for marginalized and non-marginalized religious groups. Use of social media and chat applications to find and share religious information is dominantly carried out by marginalized religious groups. For non-marginalized religious groups, even if they use the internet for this purpose, they do not abandon television as a means to access religious information. Unfortunately, the increasing trend to consume information from the internet is not supported by basic media literacy skills and knowledge.

Based on the findings from the content analysis and audience study, two things stand out. **First**, the lack of news space for marginalized religious groups and the strong victim narrative are related to the findings of the audience study, which showed marginalized religious groups' low trust in the media (especially television). In the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, the majority of marginalized religious groups expressed that they felt that media coverage tends to be biased and distorted, as their points of view were often ignored.

The exclusion of marginalized religious groups in the public sphere has an impact on their media consumption patterns. This research has found that they tend to seek and share religious information communally. The mainstream media is more of a space for things that are not related to their religious identity. So it makes sense that they give a positive rating when asked whether the content produced by the media in Indonesia is able to address the public's need for information. Imbalances arise when marginalized and non-marginalized religious groups are asked to answer whether news media represents "personal interests." While the majority of non-marginalized religious group participants said "yes," the majority of marginalized religious group participants answered "no." Although it looks inconsistent, in fact this data can also be read as a sign that marginalized religious groups have normalized the exclusion of their group identity in the public sphere. The same has not happened for non-marginalized religious groups (Sunni Muslims), who felt that their need for religious information was fulfilled by the information available from mainstream media.

Second, polarization occurs both at the level of production and the level of consumption of information. The best example to illustrate this point at the production level is the contrast in the news coverage of *Metro TV* and *tvOne* on the issue of the returning of Shia Muslims from refugee camps. While *Metro TV* covered this event using a neutral framing, *tvOne* was reluctant to give it space. *tvOne* broadcast a piece about "the heresy of Shia Muslims" in the Fact Episode on 31 August 2020. Driven by their business models and "series

news" coverage, online media has also helped in build this kind of polarization. In the end, as we have seen in the audience study, there is a polarization of trust in the media. Non-marginalized religious groups tend to place higher trust in *tvOne*, while marginalized religious groups tend to place higher trust in *Metro TV*.

In this regard, it is interesting to see how *Tempo* is judged as a media outlet that does not deserve to be trusted by either marginalized or non-marginalized religious groups. The reason that emerged in this assessment is that *Tempo*'s reporting was deemed as "provocative" or "divisive." In contrast to this argument, the Inclusive Media Index research actually placed *Tempo.co.id* in second position as the most inclusive media after *Tirto.id* (Thaniago, 2020).

Tempo has a unique place in the history of the Indonesian press and a reputation for being independent and critical, with a straightforward writing style. The finding that this media outlet is considered "provocative" by both marginalized and non-marginalized religious groups implies a strong polarization because, in the midst of today's polarizing climate, *Tempo* often "attacks" conservative groups represented by Islamists and "nationalists" represented by the Jokowi regime (Thaniago, 2019).

This strong polarization can also be found in the sentiments of displeasure by non-marginalized religious groups when they saw the content about "harmony between Shia and Sunnis in Jepara." Uniquely, many focus group discussion participants considered that they were not "content" but "agreed" with the content. They felt that this kind of content should not be given too much space because of the fear of spreading false religious teachings. However, they could rationally accept that the content was fair, or in the words of participants: "neutral." Even if not directly, it can be assumed that this sentiment is also captured by the rating measurement model or social media analytics, which then determines the news production model on television and online media when covering marginalized religious groups. The media coverage on the marginalized religious group issue has two approaches. First, they focus on big religious events. Second, if they have to cover conflicts, they choose to distance themselves from their duty to provide a deep analysis of the event. They prefer to use a "statement journalism" style that usually only relies on statements by official sources. By doing this, they avoid the risk of being persecuted by hardline Islamic groups, as is often the case.

Recommendations

IMS and Remotivi hope that the results of the study may serve as an inspiration for media, journalists, learning institutions, media development organizations, policy makers and regulators operating in Indonesia. In an attempt to elevate the findings from both the content analysis and the audience study into practical advice, we recommend the following.

For media houses and journalists:

- Go local: Ensure better local presence (and consider hiring journalists from within the local communities) and report directly from communities.
- Connect with audiences: Build rapport with audiences, get to know their needs and perspectives and meet them in their local communities to establish and increase trust.
- Use proper language and respectful forms of address: Sensitivity towards language and choice of words are necessary to show understanding and respect of cultural practices.
- Be mindful of stereotypical frames: While it can seem logical to present ethnic minorities as victims in certain situations, such a portrayal can harm the way they are perceived by others and thereby their position in society.
- Be transparent and include documentation: People have a natural skepticism of information they encounter and need to be convinced with facts and strong documentation, preferably in the form of living images.

For policy makers and regulators:

- Sensitize ethical guidelines: Ensure better representation of religious minorities in the media by developing and adopting a set of commonly accepted guidelines ratified by the press council and media industry organizations.
- Address the polarization of the media, including on social media: Initiate a conversation within the media industry about polarization in the media and the consequences it has on societal disharmony and polarization.
- Consider enhanced (self-)regulation of content: Regulation might be a useful tool (if used wisely) to counter the increasing polarization and limited representation of religious minority groups (as well as other minorities) in Indonesia.
- Address the trust deficits in the media: As audiences are increasingly relying on social media platforms for news and information, attention should be given to the diminishing trust in media and news organizations.
- Support community media owned by marginal religious groups: We need to strengthen community media by providing training and funding for them so they can voice their views and aspirations.

- Protect journalists' right to unionize: Although the Press Law (1999) guarantees journalists' ability to associate with each other, in practice there are still challenges hindering journalists from unionizing.

For media development organizations and learning institutions:

- Encourage people with minority backgrounds to pursue a career in journalism: More journalists with minority backgrounds will increase the possibility of better and more accurate representation of religious minorities.
- Ensure better access to information, not least in terms of coverage of minorities: Provide extra stimulus for alternative media to report on minority religion and beliefs while still guaranteeing accurate representation.
- Understand the sector: Conduct studies and analyze the business environment for alternative media covering religious minorities to provide necessary advice and support ensuring their viability.
- Prioritize women and other marginalized groups: Women, ethnic minorities and people living in rural areas have less access to information than other groups, as well as lower levels of media and digital literacy. Paying special attention to these groups is important to ensure that they are not left behind.
- Improve the available mechanisms for fact-checking to cover minority religion and beliefs: Provide people with the necessary tools to fact check information, also in local languages; the existing fact-checking mechanism tools in Indonesia do not yet cover minority of religion and beliefs.
- Help journalists connect and engage with audiences: Assist journalists in understanding the potential that lies in engaging more actively with their audiences to enhance the quality and reach of their content.
- Raise people's media literacy levels and their ability to find information: Production and distribution of quality content only has an impact if it reaches and engages audiences. Attention to audiences' abilities to engage with news and information flows is paramount for the success of media development efforts.
- We need a study that can be a model for the alternative media business. The reason for this is that sustainability is the main challenge facing the media in Indonesia today. There have been many alternative media outlets that have found it difficult to finance their operations and have then closed. However, although this is quite widely known, there has been no comprehensive study on the ideal business model for alternative media financing. Therefore, a comparative study of the business model of the media community in Indonesia, comparing models that are relatively successful or have failed, needs to be completed. This should include scrutiny of good practices of alternative media management and business models outside Indonesia.

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Chapter 5:

Annexes

Indonesia

Annex 1: Detailed data on content analysis

Topic Distribution (TV News)						
	Terror in Sigi (Christian)	**Yaqut Cholil controversy (All)**	**Sampang forced eviction (Shi'ite)**	**Kwan Sing Bio Dispute (Buddhism & Confucianism)**	**Shutdown of Sunda Wiwitan tomb (Indigenous belief)**	**Total media**
Kompas	19	8	-	-	-	27
iNews TV	9	4	-	2	-	15
Metro TV	5	9	1	-	1	16
tvOne	14	3	5	-	-	22
Total	47	24	6	2	1	80

Topic Distribution (Online News)								
	Shutdown of ancestral tomb (Indigenous belief)	**Forced shutdown of mosque (Ahmadi)**	**Sampang forced eviction (Shi'ite)**	**Terror in Sigi (Christian)**	**Blackpink controversy (Hinduism)**	**Kwan Sing Bio dispute (Buddhism & Confucianism)**	**Yaqut Cholil controversy (All)**	**Total media**
Tirto	2	2	1	4	-	-	2	11
CNN	1	-	1	5	-	-	8	15
Kompas	8	7	-	14	2	4	2	37
Republika	2	-	1	17	2	-	6	28
Okezone	-	-	-	11	3	-	7	21
Tribunnews	15	-	5	30	6	5	7	68
Total	28	9	8	81	13	9	32	180

Annex 2: Detailed data on audience analysis

Survey: How often do you access the internet?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Everyday	92.71%	Everyday	89.58%
4-6 times/week	1.58%	4-6 times/week	0.00%
1-3 times/week	1.58%	1-3 times/week	8.33%
1-3 times/month	0.00%	1-3 times/month	0.00%
Infrequently	2.60%	Infrequently	0.00%
Not at all	1.56%	Not at all	2.08%

Survey: How often do you listen to the radio?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Everyday	9.38%	Everyday	6.25%
4-6 times/week	1.56%	4-6 times/week	0.00%
1-3 times/week	4.69%	1-3 times/week	0.00%
1-3 times/month	1.56%	1-3 times/month	2.08%
Infrequently	35.42%	Infrequently	35.42%
Not at all	47.40%	Not at all	47.92%
		Have No Access	8.33%

Survey: How often do you read printed newspapers?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Everyday	4.17%	Everyday	10,42%
4-6 times/week	1.04%	4-6 times/week	2.08%
1-3 times/week	5.73%	1-3 times/week	2.08%
1-3 times/month	3.65%	1-3 times/month	2.08%
Infrequently	41.67%	Infrequently	58.33%
Not at all	42.71%	Not at all	22.92%
Not Specified	1.04%	Have No Access	2.08%

Survey: How do you obtain information?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Actively look for information	50.00%	Actively look for information	62.50%
From media outlets	25.00%	From media outlets	25.00%
From other people	14.58%	From other people	6.25%
In an equal manner	10.42%	In an equal manner	6.25%

Survey: Do you usually discuss the news or current affairs with other people?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Yes	91.67%	Yes	81.25%
No	8.33%	No	18.75%

If so, who do you discuss the news or current affairs with?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Friends	65.91%	Friends	61.545
Family	54.55%	Family	45.15%
Community	22.73%	Community	23.08%
Spouse	18.18%	Spouse	15.38%
Colleagues	4.55%	Colleagues	7.69%

Survey: What information do you usually look for in the media?			
Non-marginalized		**Marginalized**	
Latest News	86.46%	Latest News	77.08%
Entertainment	42.19%	Politics	62.50%
Politics	31.25%	International News	39.58%
International News	31.77%	Entertainment	20.83%
Lifestyle	23.96%	Lifestyle	18.75%
Sports	21.58%	Economy	14.58%
Economy	19.27%	Science/Technology	10.42%
Science/Technology	7.29%	Socio-cultural	4.17%
Weather	7.81%	Weather	2.08%

Average Media Access Frequency Based on Age Group					
Age group	**Newspapers**	**Television**	**Radio**	**Internet**	**Social media**
Adult	1.99	5.07	2.06	5.91	5.85
Elderly	2.13	5.46	1.87	5.45	5.69
Young	1.87	4.03	2.08	5.92	5.89

* Total respondents: 240 (70 young respondents, 90 adult respondents, 80 elderly respondents)

* Scores are scaled from 1-6, 1 meaning never consuming the media and 6 meaning accessing the media daily

Education Level Based on Age Group									
Age group	**Vocational**	**Graduate**	**Post-graduate**	**Elementary school**	**Highschool**	**Junior high**	**Unschooled**	**Religious education**	**Grand Total**
Adult	11	20	1	1	52	2	1	-	88
Elderly	11	14	3	2	41	7	-	1	79
Young	4	5	-	-	61	3	-	-	73
Grand Total	26	39	4	3	154	12	1	1	240

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Chapter 6:

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Indonesia

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REMOTIVI

Pusat Kajian Media & Komunikasi