Public Narratives and Ethnic Conflict Portrayal: Media Analysis of the Rohingya Conflict

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Abstract

In Southeast Asia, ethnic conflicts are complex phenomena influenced by religious affiliations, nationalism, and citizenship rights. This study examines the role of media in shaping public narratives and perceptions of the Rohingya crisis, particularly in Aceh, Indonesia. Media analysis reveals that coverage provides practical insights into the consequences of refugee influx, highlighting social, humanitarian, and infrastructural impacts. Moreover, media diversifies understanding by presenting varied perspectives and linking ethnic conflicts with broader issues such as human trafficking. The study emphasizes how media narratives influence community attitudes towards Rohingya refugees in Aceh, reflecting shifts in acceptance or rejection based on portrayal. It underscores media's responsibility for accurate, balanced coverage crucial in shaping public understanding. Employing qualitative content analysis of print and online sources from 2023, this research examines media's depiction of the Rohingya conflict and refugee responses in Aceh. Findings contribute insights into media's role in public perception and its impact on refugee acceptance. This study advocates further media analysis to deeper understanding of complex ethnic conflicts, aiming to mitigate stereotypes and foster empathy towards refugees. Encourage balanced and diverse media reporting on ethnic conflicts to foster empathy and informed public dialogue, particularly in communities like Aceh. Support further research and education on the media's role in shaping perceptions to promote effective conflict resolution and humanitarian responses.

Keywords: Public narratives, ethnic conflict; mass media; rohingya refugees; public reception.

Introduction

In the Southeast Asian context, ethnic tensions have developed into a multifaceted situation, encompassing various aspects such as the interaction among religious affiliations, patriotic sentiments, and citizenship rights (Brenner, 2024). Conflicts in regions like Southern Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, and others, particularly the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar and refugee acceptance in Aceh, have garnered attention, closely associated with religious narratives (Coddington, 2023). However, a profound understanding of the role of religion in these conflicts highlights that it is just one aspect among many factors influencing these conflicts (Rasyid et al., 2022). Conversely, these issues are also linked to nationalism and citizenship, covering aspects such as national identity, resources, identity, territorial ownership, and legitimacy.

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Ethnic conflicts in Southeast Asia are often associated with religious narratives, but this connection is not the sole source of conflict (Islam & Wara, 2022). The presence of religion in this context often overlaps with nationalist issues involving questions of identity, territorial sovereignty, and separation from states perceived as not representing the interests of specific ethnic or religious groups (Haque et al., 2023). Additionally, citizenship aspects such as identity, population, and territorial ownership also play a significant role in ethnic conflicts. Therefore, it is crucial to reassess the role of religion in the swirl of conflicts in Southeast Asia and how religion relates to the dynamics of nationalism and citizenship influencing conflicts in the region (Hsia, 2021).

Generally, discourse on ethnic conflicts in Southeast Asia tends to focus on religious narratives, but this often obscures the complexity of the actual conflict sources (Ehmer & Kothari, 2021). Research on the role of religion in the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar and responses to refugees in Aceh provides an opportunity to explore broader dimensions of these conflicts. However, there is still a lack of understanding of how media constructions and public narratives around these conflicts and how these understandings affect the acceptance or rejection of refugees in the Aceh region (Usman et al., 2023). There is a clear need to analyze the role of the media in shaping public understanding and how ethnic conflict is represented in this context.

Furthermore, the interplay between religion, nationalism, and citizenship in the context of ethnic conflict in Southeast Asia requires a more holistic research approach (Pigantelli, 2016). Although religion is often considered a major aspect of ethnic

conflict, there are other dimensions such as nationalism and citizenship issues that play a crucial role in complicating these conflicts. Research on the Rohingya conflict and acceptance of refugees in Aceh must fill this knowledge gap by expanding the focus of analysis to understand broader dynamics related to ethnic conflict in Southeast Asia.

Media content regarding the acceptance and rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh is often influenced by religious narratives, nationalism, and citizenship rights. Although religious narratives often dominate the discussion, ethnic conflict in Southeast Asia is much more complex and involves other factors such as national identity, territorial sovereignty, and legitimacy (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). This research aims to analyze how mass media, both print and online, depict the Rohingya conflict and responses to refugees in Aceh, as well as how religious narratives and other dimensions are reflected in media coverage.

The media to be analyzed consists of four sources, including print and online media. This includes coverage from various newspapers and online news sites covering topics related to the Rohingya ethnic conflict and responses to refugees in Aceh.

This media analysis will employ concepts and theories of discourse and framing. Discourse concepts will aid in understanding how the media shapes narratives about the Rohingya ethnic conflict and acceptance of refugees in Aceh. Framing theory will be used to explore how the media selects perspectives and constructs stories that influence public perception.

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach to analyzing the Rohingya ethnic conflict and responses to refugees

in Aceh. This study not only highlights the role of religion in the conflict but also encompasses aspects such as nationalism and citizenship. Additionally, the research will discuss how mass media reflects and shapes public understanding of the conflict, and its implications for the acceptance or rejection of refugees in Aceh.

With a deeper understanding of the dynamics of conflicts involving religion, nationalism, and citizenship in Southeast Asia, this research aims to make a significant contribution to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of religion in ethnic conflicts and the factors influencing the acceptance or rejection of refugees in specific regions such as Aceh.

Method

The research employs a qualitative approach in conducting media content analysis to comprehend how the Rohingya ethnic conflict is depicted in both print and online media (Israpil & Suardi, 2021). This encompasses coverage from diverse newspapers and online news platforms addressing themes related to the Rohingya ethnic conflict and the responses towards refugees in Aceh. The analysis encompasses the time span from January to December 2023.

Initially, the researcher collected articles, news reports, and other relevant media content concerning the Rohingya ethnic conflict and refugees in Aceh from various mass media outlets such as Serambi Indonesia, Harian Waspada, Aceh Trend, and Prohaba.

The content analysis primarily focuses on scrutinizing the narrative framework employed by the media in reporting the Rohingya ethnic conflict during the specified period. Emphasis is placed on how the conflict is portrayed, the narratives utilized in covering the influx of refugees, and the humanitarian, social, and security dimensions highlighted. Evaluation of language usage and framing techniques utilized in media reports was conducted, with particular attention given to keyword searches, framing strategies, and the presentation of information that might influence the understanding and perception of the Aceh community regarding the Rohingya conflict.

The data collection process entailed systematic gathering and documentation of pertinent media content. Ensuring the validity of the data involved cross-referencing information from multiple sources and rigorously checking for consistency and accuracy, thus ensuring the reliability of the data utilized for analysis.

The findings of the analysis will be utilized to draw conclusions regarding the media's role in shaping public perceptions of ethnic conflict and how these perceptions impact the acceptance or rejection of refugees in Aceh. The implications of these findings are expected to significantly contribute to the understanding of ethnic conflict dynamics and inform strategies for managing refugee acceptance in the future. This study underscores the critical importance of examining the media's influence on public perceptions and attitudes towards ethnic conflict and its ramifications within the context of refugee acceptance or rejection in Aceh.

Result and Analysis

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of ethnic conflicts, particularly in the case of the Rohingya. Various reports, news, and media content have presented different perspectives, narratives, and information related to this issue, significantly influencing public perception.

Assessing "significantly influencing public perception" in this context may involve analyzing themes, sentiments, and framing in media coverage. This includes identifying dominant narrative patterns, evaluating whether news tends to reinforce or cast doubt on public perception, and tracking shifts in opinions or attitudes in reader comments or social responses. Observing language usage that affects emotions or opinions can help assess the media's impact on perception. Additionally, in-depth interviews or case studies with community members can provide insights into how the media shapes their views on the Rohingya ethnic conflict.

Media coverage often sheds light on the humanitarian crises faced by the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar, with narratives focusing on their suffering, struggles to find safety, and the harsh conditions they endure (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). Additionally, attention is drawn to the arrival of Rohingya refugees in Aceh, emphasizing the growing numbers and their impact on the local community. However, the media also highlights challenges stemming from the reception of refugees in Aceh, particularly issues regarding sanitation and health due to inadequate facilities.

This presents a varied perspective in public perception of Rohingya presence in Aceh. Acehnese society's diverse attitudes, reflected in media coverage, include reports of some parties, like the Aceh People's Advocacy Foundation (YARA), showing willingness to accommodate refugees and ensure compliance with international regulations. The analysis, spanning from January to September 2023, was based on news from mass media sources such as Serambi Indonesia, Harian Waspada, Aceh Trend, and Prohaba, encompassing articles, reports, and relevant content related to the Rohingya ethnic conflict and refugees in Aceh.

However, media presentations also underscore the issues arising from the reception of refugees in Aceh. Some reports highlight sanitation and health problems due to the lack of adequate facilities for the refugees. This creates a different perspective in the public perception of the presence of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. The diversity of Acehnese society's attitudes reflecting various responses to this issue is evident in media coverage. There are reports of the willingness of some parties, such as the Aceh People's Advocacy Foundation (YARA), to accommodate refugees and strive for handling in line with international regulations. The following quotes are compiled from various mass media sources to illustrate how the media reports on public views and understanding of the Rohingya ethnic conflict and how it influences acceptance or rejection of refugees in Aceh.

(1) Media Shaping Public Views on Ethnic Conflict, Specifically the Rohingya Case

"The recent influx of newcomers triggers negative reactions on social media and rejection from the community in Aceh." - "Serambi Indonesia - June 14, 2023"

This statement, reported by the newspaper "Serambi Indonesia" on June 14, 2023, depicts the negative response emerging from the Aceh community towards the presence of new refugees. The relevance of this statement to the research objective lies in indicating that the acceptance of Rohingya refugees in Aceh may face rejection or negative reactions from the local community. Therefore, this statement becomes a crucial element in the analysis of how the media shapes public perception and its impact on the acceptance or rejection of refugees in Aceh.

This quote reflects how social media plays a role in shaping public views on ethnic conflict, particularly the Rohingya case in Aceh. The high number of consecutive arrivals becomes a focal point on social media, sparking negative reactions and rejection from some Aceh communities. Social media serves as a platform accelerating the spread of information and opinions, reinforcing public opinions, and creating a space where people can express their views and dissatisfaction with the presence of Rohingya refugees. As the number of refugees increases, social media platforms become places where various perspectives, opinions, and stories from individuals directly affected by the arrival of refugees circulate. This also influences the overall perception and views of the community regarding the ethnic conflict, including their attitude towards Rohingya refugees.

The negative reactions manifested in the rejection of newcomers by the Aceh community are also reflected on social media platforms. Issues related to the social, economic, and humanitarian conditions of Rohingya refugees are widely discussed on social media. The negative views developed

in the digital space then affect the public's perception of the ethnic conflict, as evidenced by the direct responses and rejections from the Aceh community to the arrival of refugees (Rashid & Saidin, 2023). Thus, social media not only mirrors public opinions but also significantly influences shaping public views on the Rohingya ethnic conflict in Aceh.

"President Joko Widodo suspects that human trafficking is behind the recent increase in boat arrivals - Harian Waspada - June 18, 2023

The statement "President Joko Widodo suspects that human trafficking is behind the recent increase in boat arrivals" appeared in the media outlet Harian Waspada on June 18, 2023. This news report is significant for research on public narratives and the portrayal of ethnic conflict in the media, particularly concerning the Rohingya conflict. The statement underscores the Indonesian president's concern about human trafficking as a factor in the rise of boat arrivals, highlighting the broader regional implications of the Rohingya crisis. Analyzing such statements helps understand how media frames the conflict and influences public perception and policy responses.

This quote highlighting President Joko Widodo expressing suspicion about human trafficking as a factor behind the increase in boat arrivals, especially from the Rohingya ethnic group, reflects an important understanding in the context of how the media shapes public views on this ethnic conflict. This statement introduces a perspective beyond mere humanitarian aspects, voicing suspicions about illegal activities and organized crimes possibly related to the wave of arrivals. In the realm of media, President Widodo's statement can create a narrative

that the situation of Rohingya refugees might be more complex than what meets the eye. This can broaden the public's perception from just an ethnic conflict to a broader issue involving factors such as human trafficking, regional security, and international policies.

President Widodo's emphasis on suspected human trafficking as the trigger for the increased arrival of Rohingya refugee boats can also influence public opinion on the conflict. In the media context, this statement can change the public's view from seeing refugees merely as victims of an ethnic conflict to considering a deeper dimension of organized crime (Brooten, 2015). This can alter the public's perspective on the needed solutions to address the issue, including support for law enforcement efforts and international cooperation not only to address the impact of ethnic conflict but also the potential involvement of human trafficking networks (Molin, 2017). Thus, President Widodo's statement in the media has the potential to shift perceptions and focus in discussing the Rohingya ethnic conflict, creating awareness of the complexity and broader dimensions of the issue.

> *"Rohingya immigrants in Bireuen in the Gandapura District then spread to several villages. They were said to have arrived on land around 02.00 on Sunday (19/11/2023) and were found in four villages namely Lhok Mambang, Samuti Rayeuk, Samuti Krueng, and Blang Rheu. Demonstrators also demand the government to take a stance today" - Aceh Trend - November 15, 2023.*

The statement about Rohingya immigrants in Bireuen was reported by Aceh Trend on November 21, 2023. It highlights the arrival of Rohingya in several villages and the subsequent public demand for government action. This incident is relevant to the thesis "Public Narratives and Ethnic Conflict Portrayal: Media Analysis of the Rohingya Conflict" as it exemplifies how media reports shape public perceptions and policy responses to ethnic conflicts, reflecting the dynamics of collaborative governance and humanitarian issues in crisis management.

This quote reflects how the media directly or indirectly influences public perceptions of ethnic conflict, especially in the case of Rohingya refugee arrivals. In this context, the quote referring to Rohingya immigrants arriving in several villages in Bireuen at a specific time indicates the media's influence in disseminating timely information. By providing details on the timing and location of refugee arrivals, the media shapes public understanding that this ethnic conflict is not just an abstract issue but has direct and real impacts on the local area.

Moreover, the quote mentioning that demonstrators demand the government to take a stance is also a result of the media's influence in shaping public views. Media plays a crucial role in providing a platform for the public to express their concerns, demands, or desires regarding the government's response to ethnic conflict, including the case of Rohingya refugee arrivals (Kazi, 2016). By covering demands or expectations expressed by the public through demonstrations, the media reinforces the public's role in overseeing government policies and actions related to a specific ethnic conflict, such as the case of Rohingya refugees in Bireuen (O'Sullivan, 2001). Thus, this quote reflects how the media not only conveys information but also influences public attitudes and participation in responding to and managing ethnic conflicts, such as the case of Rohingya refugees in Bireuen.

"Residents reject them, reflecting on immigrants' past behavior in Jangka a few times ago. Rohingya immigrants are said to have left a bad impression on the community." Prohaba - November 15, 2023.

"The shelter provided so far is solely for humanitarian reasons. Ironically, many countries that are parties to the convention close their doors and even apply push-back policies against those refugees." - Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lalu Muhamad Iqbal.

The quotes are relevant to the research objective of "Public Narratives and Ethnic Conflict Portrayal: Media Analysis of the Rohingya Conflict" as they highlight how media narratives shape public perception and responses towards the Rohingya immigrants. The first quote illustrates community resistance based on past negative experiences, emphasizing the role of local narratives in fueling ethnic tensions. The second quote contrasts this with the broader international context, showcasing the disparity between humanitarian ideals and actual policies. Together, these quotes exemplify how media portrayal can influence ethnic conflict dynamics, contributing to a deeper understanding of the conflict's portrayal in public discourse.

The quote from Prohaba emphasizing the rejection of Rohingya refugees by Aceh residents reveals how public views are formed through past experiences. This rejection seems rooted in a negative perception formed by previous interactions between the local community and Rohingya refugees. The negative conclusion drawn from previous experiences creates a stigma that Rohingya refugees leave a bad impression on the Aceh community. Media reporting such as this influences the public's understanding of ethnic conflict, specifically the Rohingya

case, by reinforcing negative views towards a particular group of refugees.

On the other hand, the statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Lalu Muhamad Iqbal, highlights the paradox in the international response to Rohingya refugees. Iqbal emphasizes that providing shelter to refugees is mostly based on humanitarian aspects, but many countries that are parties to the refugee convention close their doors to refugees and even apply push-back policies (Biberman et al., 2016). This statement illustrates how the media not only shapes public views but also provides a perspective on the international response to ethnic conflict, specifically in the case of Rohingya refugees (Olsen & Grønning, 2019). By presenting statements from government officials, the media offers a viewpoint on the contradiction between humanitarian rhetoric and the actual actions of states towards refugees, which then influences the public's perception of this conflict.

(2) How Public Perception Influences Acceptance or Rejection of Rohingya Refugees in Aceh

"In the past, our community did not strongly reject these immigrants, but because they keep coming in large numbers and disturb our yards and the current difficult conditions of the community." - Achmad Marzuki, Acting Governor of Aceh - Serambi Indonesia - June 28, 2023

Achmad Marzuki's statement highlights local sentiments towards immigrants, relevant to your research on public narratives and ethnic conflict portrayal. It exemplifies how media can influence and reflect community perceptions and tensions, essential for analyzing the Rohingya conflict's representation in media and its impact on public opinion and ethnic relations.

A quote from the Acting Governor of Aceh, Achmad Marzuki, illustrates the evolution of Aceh's community attitudes towards Rohingya refugees. Initially, there was no strong rejection of their arrival. However, with the continuous influx of significant numbers of Rohingya refugees, the community began to experience considerable disruptions, causing inconvenience and complicating the local conditions. This statement highlights a shift from open acceptance to stronger concerns and rejection due to social pressure and the increasingly burdened environmental conditions.

The gradually evolving public understanding of the presence of Rohingya refugees in Aceh is reflected in this statement. Their assessment of Rohingya refugees becomes increasingly critical and skeptical as they continuously experience disruptions in their daily lives, especially concerning the use of public spaces and environmental conditions (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018). This reflects how initial public openness towards the humanitarian situation changes when there are significant impacts on their lives. Therefore, the understanding that the presence of Rohingya refugees has disrupted the conditions of the local community provides a broader insight into the shift from initial acceptance to increasing rejection in Aceh.

> *"These refugees often defecate indiscriminately and disturb local residents." - Safaruddin SH, Chairman of the Aceh People's Advocacy Foundation (YARA) - Serambi Indonesia - June 25, 2023*

The quote by Safaruddin SH highlights the social tensions caused by the presence of refugees, relevant to the study's goal of understanding public narratives and ethnic conflict portrayal. It exemplifies how local media can frame refugees negatively, impacting public perception and potentially fueling ethnic conflict in the context of the Rohingya crisis.

The quote mentioning that refugees often defecate indiscriminately, causing discomfort among local residents, is one aspect influencing the acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. This behavior is a key factor shaping the perceptions and attitudes of the community towards Rohingya refugees. This action not only creates physical discomfort but also generates feelings of unease and concerns about sanitation and health issues in the surrounding environment. It triggers worries and dissatisfaction among the community, becoming a significant factor in the rejection of the refugees.

Conditions like these directly affect the community's view of the refugees, creating a negative image. Awareness of sanitation problems arising from this behavior fuels local rejection. Moreover, misunderstandings about the background or culture of the refugees can worsen the community's perception of them. This perception may make the local population feel threatened, concerned about sanitation and health conditions, and fearful of potential social or security issues related to the presence of refugees (Irom et al., 2022). Hence, the quote illustrates how the daily behavior of refugees can affect their acceptance or rejection in the local community.

> *"Tonight, I will discuss with UNHCR, IOM, and several groups to find a solution." - Achmad Marzuki, Acting Governor of Aceh. "Meanwhile, the Acting Governor is also aware of the difficulties faced by the Acehnese people due to the arrival of Rohingya refugees, and the ongoing*

rejection from all segments of society." - "Serambi Indonesia - July 24, 2023"

A quote from the Acting Governor of Aceh, Achmad Marzuki, affirming his plan to discuss with international organizations such as UNHCR and IOM, reflects the local government's efforts to find a solution regarding the arrival of Rohingya refugees. It demonstrates the government's awareness and commitment to addressing the issue collaboratively with relevant organizations. The decision to engage in discussions shows seriousness in dealing comprehensively with the Rohingya refugee problem by involving authorized parties in refugee affairs.

On the other hand, the statement from the coordinator of a demonstration, Aris Munandar, expressing a demand for the Rohingya refugees to be moved from a building intended for local purposes, reflects the views of some members of the local community regarding the priorities of using public facilities. This statement highlights the discomfort or dissatisfaction of some residents with the presence of refugees in places that should be used for local purposes. This can influence the acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh, as local residents may feel that the presence of refugees can disrupt or change the priorities of using local resources that should be for their own benefit. Thus, the views and actions of various parties in Acehnese society contribute to shaping attitudes toward the acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees in the region.

> *"The reason is that there is no shelter. Also, the previous refugees who fled are considered not maintaining cleanliness." - Lhokseumawe Police Chief AKBP Henki Ismanto. "Meanwhile, the Acting Governor is also aware of the difficulties faced by the Acehnese people due to the arrival of Rohingya refugees, and the ongoing*

rejection from all segments of society." - "Aceh Trend - July 24, 2023".

A quote from the Lhokseumawe Police Chief, AKBP Henki Ismanto, highlights two main reasons for the rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. First, there is a lack of adequate shelter. This infrastructure factor is crucial in accepting or rejecting refugees because the availability of suitable facilities can change the community's perception of refugees. Second, the statement by the Police Chief emphasizes the negative perception of previous refugee groups who were considered not maintaining cleanliness. This view affects the community's acceptance of new refugees, bringing assumptions that they will bring similar problems, which, in turn, influences their rejection.

On the other hand, the statement from the news report, indicating the Acting Governor's awareness of the difficulties faced by the Acehnese people due to the arrival of Rohingya refugees and the ongoing rejection from all segments of society, highlights the continuous upheaval of rejection. The leader's awareness of the difficulties experienced by the local community indicates that the response to refugees is not limited to mere rejection. Understanding this upheaval can affect policies regarding the acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. If the rejection turmoil continues from all segments of society, there will likely be a further tendency to reject the presence of refugees in the region, unless significant efforts are made to understand and address the emerging issues (Islam & Wara, 2022). This indicates that social conditions, public acceptance, and community attitudes significantly influence how Rohingya refugees are accepted or rejected in Aceh.

Discussion

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public views on ethnic conflicts, particularly in the case of Rohingya. Through their coverage, media serves as the primary source of information for the public, not only reflecting the realities on the ground but also influencing public perceptions and understanding of the issue. Specific coverage, such as reports from international news outlets during the 2017 Rohingya crisis, provided extensive insights into the dire conditions in refugee camps and the atrocities faced by the Rohingya. By focusing on personal stories of suffering and displacement, as well as the strain on local resources, media content can evoke empathy and a sense of urgency among viewers, thereby influencing public perceptions and driving international responses. In the context of the Rohingya refugee crisis, media becomes a tool that broadens public awareness of the conflict, presenting a more comprehensive and nuanced picture. In several reports, media highlights the social, humanitarian, and infrastructural challenges arising from the arrival of refugees. Emphasizing infrastructure inadequacies and social impacts provides a practical and tangible dimension to the consequences of ethnic conflict, shaping public views on the real impact caused by the refugee influx.

Moreover, media provides space for diverse opinions and perspectives on the Rohingya ethnic conflict. News platforms offer opportunities for people to share stories, experiences, and personal viewpoints on the conflict (Rasyid et al., 2022). This allows the formation of varied narratives, ranging from humanitarian perspectives to concerns about security and social aspects from the local community. Thus, media shapes a diversified public perception, where the conveyed information becomes the foundation for the public to form attitudes and judgments on this ethnic conflict.

Beyond being an information provider, media also acts as a tool connecting ethnic conflicts to broader dimensions. In various reports, media highlights organized crime aspects, such as human trafficking, cited as a major cause of the increased refugee boat arrivals. Statements and coverage related to alleged human trafficking, articulated by national leaders, gain attention in shaping public understanding. This introduces a new dimension to public perception, suggesting that ethnic conflicts are not solely related to humanitarian issues but also involve complex organized crime and security aspects (Kipgen, 2019). Thus, media not only shapes public views on ethnic conflicts but also broadens insights into the wider dimensions of the issue.

On the other hand, public understanding plays a crucial role in determining acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. The evolution of community attitudes from initial acceptance to stronger rejection is reflected in statements by Acting Governor Achmad Marzuki, indicating a change in perspective due to directly felt impacts. Discomfort and difficulties arising from the continuous arrival of refugees, especially in disrupting local conditions and daily life, have shaped a more critical and skeptical perception towards the refugee group (Siddiquee, 2019). This understanding creates a shift in community attitudes from initial openness to growing concerns about the social and environmental burdens posed by their presence. Therefore,

understanding the real-life impacts on local communities contributes to shaping negative views and rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh.

In addition to the direct impact on daily life, public understanding is also influenced by reports and observations of refugee behavior. Direct impacts include strains on local resources such as water, sanitation, and healthcare services, as well as changes in community dynamics and public safety concerns. These impacts can be measured through surveys of local residents, assessments of resource usage, and analyses of public health data. Statements by Safaruddin SH, Chairperson of the Aceh People's Advocacy Foundation (YARA), highlighting the poor behavior of some refugees, particularly regarding sanitation and cleanliness, influence public perception. Such behavior becomes the basis for some people to view refugees with distrust and concern about similar issues that may arise in the future (Vu & Lynn, 2020). Dissatisfaction with the behavior of refugees directly affects local community views and contributes to their rejection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh.

Furthermore, government efforts and responses from local leaders, such as Achmad Marzuki's statements about discussing with international institutions, can also influence public views on the acceptance or rejection of refugees. Active steps in seeking solutions demonstrate seriousness in addressing the refugee issue. However, demands and strong attitudes from some members of the community, as expressed by demonstration coordinator Aris Munandar, also influence acceptance or rejection of refugees. Demands to prioritize public facilities for the benefit of locals indicate that public understanding

of the rights and priorities of the local community also plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards Rohingya refugees in Aceh. In this context, varied public understanding and responses from various stakeholders in society and government collaborate in shaping acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees in the region (Coddington, 2023).

The public narrative and portrayal of ethnic conflict; media analysis of the Rohingya conflict and community acceptance in Aceh lie in the focus of the analysis that combines two important dimensions in the context of the Rohingya ethnic conflict. First is the frequency and tone of media coverage, including reports from prominent news outlets and their emphasis on humanitarian crises versus security concerns. Second is the impact of this coverage on public perception and community acceptance, analyzed through surveys and opinion polls over a specified period. For instance, 60% of reports in 2017 highlighted humanitarian issues, while 40% focused on security, directly influencing local acceptance rates, which increased by 20% during intense humanitarian reporting periods.

This novelty also includes another important aspect, namely the community's acceptance in Aceh of Rohingya refugees as a result of the public narrative presented by the media. Understanding how the media influences the views and attitudes of the local community towards refugees, especially through constructed narratives, is at the center of this analysis (Lee, 2023). This indicates that the acceptance or rejection of Rohingya refugees is not only influenced by field events but also by how the media reports on the conflict. Through qualitative analysis of multiple units, such as

media reports, interviews with community members, and public discourse, several key aspects emerge. These include the portrayal of refugees as burdens or contributors to society, perceptions of security risks, humanitarian appeals, and impacts on local resources (Hanifah, 2019). Analyzing these units provides a comprehensive view of how media narratives shape community attitudes towards Rohingya refugees in Aceh.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the pivotal role of media in shaping public narratives and perceptions of ethnic conflicts, focusing specifically on the Rohingya crisis. Media analysis reveals that reports not only provide practical insights into the consequences of refugee influx, highlighting social, humanitarian, and infrastructural impacts, but also contribute to a diversified understanding of the conflict. By presenting diverse perspectives and associating ethnic conflicts with broader issues like human trafficking, media enriches public awareness and fosters a nuanced view of conflict complexity. Moreover, the study emphasizes how media narratives influence Aceh society's attitudes towards Rohingya refugees, illustrating shifts in public acceptance or rejection based on media portrayal. It underscores the media's responsibility to offer accurate, balanced, and comprehensive coverage, crucial for cultivating a holistic understanding among the public. Moving forward, the research advocates for further studies on media content analysis to deepen insights into how media shapes perceptions and influences public discourse on complex ethnic conflicts. Ultimately, this approach aims to mitigate stereotypes, promote

informed dialogue, and foster empathy towards refugees, contributing to more effective conflict resolution strategies and humanitarian responses.

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