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The Daily Mail and the Rebirth of Populist Journalism

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the phenomenon of populist journalism using the Daily Mail in the UK as a case study. Borrowing the concept of mediatization from Couldry and Hepp (2017) and hybridity from Chadwick (2017), this paper elaborates populist journalism as an inseparable part of the rise of populism in various places. While the socio-political context is relatively new, the historical traces of populist journalism can be traced to the phenomenon of tabloid journalism that has emerged since the early 19th century. In other words, populist journalism is a new style of developing tabloid journalism as a consequence of structural changes in the media environment.

Keywords

Populist journalism, Daily Mail, tabloid journalism, mediatization, hybridity

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INTRODUCTION

The past decade witnessed the rise of populism and identity politics occurring in various countries. The phenomenon is epitomized in cases such as the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States and the United Kingdom exit from the European Union or commonly referred as Brexit, two events which Fukuyama (2018) called as the biggest shock in the recent political landscape.

While populism is starting to get a lot of attention from various political spectrum (As discussed by Mouffe (2018) and Narwaya (2021), discussions about populist journalism have not received much attention. Whereas the media is not only a platform for the rise of populism in politics but also it provides a basis for populism. Media in the United States, for example, set off the stage that allowed Donald Trump to emerge and was finally elected as president (Boczkowski & Papacharissi, 2018).

To understand the relatively new term populist journalism, this paper would like to ask two questions which are formulated as follows: what is populist journalism? If it is a new phenomenon, where is its novelty and what distinguishes it from the past phenomenon in the history of journalism?

To answer these questions, this paper would like to borrow the concepts of mediatization and hybridity by Couldry and Hepp (2017), and Chadwick (2017) to analyse the Daily Mail (newspaper and website) in the UK as a case study.

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This paper would first elaborate the mediatization and hybridity framework, then go into the Daily Mail and journalism models that present sensations or what this paper would refer to as populist journalism.

METHOD

As a conceptual paper, this article refers to Jaakkola (2020), who points out that the conceptual paper "typically draws on multiple concepts, literature streams, and theories that play differing roles" (p. 19). This approach starts from a discussion of a phenomenon that focuses on an issue and then proceeds to analysis, interpretation, and in-depth discussion from various relevant reference sources. This article also uses a narrative-based style (Cornelissen, 2017) as a method that describes some significant events and their results to obtain a good story related to the issues raised. The article's structure begins by describing the mediasphere's development as a setting. The following review is related to the emergence of populist journalism as new tabloid journalism. In this case, Daily Mail is one practical example. The discussion continues on the sketch of how journalism develops and enters the digital realm today and its implications and consequences. Analysis and interpretation then continue on specific issues, such as the Daily Mail and privacy violations and the Daily Mail and racism. The discussion ends with concluding thoughts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Setting the stage: Mediatization and Hybridity

Mediatization is one of the popular key concepts to understand the role of the media, especially in each period of new technological developments.

Schulz (2004, p. 88) explained that mediatization is a condition of social change that is "associated with communication media and their development". In other words, this concept helps us to explain the ways in which the media became influential in social process and every aspect of society. At this stage, the media helps humans adapt to technological developments. And in every process of adaptation, the media would become an inseparable part of human life itself.

There are three stages of mediatization as identified by Couldry and Hepp (2017, pp. 38-52). First is mechanization related to how the media environment becomes mechanical which is marked by the presence of a printing press machine invented by Gutenberg in the decade of 1450. This is the first revolution in the development stage of media technology.

The second is electrification, which is the transformation of communication towards technology based on electronic transmission. This phase is marked by the presence of technological devices such as electricity, radio, telephone, and the like.

The third stage is what is referred to as digitalization. This phase marks the phase of transformation with the presence of internet technology devices that will later become a "foreground" for each of our current communication actions (Couldry and Hepp, 2017, p. 51).

Meanwhile, by taking an example of the political process that occurred in Sweden, Asp and Esaisasson (1996) stated that there are three stages of political mediatization that occur.

The first stage arises when the mass media becomes the dominant channel that connects government and citizens. Interaction between the two is more done through the media, especially television. Of course, in conditions where the media is the main intermediary, the political image of the regime of government is far more prominent. In this kind of culture, the citizen is shapely become a spectator.

In the second stage, when the role of the media in the process of political communication enlarges, it also becomes a political actor who is independent of both the government and citizens. The media has its own political interests and is not merely a passive medium. Moreover, it has the power to be a pressure group to the authorities, while at the same time have a power to form and direct public opinion either by issuing or holding certain political issues. That way, the media agenda can become the agenda of the authorities, or vice versa, become the public agenda. These two stages show the face of the power of the media that is visible.

The third stage shows the invisible power of the media, which is to carry out active mechanisms by slowly adapting to influence people's way of thinking. From the process of policy formulation to the social system the community follows how the logic of the media works. Everyday life become

chaotic with various stories issued by the media and how people respond to these issues. That mixture between the media and people's way of thinking then then influences the process of the formation of "media logic".

Introduced by David Altheide and Snow (1979), this term explains how the media have an influence on how politics operates. This Altheide and Snow's seminal work emerged when the influence of television began to become the mainstream so that the media logic was initially very television-centric oriented. Some critics (Schulz, 2004; Daremas & Terzis, 2000) said that the concept of media logic is still very television-centric oriented so that it is more accurately referred to as televisualization.

Based on that criticism, it is important to widen the explanation of this media logic from mediatization to another concept, namely hybridity. While mediatization pays more attention to how the media logic works, hybridity looks at the other aspects especially on technological developments that affect the way media works.

Chadwick (2017) mentioned that hybridity is "a process of simultaneous integration and fragmentation". Because it is a process in which there is a paradox of integration as well as fragmentation, it is difficult to draw a conclusion on what is really happening. Disruption in the transition period is full of uncertainties and at the same time actually offers various opportunities.

The situation which full of disruption also changes the way media works. Therefore, media logic must also be expanded into hybrid media logic. That means that the development of social media technology plays a very important role in understanding how media works and influences political life. Furthermore, Chadwick mentioned that:

Particulate hybridity is the outcome of power struggles and competition for pre-eminence during periods of unusual transition, contingency, and negotiability. Over time, these hybrid practices start to fix and freeze; they become sedimentary, and what was once considered unusual and transitional comes to be seen as part of a news element, but that news element is never entirely fixed (Chadwick, 2017, p. 15).

We can say that the factors that affect the mediatization process are not just the media or politics. More than that, it is also influenced by and influences the audience. Reciprocal processes occur, especially in the era of active audience whose perspective is heavily shaped by dominant media logic. And this makes political and social mediatization more complex.

However, as Chadwick (2017) pointed out, it should be noted that there is nothing really new about a new media. It is always an improvement from the conventional media that came first. It means that the novelty of new media does not originate from the technology itself.

More than that, what is new is the ways in which how the strategies of old media in adjusting to new forms of media. And this adaptation process will always be influenced by the technology it used. This is because each medium has its own biases that affect the reception of messages carried by the media (see for example McLuhan, 1967).

From what Chadwick conveyed, there are various new biases caused by the medium, but it does not always change various normative values drastically. For instance, a newspaper which later adapt and have a website version. That is an example of hybridity in the context of adaptation to technology. But it should be noted, this media will still have values that it held. These values could be in the form of journalistic principles or a form of political partiality or affiliation towards certain groups or ideologies. In the context in the UK, for example, technological development will not have much influence on the political stance of liberal and conservative media.

A variety of literature shows how the process of normalization of this technology occurs and affects how the media logics operate (e.g., Singer, 2005). In addition, changes in the mode of communication affect what Revers (2014, p. 4) called the development of "more outspoken and opinionated forms of journalism."

Populist Journalism is New Tabloid Journalism

Tabloid journalism is a term that often causes debate in discussions about the study of journalism. Ornebring and Johnson (2004, p. 283) said that this genre is the "lowest standard" in existing public

conversation. It is a genre that focuses on sensationalism in a story. Therefore, this genre is also said to be a threat to democracy because it lacks substance and keeps the public away from healthy discussions. Such criticism often arises from academics and media researchers

Such scepticism can be seen from Bob Franklin (1997) which stated that tabloid journalism inevitably eliminates the role of journalism as a provider of information and makes journalists more focused on interesting news and not what is important to the public.

In Britain, which is often referred to as the place where tabloid journalism emerged, this practice has been running for decades. At first, the term appeared and often referred to newspapers. These newspapers need to appeal emotionally to its readers and the easiest way to get close to its readers is to create sensational news.

Bingham and Conboy (2015) said that the way the newspapers appeal to its readers is by reporting scandalous information about well-known people, or even working classes and minority people (Jones, 2016). In the next stage, this kind of appeal method made the stories become "marketable commodity". After becoming a commodity, stories in the media that practices tabloid journalism is then full of dramatization to attract new readers. And that makes the term tabloid journalism have a negative connotation as it focusses on readers' emotions rather than information.

Apart from the sensations and sometimes the controversies that often arise, Bingham and Conboy (2015) said that tabloid journalism is a form of success for the media that practice it, in context of its level of readability. This certainly is natural, when a media published sensational and click-bait stories, it would easily target and cling to the emotions of readers. At a later stage, readers who feel themselves represented and can be swept up in the emotions of a stories would certainly decide to subscribe. This emotional bond between the media and its reader is an important component in the culture of reading newspapers in the UK (Bingham and Conboy, 2015).

In addition, not all media pundits saw this term in a negative way. Sparks and Tulloch (2000), for example, built a more normative argument by saying that tabloid journalism cannot only be seen from the perspective of news media content. More than that, they suggest that it is also a response to the changing media market. Changes in the media market are changing journalism and because the structure is changing so the values of journalism also change. This makes tabloid journalism ultimately a response to the dynamically developing political economy of the media.

Therefore, although initially departed from the tradition of the newspaper, the term tabloid journalism in its development has changed. It now no longer always refers to print media but to all existing media who practice sensationalism in their journalism practices. Dahlgren (1992) explained that in its development this term also influences broadcasting journalism. Moreover, the television is the medium which much more likely full of sensation and an issue become a public conversation. This context must first be understood before we discuss another term that has emerged: populist journalism.

As a term, populist journalism experienced a shift in meaning especially in a time when the rise of populism marked the last decade. Populism makes populist journalism characterized by ignorance of facts and more emphasis on emotional aspects. One of the things that caused this to happen was because the journalistic truth of the mainstream media became "alienating and disempowering" (Anderson, 2018).

Populist journalism has its roots in the tradition of tabloid journalism. Some researchers say that although based on sensationalism, but this genre of journalism is not always negative. It is a sensational and politically partisan form of reportage and directly confronts the objective journalism model of the 1920s (Maeyer and Trudel, 2017).

In line with them, Mathias Revers (2018) also mentioned that populist journalism has roots in the tradition of tabloid journalism and yellow journalism. Meaning that it relies on "sensationalism, hyperbole, scandal-mongering, gossip or rumor reporting and often the voices of" the people "against the elite".

Maeyer and Trudel (2017) even mentioned that populist journalism in the today's populism "needs to be reinvented". By calling this reinvented they do not see the sensational aspects of populist journalism. What they have seen is how journalism can still appeal emotionally with its readers and not ignore the substance.

Both of them said that journalism that only presents facts or objective journalism was not enough in terms of responding to political populism. Presenting data and hard facts just as it is made the phenomenon of the victory of Donald Trump in the 2016 United States presidential election and Brexit in the United Kingdom could emerge. In these two moments, the media failed to grasp the roots of populism and only focused on facts (Boczkowski & Papacharissi, 2018).

Another thing that must be understood is that what distinguishes populist journalism from the tabloid journalism model is the increasingly widespread mediatization and hybridity which makes its reach to the audience become more massive. Social media makes it easier to spread or distribute news on the media. Much faster than in the era of print media.

In addition, in the digital era as it is today, populism finds its habitat to flourish. Populism was born from sentiments used by politicians to get their political goals (Fukuyama, 2018). And learning from various countries, these politicians often use provocative and often politically incorrect languages which still acceptable to their constituents.

Populist politicians use popular jargon especially during the election season and to consolidate their power. These politicians claim that they get a mandate directly from the people and therefore try hard to maintain their power with that argument (Fukuyama, 2018). To maintain power, tactics such as fearmongering are carried out. In addition, they are trying to undermine various important institutions that can carry out checks and balances mechanisms for power such as media institutions.

That context must also be understood. At present, it is easy to divert anxiety because of economic and political reasons of a majority group in various countries towards a minority group. They are feeling that they are left behind. This feeling of anxiety is exploited not only by politicians but also by both conventional and new media. That is, it is natural when watching outrage-based radio shows, television programs, and blogs or social media flourish. Berry and Sobieraj (2014) called it: outrage industry.

In outrage industry, public sphere is not imagined as a fully rational space for sharing ideas or exchanging important shared ideas. This rational sphere basically values facts and is inclusive. Outrage industry makes it "distinctly emotional, partial, antagonistic, and opinion-based" (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014, p. 19). Public discussion is no longer a space to reach consensus and instead makes the public more divided.

In ideologically divided societies, especially for liberal and conservative communities, it is difficult to get meaningful discussions about issues that are important to the public. This is especially related to issues which in recent years have become sensitive in many countries such as political, religious, cultural, immigrant, and so on.

That is a symptom that we can witness in many countries and also appears in the context of populist journalism. Instead of appearing as imagined by Maeyer and Trudel (2017) where populist journalism can still appeal to readers and based on facts, populist journalism is actually trapped in an outrage industry. Outrage industry which is slowly becoming dominant in the media emphasizes journalism on artificial aspects rather than substantially.

Paradoxically, when populist politicians like Donald Trump in the United States attacks the media, the media is also trapped in the narrative of populist journalism. This makes them vulnerable to increasingly massive misinformation in the era of social media. A wave of fake news is rampant and this is exploited intelligently by populist politicians to attacks media that are critical of them. In the end, the term fake news is difficult to define because it is later more a political act rather than an attempt to understand stories that is false and is part of misinformation.

Analysis of that various conditions is what makes this paper mention that populist journalism today is a new tabloid journalism. The next section would look at the Daily Mail as a model of populist journalism through the concept of mediatization that results in engagement between the media and its readers.

Daily Mail: The Voice of Middle England?

By 2020, the Daily Mail will be 124 years old. When it was founded in 1896, the Daily Mail stories already showed what the style of journalism that it would be practiced later. Contains every day and human-interest stories, the headline news was already using sensationalism as the main element (Addison, 2017).

Daily Mail can be called the pioneer of tabloid journalism in the UK. Daily Mail founder Lord Northcliffe, from the beginning said that the Daily Mail in its stories or journalistic coverage focused on 'style of language used, making it more precise, simple, snappy, condensed, lively and more consistently populist' (Noxon, 2017).

Look at the word populist in the description. That is simply a Daily Mail style formula that distinguishes from the tendencies of other newspapers at the time. In other words, it means that it wanted to appeal to the readers' emotions. The Daily Mail slogan was initially "the penny paper for halfpenny" in an effort to attract more popular public attention (Salmon, 2009, p. 29).

Conboy and Steel (2010) also mentioned that from the beginning there had indeed been a populist and commercial intention from the establishment of the Daily Mail. This populist term is closer to commercial rather than political. And this was proven years later. Daily Mail, based on a survey conducted by Demos with Opinimu Reserah, is the most widely read newspaper in the UK in January 2018.

Addison (2017) explained the Daily Mail managed to build success as the most successful newspaper with tabloid journalism. This happens because they knew the formula in understanding and providing space for the community of readers with everyday language (Noxon, 2017). The sensationalism they used proved to be able to engage with the British public. Not surprisingly, they dare to claim that the Daily Mail is "the voice for Middle England" (Addison, 2017, p. 1).

Middle England is not a geographical area. As mentioned by Jones (2016), this term is widely used by journalists and political commentators to refer to the category of majority of the British population. Because it is a form of reference to the majority, it is thus binary in dealing with minorities in society. This context must later be understood when looking at how stories in the Daily Mail and right-wing media often bashing minorities such as black people, Muslims, and in the context of the debate about Brexit are immigrants who come and live in Britain.

The style of language that is explosive and sometimes projects fear towards minorities must be read as an attempt to appeal to the so-called Middle England type readers. This kind of project fear, for example, can be seen from Molek-Kozakowska's (2013) research which examined a series of Daily Mail headlines and mentioned that they deliberately use explosive language as a strategy to target the emotions of certain audience.

Robins (2007) explains that sensationalism is believed and popular among many readers of the Daily Mail because it does not follow the factual reporting standards that are based on "hard-fact". However, the Daily Mail uses a storytelling and fiction approach model that targets the readers' emotions.

In the long run, this strategy works after decades of practice. It can at least be seen from Addison (2017) who said that the Daily Mail won the hearts of the public in the pub. Pubs are the most popular places to interact in everyday life of the British people. By winning the pub, the Daily Mail made its stories widely discussed and therefore influential.

At this point, it can be argued that the journalism model targeting readers' emotions has been around for a long time and the Daily Mail shows how the journalism model has managed to get many readers. This became the basis for the development of populist journalism in the United Kingdom. Apart from the strategy used by the Daily Mail, the success achieved by this media is also caused by social division in the reader's character.

Schudson (1995) divides the division into two categories, namely informational and informed citizens. Informational citizens are those who consume "bits and bytes of information" (Schudson, 1995, p. 169). In contrast, informed citizens are readers or ideal citizens in a democracy because they are able to sort and filter out information. Gradually, this division became the basis for social cleavage which made it possible in its development that populist journalism could emerge and be massive in the current political landscape situation.

In a storytelling and fiction culture that targets emotions, it is easier for the media to engage with certain public social cleavages that have a collective "deep story" (Polletta & Callahan, 2017). A person's perspective will be influenced not only by his or her personal experience but also the stories he or she reads, especially the stories that is close to their experience. Polletta and Callahan (2017) explained that this "deep story" similarity that makes hard facts can be ignored when compared to the values or beliefs they held.

When the media was engaged with its readers as can be seen in the Daily Mail, an information ecosystem was formed, or what is now known as a filter-bubble. In this situation reciprocity is created as is the case in populism politics: the media can write anything and get away with it because there are readers who affirm certain beliefs. This condition then makes us enter dangerous territory: when the media identity is inherent and slowly represents a certain community, political incivility grows.

Berry and Sobieraj (2014) said that such conditions can become fertile ground for growing media outrage - political media genre that is increasingly popular and is characterized by a high level of hostility towards political opponents. This high hostility towards political opponents is common in countries with clear ideological divisions such as right and left in the UK and liberal conservatives in America.

As Couldry and Hepp (2017) mentioned above, currently the media are in the changing landscape and third wave of mediatization, namely digitalization. In the changing landscape, technological change changes the nature of journalists' work which actually makes the tabloid journalism massive.

Technological developments make journalists must adapt to new technological devices. In addition, journalists must deal with a new way the audience consumes news (Barnett, 1998). In other words, journalists are required to work hard in processing news quickly "before they have all the facts" and therefore often sacrifices journalism quality. And populist journalism that only needs an appeal to the emotions of readers does not require complete facts.

The next section would discuss hybridity by looking at Daily Mail in the digital age.

Entering the Digital Era

As already mentioned above, hybridity explains the concept of how the media adapt to technological change. This adaptation is a complex process because it disrupts various established situations that have long been enjoyed. Daily Mail is no exception.

Realizing that globally newspaper circulation figures have continued its sharp decline in recent years, the Daily Mail tried to focus on its website. They began to seriously work on Mail Online. As they managed to work on the newspaper as a popular media in the UK, so did the website version. 2018 Mail Online was once the most accessed media website in the UK with daily averages of unique readers of 14.8 million in 2016 (Gaston & Harrison-Evans, 2018).

Of course, it takes a strategy to become the most popular media in the online realm. One way for the Daily Mail to engage with online readers is to use the same strategy as it used in the newspaper. They continue to use sensational language and because the website version is more audio-visual than the newspaper, the Daily Mail can make so many digital experiments. In addition, they can utilize viral information models as well as characters on social media.

One of the interesting things to see is the Daily Mail's political stance which often raises issues that are not politically correct, just like the playbook played by populist politicians and uses dog whistle narratives. There are at least two things that can be seen in this case, the first relating to privacy violations. And the two relate to racism and anti-minority sentiment.

Daily Mail and privacy violations

Aware that it takes effort to adapt to the digital age, the Daily Mail conducted an experiment to test what kind of information could bring in an audience. According to Addison (2017) one of the experiments was carried out with the launching of a "sidebar of shame" page on its website in 2012.

The contents of the "sidebar of shame" page are basically sensational and controversial videos and photos of public figures including artists, politicians, and others. Specifically, the target is usually a female figure. This follows exactly the way used in the Daily Mail newspaper edition which displays nude and controversial images of female figures. The purpose of this page is not only to attract the attention of the public but also embarrass the target character (Addison, 2017). Of course, this is done not without purpose. By embarrassing the targeted public figures, the hope is that the stories become a public conversation.

Brown (2012) said that the Daily Mail reporters work is outrageous and called "sidebar of shame" as "the raucous and shameless energy of the tabloid press". Daily Mail journalists often violate people's privacy with a variety of methods including secretly and without consent to

photographing and videotaping public figures. In 2014, for example, Mail Online was blocked by the Thai government after the site published videos and photos of the then Thailand's Crown Prince and his wife having a party with Topless.

Another example of privacy violations committed by the Daily Mail is when this media published stories that contained serious allegations of immigration status and nude photographs that had been carried out by Melania Trump's wife, wife of Donald Trump. This serious allegation is not supported by adequate data and facts and therefore Melania Trump is suing Daily Mail for defamation. At the end, Daily Mail must retract the story because the allegations are not proven. Such cases are often carried out by the Daily Mail.

In the context of combining technological developments with the practice of journalism style it does - however controversial the practice is - I would say that what the Daily Mail does is a form of hybrid of media logics. Daily Mail has succeeded in making various news contents into public conversation. Journalistic principles that adhere to ethics are deliberately ignored.

Daily Mail in the digital era is better equipped to publish journalistic reports without strict journalistic standards (Chadwick, 2017). This readiness, aside from being a strategy to appeal to the reader, is also because the nature of the digital environment makes speed and sensationalism take precedence over factuality. According to Waisboard, Tucker, and Lichtenheld (2018), this same context also makes fact-free and conspiracy stories driven into the mainstream media.

The condition in the UK is a little bit from the United States. In the United States, populist journalism and outrage-based media are widely practiced by television, radio, or blogger persona, while in the UK populist journalism has its main platform in mainstream media such as the Daily Mail or other right-wing newspapers such as The Sun or Daily Express.

What to be understood is that the strategy and context of the changing digital environment still cannot change the fact that the Daily Mail still has a right-leaning ideological tendency. Collins (2012) summarizes the ideology by quoting one of the Daily Mail editors who said that "The paper's defining ideology is that Britain has gone to the dogs". Furthermore, Angel (2017) mentioned that "The Mail treats its readers like they haven't got a mind of their own".

Daily Mail and Racism

In the literature on the press and racism especially in the UK, one of the important classic literatures is the work of Teun van Dijk. In his book entitled *Elite Discourse and Racism*, van Dijk writes:

The very topics of news on ethnic affairs convey an overall impression that associates minorities or immigrants with problems, conflicts, deviance, or even threats. Crime, violence, drugs, and riots are usually among the most frequently covered topics on ethnic minorities, especially but not exclusively in the right-wing and popular press. Immigration is also often covered, but news reports on that issue focus on problems, large numbers, immigration rackets or 'economic' refugees who are seen as coming to live off our pockets (van Dijk, 1993, p. 9).

Even though this book was written in 1993, it is still relevant for reading today's conditions. In the midst of rising waves of political populism, people of colour in the UK are habitually represented as constituting a potential threat to the British Society in terms of law and order, cultural cohesion, and the "national stock" (Curran, Gaber, and Petley, 2019).

In that narrative, and with a populist journalism model, the Daily Mail plays its role in the mainstreaming of racism in British Politics.

One of them is reflected in an online presentation from its journalist or columnist. One of the most popular Daily Mail columnists is Katie Hopkins, who has now resigned. Through her column in the Daily Mail for many years Hopkins fuelling prejudice toward minority groups especially Muslims and immigrants (Barnett, 2017). Hopkins often issued statements that were deliberately provocative. Among these are when the 2017 terror events that occurred in the city of London and Manchester. Hopkins said that the solution of terrorism carried out by radical Muslim groups is to implement a "final solution" for Muslims. This term is very insensitive and racist because it refers to the killing of millions of Jews by Nazi Germany in World War 2.

These allegations can often be freely made by Hopkins without any consequences. She has also referred to immigrants as "cockroaches" and dead refugees "floating in the weather" (Gore, 2017). However, she was found guilty by the court and the Daily Mail had to pay £ 150,000 to one of the British Muslim families. The family was accused by Hopkins as part of a terrorist group, a charge that has never been proven.

Hybridity in this context is so effective because the fuelling prejudice method takes place through online media and responses to it can be seen on social media. The *DM Reporter* Twitter account, for example, documents the racist comments that emerge from Daily Mail readers. These comments that are often viral and widely spread on social media appear below the comments column in the Daily Mail website.

Although much literature shows the tendency of racist and anti-minority Daily Mail as mentioned above, the Daily Mail editor in chief rejected the label. This is seen, for example, when Paul Dacre, editor in chief of the Daily Mail 1992 - 2018, published an unprecedented editorial attack on the Guardian.

In 2017 the Guardian and the Daily Mail were involved in a post-terror feud at the mosque in Finsbury Park, London. The Guardian published a cartoon comic which said that the terrorists at the mosque in Finsbury Park liked to read the Daily Mail and The Sun, the two newspapers with the highest number of copies in the UK. The message of the cartoon: acts of terrorism targeting Muslims are a consequence of the anti-Muslim propaganda that has been carried out by the two media for years. This accusation does not depart from empty space. Many studies discuss how these two media amplify Islamophobic messages (Barnett, 2017).

After the cartoon on The Guardian was published, the next day the Daily Mail wrote a long editorial entitled "fake news, fascist left, and the real purveyor of hatred". In short, in an angry tone, the Daily Mail editorial rejected its newspaper being called a supplier of anti-Muslim propaganda in Britain. Instead, it accused The Guardian of the apparent source of hatred from the left-wing groups and the cartoon was "a direct attack on millions of readers of the Daily Mail".

This defensive attitude and self-defence efforts actually show the way of thinking of the Daily Mail which then uses the reader's sentiment to defend itself. Of course, this is problematic considering Paul Dacre was once called the most dangerous person in the UK (Adams, 2017). With access to millions of readers, Dacre and the Daily Mail have an important role in influencing the course of public discourse. As Adams (2017) mentioned, Dacre has always "let his newspaper do his talking for him" for nearly 25 years as editor in chief.

At this point, it can be argued that the Daily Mail maintains sensationalism and controversy in its news in the digital age. This strategy is similar to that carried out in its print product in the previous decade. The difference is, the development of media technology and hybrid media models allow a variety of sensational information to be spread much faster. From the Daily Mail, we can see that the populist journalism model has a platform in mainstream media.

CONCLUSION

This paper showed that populist journalism, especially in the UK, is not a new phenomenon. By looking at the Daily Mail case study and borrowing the concepts of mediatization and hybridity, this paper argued that populist journalism is a new style of developing tabloid journalism as a consequence of structural changes in the media environment.

Changes in technology that continue to occur basically do not always change the social or political cleavage that has been formed. In the context of the UK there is an established reader market and the ideology of the Daily Mail. This is what drives the development of populist journalism as it is today. It is also undeniable that populist journalism that targets emotions, as practiced by the Daily Mail or elsewhere is so popular and read by many people.

Although more specifically discussing the UK, some parts of the analysis are relevant enough to analyse the rise of populist journalism and also populism itself on a global scale. Populist journalism, as indicated by the Daily Mail, gives a very wide space for the emergence of populist leaders and far more vital is to provide a basis for anti-immigrant and minority sentiments that occur in various places in the world.

In a broader context, this paper may be laid in discussion about the role of the media in the current political landscapes across the globe. While populist journalism may be popular and engage with its readers, there is some concern that the journalism model that only targets emotions and ignores the facts can be fatal. It can make the public questioning the relevance of journalism that spread smears without facts that can be accounted for.

In a democratic society, the media serves as the fourth pillar of democracy by providing information that can be accounted for as a basis for conversation in the public sphere. In the post-truth era like today, hoaxes are easily spread, especially on social media. In such situations, the media has an important role to clear public space. If the mainstream media actually spreads misinformation by only selling sensationalism, of course the media can be a threat to democracy itself. In that context, this paper hopes to be a subject of further discussion to discuss populism and democracy.

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