

# Indonesia's National News Trends on the Rice Import Policy: A Content Analysis

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**Submission date:** 10-Jan-2022 03:30PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1739474740

**File name:** INDONESIA\_S\_NATIONAL\_NEWS\_TREND\_ON\_THE\_RICE\_IMPORT\_POLICY.pdf (203.25K)

**Word count:** 5792

**Character count:** 30432



## Indonesia's National News Trends on the Rice Import Policy: A Content Analysis

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Key words:** *news analysis; rice import; content analysis; journalism*

**Kata kunci:** *analisis berita; impor beras; analisis isi; jurnalisme*

**How to cite:**  
Latif, D. & Ramli, R. (2020). Indonesia's National News Trends on the Rice Import Policy: A Content Analysis. *Journal of Humanity and Social Justice*, 2(2), 124-136.

### ABSTRACT

*This research discusses the rice import policy of the government of Indonesia in 2018. At the time more than two state institutions differ to see the national rice stock. They are the official state institutions; Central Bureau of Statistic, Ministry of Trade, and Ministry of Agriculture. The National Logistics Agency (Bulog) as state institution which responsibility to the national rice affair of Indonesia is confused to run the policy. Then, the policy reaps polemic, pros, and cons points of view. The pros argue that rice stocks are getting less while the cons argue that rice stocks are available due to harvest. This research aims to explain the trends and alignment of tempo.co and kompas.com toward the policy of rice import taken by the government. The method uses a descriptive-quantitative approach by applying the content analysis technique. It divides of some categories. The result shows that the news tendency of tempo.co tends to apply war journalism, while kompas.com tends to apply peace journalism. For news' source category, tempo.co and kompas.com empower their reporters in creating a news. They both take a side to the policy for rejecting rice import to Indonesia.*

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini membahas kebijakan impor beras pemerintah Indonesia pada tahun 2018. Pada saat itu lebih dari dua lembaga negara berbeda untuk melihat stok beras nasional. Mereka adalah lembaga resmi negara; Biro Pusat Statistik, Departemen Perdagangan, dan Kementerian Pertanian. Badan Logistik Nasional (Bulog) sebagai lembaga negara yang bertanggung jawab terhadap masalah beras nasional Indonesia bingung menjalankan kebijakan tersebut. Kemudian, kebijakan itu menuai polemik, pro, dan kontra pandangan. Pro berpendapat bahwa stok beras semakin sedikit sementara kontra berpendapat bahwa stok beras tersedia karena panen. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan tren dan penyelarasan tempo.co dan kompas.com terhadap kebijakan impor beras yang diambil oleh pemerintah. Metode ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-kuantitatif dengan menerapkan teknik analisis konten. Ini membagi beberapa kategori. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kecenderungan berita tempo.co cenderung menerapkan jurnalisme perang, sedangkan kompas.com cenderung menerapkan jurnalisme perdamaian. Untuk kategori sumber berita, tempo.co dan kompas.com memberdayakan reporter mereka dalam membuat berita. Keduanya berpihak pada kebijakan penolakan impor beras ke Indonesia.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agrarian country with extensive agricultural land stretching from Aceh to Papua. In 1980, Indonesia managed to conduct rice self-supporting. Indonesia indeed is known as agricultural country which majority of its populations work as farmer. They live from the land and distribute their product to all over in this country. They support the basic need for more than 271 millions people per 2020 (bps.go.id).

Since centuries ago, mostly the people rice field traditionally. They produced it for their living, but some of them distribute to the seller. Day by day and year by year, Indonesia has a glory in agriculture. It is enough to sustain their daily life. In the era of Soekarno as President of Indonesia, no change. Rice productivity goes on normally, even more reached over the target. With its abundant production, the Soeharto government exported rice overseas. Since then Indonesia's status has changed from rice importers in the 1970s to rice exporters. In 1969-1988, Indonesia's rice production increased by 4.5 percent per year due to policies that emphasized the use of new technology, infrastructure investment, and good prices (Antara, 2000).

The increase in domestic rice productivity lasts over time. Sari (2014) noted that at the beginning of 2001-2012, national rice production continued to grow positively. It even increased to 10 million tons. In 2001 Indonesian rice production amounted to 31.6 million tonnes, and in 2012 it already reached the figure of 43.3 million tonnes. While the production of rice in 2001 was as much as 50.4 million tonnes, in 2012 it reached 69 million tons. From 1995 to 2000, the production of Indonesian rice was average up to 31.96 tons (Kariyasa, 2013).

Ministry of Agriculture has registered since Joko Widodo was appointed President of Indonesia, that the development of national agriculture is relatively good. Besides corn, chili, and onion, national rice production is increasing. Even with the increase of other commodity production during 2014, rice production contributed to a value of up to Rp 318 trillion (pertanian.go.id).

The data from the Ministry of Agriculture generally mentions positive national agricultural performance, but other facts demonstrate the practice of rice import in Indonesia. The government takes this import policy as a strategic decision due to the minimal domestic availability of rice. National rice reserves are reduced to impact on uncontrolled rice prices in the market.

However, in 2018 Indonesia imported rice from ASEAN countries. There were two million tonnes of rice gradually imported to the country, whereas the rice production in Indonesia was surplus. The mass media was presenting news about the rice import policy. The print, electronic, or portal media cited the statement of the Minister of Economic Coordinator and Minister of Trade.

The Minister of Trade, Enggartiasto Lukita said the government is ready to import 500 thousand tons of rice at the end of January 2018 (tempo.co, 13 January 2018) and the government has issued a second import permit for Bulog to import 500 thousand tons with a deadline of July 2018.

On one side, the Minister of Trade expressed the need for importing rice, but on the other hand, the Ministry of Agriculture refused to do so. Director-General of Food Crops Ministry of Agriculture Sumarjo Gatot Irianto said the rice production has been sufficient to fulfill the needs of national food (tempo.co, 21 January 2018).

President Director of Bulog General Company, Budi Waseso, was not aligned with him. Budi Waseso even resisted rice imports by insisting that the stock of rice is enough only by relying on domestic procurement. Bulog will maximize the absorption of grain from farmers instead of buying imported rice (kumparan.com, 27 April 2018). The government and society do not need to worry in case there are natural disasters and price volatility because of considerable stock.

The rice import policy then became a "hot ball," which was revolving among state officials, especially the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Agriculture, and Agency for Logistics (Bulog). The principal officials in the three-state institutions were conflicting with each other about the urgency of rice import policy.

Mass Media continues to escort polemic imports of rice as an event or issue that has very high news value. Therein is an essential element because of the public, actual, consequential, and on-going interests. It is even more exciting because it involves famous figures with disputes. So far, the value of news is usually based on actuality, importance, impact, conflict, character, and many others. Kershner (2009) said news related to actuality, interesting article, and important.

Moreover, the portal as a media relies heavily on speed. The question of imports of rice being polemic is a nationally-selling issue. This speed is the power of portal media compared to conventional ones. The media portal users is now greater than the mainstream media. Easy access to information makes users prefer it over newspapers, television or radio.

It was not only a minimal production issue as the cause of the issuance of rice import policy but rather the rising rice prices on the market. Price volatility was also suspected as a result of cartels. Even the difference of rice stock data between the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Agriculture was accused of being a trigger. The data in both institutions were also not matching, so it was difficult to see the trend of rice needs in a certain period.

The issue of rice import automatically attracts the attention of mass media. Behind the rice import policy, the mass media created a separate issue. Not all events are newsworthy, but only those that contain the news value. With the agenda-setting, the mass media arranged the issues to uncover the policy. As a result, the issues accompanying the import of rice policy were milling about on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and portals.

With its diversity, the mass media presents the news differently. Some present it with the facts, but some are provoking it. The practice of peace and war journalism applies here. It is seen in the title, and news content presented. Some accept, but others reject.

Tempo.co and Kompas.com portals are the official media that also presents the imported news of rice. Both portals intensively broadcast news related to rice

import policy. Based on the explanation, the problem of this study is formulated as "How is the reporting trend and alignments of Tempo.co and Kompas.com to the policy of national rice imports in 2018?" This study aims at describing the reporting trend and alignments of tempo.co and Kompas.com to the policy of imports of national rice in 2018.

## 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Research using the method of content analysis and entitled The Import of Rice was done by Dakhoir et al. (2018). His research discusses the national trade as a necessity or desire so that the import policy of rice emerged in 2018. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers tried to construct reality and understand its meaning so that this research pays attention to processes, events, and authenticity.

This research generates several points: (1) Rice Import is the need of people. (2) If only a few people feel the need for it, then the policy of rice import is only a little interest. (3) The Government should pay great attention to the farmers through the availability of land, seeds, fertilizers, and many more. (4) Support the farmers in selling their rice by regulating its price on the market.

Suryawati (2019) also researched food security issues through the news broadcasted by Tirto.id. Food security issues are appealing to researchers because, in addition to Indonesia, other countries are also focused on food issues. Food is related to the lives of many people and affects on the domestic economy. Food problems are also related to the inflation rate and the purchasing power of society.

In the research, the analysis unit used was news. The news in question was the choice of headlines, themes, sentences, and words presented by the news portal. As a problem, tirto.id formulated how the framing of Indonesia's food security strategy. The approach used is qualitative, to get descriptive data through words and sentences.

The results show that Tirto.id considers food security to be a problem due to government policy. The government changed the distribution scheme of food subsidies to pre-prosperous communities through the Non-Cash Food Aid Program. Previously, subsidies in Non-Cash Food Aid Program were given in the form of rice and other foodstuffs. Then the government plans to change it back by giving money transfer. The change made Bulog overwhelmed by stockpiling of rice reserves in warehouses.

The content analysis as a "surgical tool" research was also conducted by Juditha (2013) through the news portal. detiknews.com was her choice because the portal is known as the first news portal that existed in Indonesia and was visited by many readers. Besides, detiknews.com is the first online media to update information for 24 hours.

The issues raised are related to the online spotlight because they often sacrifice the basic principles of journalism, such as the accuracy of news for the sake of actuality. This study aims to illustrate the accuracy of news in online journalism, especially the case of alleged corruption of the constitutional court. As a result,

detiknews.com continues to adhere to the accuracy of the news through five categorizations, i.e., the accuracy of headlines with news content, check and re-check, writing errors on data, the relevance of news sources, and accuracy between photos and news content.

The other research on the import of rice was also done by Ikomatussuniah (2012). It discusses the food self-sufficiency for national food security. This research mentions several measures that can be applied to achieve food security. It includes infrastructure development that supports food production such as irrigation, improvement of human resources quality for farmers, access to affordable prices for seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural tools that support food production, strengthening food security agencies. It is following Law No. 12 the Year 2012 on Food, Enforcement, and Legal Protection that protects farmers from illegal practices such as cartels.

Siringo and Daulay (2014) are reviewing the linkages of agricultural productivity and the import of rice in Indonesia. It was explained that rice imports done by the government without considering the increased rice productivity is bad for the country. It resulted in government dependency in meeting domestic rice needs. Low rice import prices have an impact on the decline of national rice prices. The decline in rice prices then became the hope of the government. For the government, on one side, the low rice price will help to reduce the consumer burden, but on the other side, this policy is detrimental to farmers.

Prabowo (2010) discusses the policy of Indonesia's government in realizing national food security. The results express that the durability of the food has a far more macro concept than food self-sufficiency. Food self-sufficiency is more oriented to the physical aspect, which includes the availability of food production.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach. Barelson (1952) said content analysis is a research technique which doing objective, descriptive-quantitative of manifest content. Descriptive means an approved method used by researchers through the description of discussion or news stories. To expose it, researchers apply the method of content analysis, which analyses the news (manifest), execute them objectively, valid, reliable, and can be replicated (Eriyanto, 2011; 15). Content analysis helps to describe the work of media, especially the news room. They select issue through title, news content, sources, and etc.

The data source is extracted from all the imported rice news published by tempo.co and kompas.com. The import news is a collection of news related to the rice import policy of the 2018 edition. The tempo.co portal consists of 56 news, while kompas.com is as many as 36 news. From the news, one of the categories that can be known is the tendency of the news. Does it tend to peaceful or war journalism. Or it is neutral.

This content analysis research technique uses coding sheets that are arranged based on pre-defined research variables. The variables in question are the trends of

the news referring to the use of war or peace journalism practices as well as the variable of media alignments, whether to supports or rejects the rice import policy.

Furthermore, researchers described the results of data processing and discussed it. Researchers used cross tables to view variables directly. After that, the researchers analysed it in detail; then, the research<sup>13</sup> concluded. In this study, researchers applies the theory of agenda settings (McCombs, 2004). This theory concerns the media's ability to create issues. What is considered necessary by the media will also be considered important by the public.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the news of the rice import policy conducted by the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Trade in 2018. From the results of the newsgathering, there was 92 news related to the topic. As an explanation of the news' trends, the results and discussion are as follows:

**Table 1.** News' Source and New's Trend

New's Source	New's Trend			
	Peace	War	Neutral	Total
Reporter	12	24	5	41
News Agency	7	2	1	10
Release	0	0	0	0
Other Portals	1	3	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 (36%)</b>	<b>29 (52%)</b>	<b>7 (12%)</b>	<b>56 (100%)</b>

Source: Researcher' Data

Table 1 shows that news sourced from journalists' coverage, as much as 52% (29 news) leads to war news feeds, 36% (20 news) leads to peace newsfeeds, and 12% (7 news) of neutral news feeds.

**Table 2.** News' Source and New's Trend

New's Source	New's Trend			
	Peace	War	Neutral	Total
Reporter	18	14	2	34
News Agency	0	0	0	0
Release	0	1	1	2
Other Portals	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 (50%)</b>	<b>15 (42%)</b>	<b>3 (8%)</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>

Source: Researcher' Data

Table 2 shows that news sourced from journalists' coverage, as much as 50% (18 news) leads to war news feeds, 42% (15 news) leads to peace newsfeeds, and 8% (3 news) neutral newsfeeds. Tables 1 and 2 shows that tempo.co and Kompas.com are national-reputable portal media. It is evidenced by the news of rice imports in 2018, which is highly dominated by internal production internal. They are reporters whose daily work is covering news in the field.

As a national media, both rely on news production capabilities rather than relying on news from outside parties. Their standard operational procedures are highly maintained with coordinating work mechanism. A reporter should report to the editor or wait for a command from the editor to the reporter. Before going to the execution stage, they will make a plan.

Furthermore, tempo.co and Kompas.com also produce news by giving special attention to the agricultural economic rubric. There are reporters and editors in charge of overseeing the national agricultural issues. For both media, agricultural issues are "sales" that the readers are interested in because it is related to national food security. They consider that it has basic interest for the life of Indonesia people. They are responsible to monitoring the issue progress, even more day by day.

The internal totality of tempo.co can be seen in the news published in the May and November editions of 2018. In that edition, all news published was the result of tempo.co reporters' coverage. Meanwhile, in Kompas.com, all news published is the result of its reporters' coverage except the August edition, which publishes a release from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Both tempo.co and Kompas.com still give room to other parties. As an example, tempo.co empowers news agencies and other portals as news sources. The issues or events that are considered essential and exciting, but are missed from that place, are taken from Antara or bisnis.com as news agency. In particular, the September issue of 29 news published tempo.co, there were 11 news of which came from the reporter of the news agency, especially from Antara and bisnis.com. While the January, August, September, and October editions, tempo.co publishes only one or two news.

Meanwhile, Kompas.com ignores other news agencies or portals. This media need not the outside information but rely on their internal manpower. All news published in January, February, March, May, September, October, and November are derived from Kompas.com reporters' coverage. This portal in the August issue only accommodates one release sourced from an official government agency. The release of the Ministry of Agriculture is mainly related to the issues that match and suit its agenda.

From the aspect of the journalism practice, table 2 also shows the differences in tempo.co and Kompas.com in publishing the imported rice policy news in 2018. This distinction is caused by the import of national rice that has become a national polemic. It is not only food issue anymore but also changes to be national issue. The discussion involves some institutions, include non government organization (NGO) and parties. Various parties were arguing with each other about the policy of bringing in rice from abroad. It is common knowledge that the Minister of Trade



Enggartiaso Lukito was involved in a "conflict" with the Head of the Logistics Agency, Budi Waseso.

The sharp difference of opinion between the two makes the mass media very free to fry up the issue of rice import policy. In this case, tempo.co uses war journalism more often than peace. Known as a critical media, tempo.co proves the stigma by presenting news feeds containing argumentative views. This portal publishes ideas from different sources, so the presentation looks sharp. Some examples of war nuanced news journalism are found in the news entitled "Four Reasons Why Budi Waseso Reject Rice Imports," "Rizal Ramli Call the Kartel exploits the Jokowi's Policy of Rice Import," and "Support Budi Waseso for Rejecting Imports, Fadli Zon Ask the Trade Minister to be terminated."

The choice of words used above indicates a sharp difference. The phrase "reject," "exploited," "terminated" means negative and creates a potential conflict. The diction is warming up the feelings for the reader. Farida et al. (2013) say the news that invites human feelings and

Tempo.co's critical power is also seen in its headings. This portal is also more aggressive (war journalism) than soft (peaceful journalism). Of the total 56 stories presented, as many as 59% (33 news) with titles that have a "war" tone, while soft titles only 20% (11 news). The rest are neutral.

Similar to tempo.co, kompas.com is also more aggressive than soft. Of the total 36 published news, 50% (18 news) with a "war" nuance, 28% (10 news) are soft. The rest are neutral.

Then, Lynch and Mc. Goldrick (2005) divides the four orientation of war reporting journalists, namely, war-oriented or violent journalists, propaganda-oriented journalists, elite-oriented journalists, and victory-oriented journalists.

In contrast to tempo.co, kompas.com chooses soft news to broadcast polemic of rice import policy. The percentage of the implementation of peaceful journalism is smaller than war journalism. This media is not trapped in the hustle and bustle of national mass media coverage, including mainstream media.

Kompas.com is careful media in delivering the news because it holds strict journalistic rules. In Indonesia, it is known as a very mature media group. It also sought to avoid conflict among institutions, although there was a leak in publishing such news, like the news entitled "Buwas: Do not be A Traitor of the Nation!" Although the rice import policy provokes controversy, kompas.com still carries the principle of caution. It can be seen in the news entitled "Minister of Trade: Problem of Rice Import is Enough," "The Ministry of Agriculture Presents some facts, Government Rice Reserves are More Than Enough," and "The Facts Behind the Plan to Import 2 Million Tonnes Rice This Year".

Moreover, Kompas Group, so far, is known as a media group that holds well the principles of journalism. Kompas Group is very calm and mature in broadcasting news. Regarding the issue that blows in the national universe, Kompas Group has its attitude. The attitude is strong and as a reflection of its character. As part of the

Kompas Group, kompas.com is also taking the same attitude in addressing Indonesia's rice import policy in 2018.

Regarding subjectivity, Santosa (2017) said that there were no more stringent requirements in managing and publishing mass media in the reform era, such as New Order practices. Now, anyone who has significant capital and technical ability has the right to manage the media. The news can be "pushed" subjectively according to the wishes of the media owners. With this ownership, news content then takes the form of a "double-edged knife." On issues that contain conflict, on the one hand, the media can report conflicts in a balanced manner with the principles of peaceful journalism. Thus the news can reduce conflict. However, on the other hand, the media can also use their authority to present their news unevenly. The media can sharpen conflict by using the principles of war journalism.

**Table 3.** News' Source and News' Alignment

News' Source	News' Alignment			
	Support Rice Imports	Refuse Rice Imports	Neutral	Total
Reporter	17	17	7	41
News Agency	4	5	1	9
Release	0	0	0	0
Other Portals	0	2	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 (37,5%)</b>	<b>24 (43%)</b>	<b>11 (20%)</b>	<b>56 (100%)</b>

*Source: Researcher's Data*

Table 3 shows that news sourced from journalists' coverage, as much as 43% (24 news) supports the government's rice import policy rather than rejecting the policy by 37% (21 news). While the neutral is only 20% (11 News)

**Table 4.** News' Source and News' Alignment

News' Source	News' Alignment			
	Support Rice Imports	Refuse Rice Imports	Neutral	Total
Reporter	16	16	2	34
News Agency	0	0	0	0
Release	0	1	1	2
Other Portals	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 (44%)</b>	<b>17 (47%)</b>	<b>3 (9%)</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>

*Source: Researcher's Data*

Table 4 shows that news sourced from journalists' coverage, as much as 47% (17 news) rejected the government's rice import policy rather than supporting the policy of 44% (16 news). Meanwhile, the neutral is only 9% (3 News).

Tables 3 and 4 depict the alignments tempo.co and kompas.com are more dominant in rejecting than supporting the government's import policy by the Indonesian authorities in 2018. The alignments referred to is the position of both portals to the rice import policy. Both tempo.co and kompas.com disagreed more with the government's move to bring imported rice into the country.

The Ministry of Trade argued that the lack of national rice stocks had implications for the increase in rice prices on the market, and it is the reason for the government to open up rice imports into the country. The Ministry of Trade does not want the lack of rice reserves to bring harm to the people of Indonesia.

On the other hand, Bulog argues differently. The agency that deals with national rice (Bulog) rejects rice imports because Indonesian rice stocks are considered to still sufficient to meet the needs of the Indonesian people. Bulog holds on the Ministry of Agriculture data, which states that domestic rice production in 2018 is sufficient for national consumption. During 2018, the rice harvest in the country's production centers did not show any problems. Java or Sulawesi, as a national rice buffer, is still sufficient to meet domestic rice consumption.

A more significant rejection of tempo.co and kompas.com compared to supporting the import policy of rice is also seen in the second tabulation of the portal. From a total of 56 news broadcasts by tempo.com, 43% (24 news) with titles that refuse, 27% (15 news) with supporting titles, and the rest neutral. While kompas.com, from a total of 36 published news, 42% (15 news) with titles that refuse, 30% (11 news) with supporting titles. The rest are neutral. With this composition, it is quite clear that tempo.co and kompas.com expect the government to empower domestic production compared to imports. Moreover, domestic rice stocks are still available.

Both tempo.co and kompas.com clearly explained that the availability of national rice stocks is safe. Tempo.co quoted the statement of the Head of the National Logistics Agency (Bulog) Budi Wasesa in the news entitled "Budi Waseso: BPS Surplus Data, Imports Not Required." The head of the State Logistics Agency estimates that until the end of 2018, the State Logistics Agency rice stocks will reach 2.7-3 million tons. The government and the people need not to worry if there are natural disasters and price fluctuations.

Previously, the head of the National Logistics Agency (Bulog) on the news entitled "Bulog Said No Need to Import Rice, Minister Amran: We Pray," also said there was no need to import rice. He said, "The need for rice until June 2019 is safe. The prices in the market of Rp. 8,200 per kilogram, even in some places I have met, the price is under Rp. 8,000 per kilogram."

In the kompas.com news entitled "Buwas: I told the President, God willing, I did not import ...", the head of the National Logistics Agency also stated that food security without imports was believed to be easily realized. It can be done by

synergizing between all relevant parties and absorbing local food products to assist farmers. "It is sad if then a largely agrarian country like Indonesia demands imported food and how proud can it be to eat foreign or imported products. I, as a villager am sad as if I am not taking sides with farmers,"

Regarding media alignments, McCombs (2004) said theory of agenda-setting describes the ability of the media to influence the importance topics of the public agenda. It is also the creation of public awareness and concern of importance issues by the media. The study of agenda-setting is the way media to influence the public and setting a hierarchy of news prevalence

Febrina Zulmi (2017) said that the media has alignments because it takes advantage of this position. Media alignment referred to here is the attitude of the media on an issue. This attitude supports or does not support an issue for reasons that are tailored to their interests. The objective, balanced, accurate, and correct attitude that the news media should have is disturbed by the bias. It can cause the news media to no longer be in an independent position.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that there are differences in the news' trends of tempo.co and kompas.com in publishing to the rice import policy conducted by the Indonesian government in 2018. Tempo.co implements more war journalism rather than peace, while kompas.com is more dominant in the practice of peaceful journalism than the war. Generally, these two portals empower internal production more than taking news from outside sources. In terms of partisanship, both tempo.co and kompas.com are more dominant in rejecting the policy of importing rice into Indonesia than approving it. This research will be better if able to explain the relevance of the issues raised and the choice of sources. However, this research brushes aside the growing assumption that national portals tend to be blunted against government policies because they are part of the government. It turns out that both tempo.co and kompas.com show media control over the government is still running. Finally, theoretically, this study is useful to convey the way the media pack the issue. While practically, it shows the interests of the media on the issues it develops.

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