

Religious Dynamics in Mass Media: A Study on Popular Articles in *Kompas* And *Republika* Newspapers

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Abstract: This paper examines the religious dynamics image in contemporary Indonesia was presented by the printed mass media. Using van Dijk's critical discourse analysis method, and the hierarchy of influence media content of Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese, this paper examines the content of popular articles in the *Kompas* and *Republika* for the period 2013-2017. These two print media were chosen because they are two different ideological poles. *Kompas* was born from Catholic activists and supported by several military officers. Meanwhile, *Republika* was founded by Islamic activists with government support. The themes of popular articles in both media revolve around issues of the state and democracy, political dynamics and Islamic parties, and spirituality. The religious discourse contest at *Kompas* and *Republika* was filled with Muslim scholars and leaders of Islamic mass organizations. *Kompas* does not provide enough space for new writers so that its popular articles are filled by monotonous scholars. On the other hand, *Republika* has promoted many new writers. However, *Republika* also features internal writers. Popular articles from *Kompas* and *Republika* put forward a moderate religious face. However, *Republika* seems to emphasize the Islamic side more, while *Kompas* appears to be more inclusive.

Keywords: *Republika, Kompas, Popular Article, Religious Dynamics*

A. Introduction

Post New Order era, various Islamic expressions emerge and enrich the Islamic dynamics and contemporary Indonesia, from radical Islamists, puritans, to liberal Islamists. Various Islamic movements emerge and compete to dominate the free market of Islamic Da'wah in Indonesia. In politics, many Islamic parties emerge campaigning the formalization of sharia. Whereas, in socio-cultural dimension, various new Islamic movements that are totally different from the previous movements emerge and they are related to the Islamic movements in the Middle East. Several scholars

called this as the “new santri/Islamic student”.¹ Martin van Bruinessen simplistically named this as *conservative turn*.² The existence of this new *santri* movement “disturbs” the main stream Islamic movement (the old *santri*). Hence, the main stream movements react and involve themselves by competing in the public arenas of religiosity in contemporary Indonesia. The old *santri* existence is signified by their mottos and taglines, such as, Islam Berkemajuan/Progressive Islam by Muhammadiyah, and Islam Nusantara by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), or Islam Wasatiyah/Midway Islam by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)/Indonesian Council of Ulama.³

This new diversity phenomenon draws the interest of many. Studies to scientifically unveil this phenomenon are carried out by Yon Machmudi,⁴ Martin van Bruinessen,⁵ Haedar Nashir,⁶ or Din Wahid.⁷ This phenomenon also attracts mass media attention. Apart from having news value (through straight news, feature, or in-depth news), mass media also presented this phenomenon in form of non-journalistic articles through opinion column with outside writers. Popular article is an expression of the author’s contemplation on a current phenomenon among the society. It is different from the article written in scientific publication. The popular scientific article is simpler and written in journalistic style, whereas the scientific paper written in scientific publication is longer, specific, and more comprehensive. Nevertheless, popular article in printed media adhere to certain standard, such as news value, actuality, clear, concise, direct, and using language understood by general reader.⁸

Therefore, study on popular articles in mass media becomes of interest to be studied to unveil the contemporary religious phenomenon from the perspective of mass media. Thus, this article discusses, “what contemporary religious themes are discussed in *Kompas* and *Republika* newspapers?”. The present study is narrowed down to articles printed in these two-mass media during the period of January 2013 to December 2017. This period is specifically selected due to the national General Election agenda in 2014 and the Jakarta general election in 2017, in which, within these two elections the issues of political identity was awakening.

¹ (Machmudi, 2008, 69–102)

² Martin van Bruinessen, *Conservative Turn: Islam Indonesia Dalam Ancaman Fundamentalisme* (Bandung: Mizan, 2014), 24–30.

³ (Fata & Ichwan, 2017, pp. 339–364; Najib & Fata, 2020, pp. 115–138; Syamsuddin, 2016)

⁴ (2008)

⁵ (2014)

⁶ (2006)

⁷ (2014)

⁸ (see S.M., 2006; Siregar, 1998)

In addition, we decided to study the popular articles in *Kompas* and *Republika*. The two medias are selected based on their background as the mainstream media and with two different publishing backgrounds. *Kompas* is published by Catholic activists and supported by several military generals, whereas *Republika* is published by Islamic activists. The two are vastly different in terms of ideological background. David T. Hill,⁹ noted that *Kompas* was an independent Chinese-Javanese-Catholic newspaper known for its accommodating journalism. Meanwhile, *Republika* was considered as ideologically an Islamist printed media.¹⁰ These two newspapers continue to exist today by upholding their idealisms, while keeping up with the rhythm and dynamic of the sociopolitical conditions, including in their responses toward the Religious dynamics. *Kompas* and *Republika* provide rooms for Islamic scholars to broadcast their thoughts on contemporary religious dynamics based on the visions of these two media. Such way is called "borrowing others hand."

B. Methods

This present paper is a library research, qualitative, and employs critical discourse analysis by Adrianus van Dijk. Van Dijk described that discourse is always consists of action or movement, has context, historical network, tool for power, and a representation of an ideology. Discourse within a text can be observed through the structure or parts of themes or topics put forward in a news. Secondly, super-structure, a discourse structure related to the framework of a text, how those parts of text are composed in a complete article. Third, micro-structure, an observable discourse meaning from a small part of a text, like words, prepositions, clause, paraphrase, and even from a picture.¹¹

In addition, there are also hierarchy influence in media content proposed by Pamela Shoemaker & Stephen Reese. Shoemaker and Reese stated that the content of media produced through a standard operating procedure, which refers to the philosophical, ethical, and technicality of a media. In this process, there are influence in several layers, such as individual level, media routines level, organizational level, extra media level, and ideological level. These influences surely affect journalistic and non-journalistic works.¹²

⁹ (1994)

¹⁰ (see Fauzi, 2007; Sofiana et al., 2020)

¹¹ (1993)

¹² (1991)

Therefore, authors collect data from popular articles published in *Kompas* and *Republika* for the period of 2013 – 2017. Data collection are based on contemporary Islamic texts found in those articles. Further, irrelevant articles are reduced and the relevant ones are classified into contemporary popular Islamic articles.

C. Religious Discourse in Popular Articles

Within the period of 2013-2017, *Republika* published 193 popular articles related to religious themes, whereas *Kompas* only published 103 articles. These articles then classified into several sub-themes: 1. The State and Democracy; 2. Politics and Islamic Party; 3. Religious and Spirituality. These sub-themes are based on the study all of those articles, and classifying them semantically and reflectively.

The State and Democracy

In relation to this theme, *Kompas* and *Republika* for the period of 2013-2017 published 65 popular articles; 26 in *Kompas* and 39 in *Republika*. The articles are described in detail in the table below:

Table 1
Popular Articles on the State and Democracy Published in
***Kompas* 2013-2017**

1	Azyumardi Azra	Waspadai Sektarianisme	11 Jan 2013
2	Fajar Riza Ul Haq	Intoleransi di Tahun Politik	7 March 2013
3	Syafii Maarif	Pilpres 2 014, Harian Kompas	16 March 2013
4	Syafii Maarif	Parpol dan Negarawan	4 Apr 2013
5	Zuly Qodir	Partai Islam dan Demokrasi	25 Sep 2013
6	M Alfian Alfian	Masalah Abadi Demokrasi Kita	3 Feb 2014
7	Syafii Maarif	Waktu dan Masalah Kedaulatan	4 Feb 2014
8	Zuhairi Misrawi	Transisi Demokrasi Tunisia	5 Feb 2014
9	Asep Salahudin	Kepemimpinan Imajinatif	26 Apr 2014
10	Azyumardi Azra	ISIS, Khilafah dan Indonesia	6 Aug 2014
11	Salahuddin Wahid	Keindonesiaan dan Keislaman	16 Aug2014

12	Teuku Kemal Fasya	Agama dan Warga Negara	14 Nov 2014
13	Azyumardi Azra	Teror Paris, Memperkuat Islam...	13 Jan 2015
14	Yudi Latif	Negara Sengkarut Pikir	2 Feb 2015
15	Hajriyanto Thohari	Politik di Arab, Teologi di ..	1 June 2015
16	Muhammad Ja'far	Antara Demokrasi dan Terorisme	24 Nov 2015
17	Ronny Nitibaskara	Radikalisme dan Toleransi	27 Apr 2017
18	Zuhairi Misrawi	Membendung Teologi Extrimis...	5 Aug 2017
19	Said Aqil Siroj	Deradikalisasi Nusantara	20 Jan 2016
20	Azyumardi Azra	Mendirikan Negara Lain ...	2 Feb 2016
21	Azyumardi Azra	Demokrasi Menurun	9 Aug 2016
22	Masykuri Abdillah	... Demokrasi di Negara Islam	30 Aug 2016
23	Azyumardi Azra	Menjaga Indonesia	15 Nov 2016
24	M Arskal Salim GP	Demokrasi Agonistik	16 Dec 2016
25	Sulastomo	Mimpi Demokrasi Indonesia	30 Dec 2016
26	Budiman Tanuredjo	... Indonesia dalam Ujian	31 Dec 2016

Tabel 2
Popular Articles on the State and Democracy in *Republika*
2013-2017

1	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Bhinneka Tunggal Ika,...	8 Jan 2013
2	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Pergumulan Teologis... (I)	14 May 2013
3	Yudi Latif	Islam dan Politik	15 May 2013

4	Azyumardi Azra	Negara dan Filantropi ...(1)	19 May 2013
5	Azyumardi Azra	Negara dan Filantropi ...(2)	23 May 2013
6	Ikhwanul Kiram Mashuri	Ketika Demokrasi Mesir ...	8 July 2013
7	Azyumardi Azra	Indonesia, Turki, dan ... (1)	25 July 2013
8	Azyumardi Azra	Indonesia, Turki, dan ... (2)	1 Aug 2013
9	Azyumardi Azra	Indonesia, Turki, dan ... (3)	15 Aug 2013
10	Ikhwanul Kiram Mashuri	Demokrasi Mesir Dirampok	19 Aug 2013
11	Nasihin Masha	Indonesia, Turki, Mesir,	26 July 2013
12	Azyumardi Azra	Militerisme Membajak ...	10-Apr-14
13	Azyumardi Azra	Islam dan Demokrasi di.. (1)	3 July 2014
14	Azyumardi Azra	Islam dan Demokrasi di.. (2)	10 July 2014
15	Azyumardi Azra	Pemilu 2014: Retrospeksi	24 July 2014
16	Azyumardi Azra	Kajian Islam CUHK (1)	23 Oct 2014
17	Ikhwanul Kiram Mashuri	Kaum Khawarij Masa Kini	22-Sep-14
18	Azyumardi Azra	Monokultural Vs Multi...	20-Nov-14
19	Azyumardi Azra	Pasca-Dua Mukhtamar	6 Aug 2015
20	Azyumardi Azra	Proxy War (1)	13 Aug 2015
21	Azyumardi Azra	Proxy War (2)	20 Aug 2015
22	Irfan Idris	Kontra Narasi Bahaya ...	10 Oct 2015
23	Busman Edyar	Santri dan Desekularisasi	23 Oct 2015
24	Azyumardi Azra	Kerukunan, Kekerasan,...	31 Dec2015
25	Azyumardi Azra	Menjaga Marwah Islam (1)	7 Apr 2016
26	Azyumardi Azra	Menjaga Marwah Islam (2)	14 Apr 2016
27	Azyumardi Azra	Tunisia, Indonesia, dan ...	12 Mei 2016
28	Azyumardi Azra	Turki, Indonesia, dan ... (1)	21 July 2016

29	Azyumardi Azra	Turki, Indonesia dan ... (2)	28 July 2016
30	Azyumardi Azra	Tunisia; Antara Demokrasi...	21 Apr 2016
31	Azyumardi Azra	Membendung Sektarianisme	6 Oct 2016
32	Sohibul Iman	Islam, Kebinekaan, ...	6 Dec2016
33	Azyumardi Azra	Anak Muda dan ...	20 Apr 2017
34	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (1)	27 July 2017
35	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (2)	3 Aug 2017
36	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (3)	10 Aug 2017
37	Haedar Nashir	Mengubah Minda	29 Oct 2017
38	Muhbib Abdul Wahab	Islam dan Dialog	2-Nov-17
39	Masykuri Abdillah	Harmoni Agama dan Negara	27 Dec2017

For the period of 2013 2017, *Kompas* and *Republika* published popular articles on the state and democracy in a diverse context. Within this time-frame there are several national agenda such as General Election in 2014. This democratic event in Indonesia are prone to frictions that might cause disturbance among the ummah. This made some popular authors then wrote the risk of sectarianism and politization of religious issues, such as Azyumardi Azra.¹³ In his writing, Azra reminded the readers to understand the sectarianism issues considering the democracy consolidation in Indonesia is yet solid and the legal enforcement is weak. Azra warned about the danger of the spread of the intolerant religious views. Hajriyanto Y Thohari¹⁴ and Said Aqiel Siradj¹⁵ also sang the same tune by learning from the similar case in the Middle East.

The intolerant groups often make use the democratization and the freedom of speech to spread their views, however, M Alfian Alfian regretted that Indonesian leaders had poor democratic imagination and were busy with the struggle of power.¹⁶ A Syafii Maarif called such phenomenon as a democracy paradox. Maarif also dreamed of a statemen to reestablish people's trust to the state institution.¹⁷ Masykuri Abdillah saw

¹³ (2013b, 13; 2016, 9)

¹⁴ (2015, 6)

¹⁵ (2016, 6)

¹⁶ (2014, 6)

¹⁷ (2013a, 6)

this “democracy paradox” as part of the struggle of meaning between religious-state and Islamic Nationalists groups and non-religious nationalists. In order to clarify this issue, Abdillah saw the importance of democracy consolidation through eradication of corruption, money politics, General Election conflicts, communal conflicts, intolerance, violence, and religious radicalism etc., similarly strengthen the control toward the state apparatus, and implementation of independence election, and freedom of expression, and freedom of press.¹⁸

In addition, Azra also saw the needs for compromise between the two groups to preserve the harmony of the Nation. This compromise should be implemented considering many Indonesian people are Muslims. Their acceptance is needed for without it, democracy consolidation will not be smooth.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Azra was optimistic that Indonesian democracy will run smoothly considering the majority of Islamic ummah support this process, with the support of two main-stream Islamic organizations (Muhammadiyah and NU). These two organizations have *wasathiyah* view of Islamic orthodoxy.²⁰

Politics and Islamic Party

The theme of politics and Islamic party within popular articles in *Kompas* and *Republika* between 2013-2017 are 37 articles, with total 27 articles in *Kompas* and 10 articles in *Republika*. Ideology and power movement is part of political activities. Political power is obtained through political party. Political party is an instrument of democracy. Through politics, ideology is fought to have place and to be eternally acknowledge.

Table 3
Popular Article on Politics and Islamic Party in
***Kompas* between the period of 2013-2017**

1	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Politik dan Uang	7 Feb 2013
2	Komaruddin Hidayat	Menimbang Partai Agama	20 Feb 2013
3	Salahuddin Wahid	Memudarnya Partai Islam	28 Feb 2013
4	Fajar Riza Ul Haq	Intoleransi di Tahun Politik	7 Mach 2013
5	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Partai Islam dan Masalah	2 Apr 2013

¹⁸ (2017, 6)

¹⁹ (2017, 13)

²⁰ (2013b, 9; 2014, 9)

		Moral ...	
6	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Parpol dan Negarawan	3 Apr 2013
7	Salahuddin Wahid	Dari Ormas Menjadi Parpol	17 May 2013
8	Zuly Qodir	Partai Islam dan Demokrasi	25 Sep 2013
9	M Anis Matta	Politik dan Sejarah	7 Dec2013
10	Salahuddin Wahid	Menimbang Partai Islam	14 Apr 2014
11	Azyumardi Azra	Simbolisme Islam dan Pilpres	21 May 2014
12	Azyumardi Azra	Islam dan Pilpres 2014	5 June 2014
13	Azyumardi Azra	Takarub Sosio-religius dan Politik	4 Oct 2014
14	Yudi Latif	Revolusi Pancasila	16 Mar 2015
15	Azyumardi Azra	Politik Gerontokrasi	28 Apr 2015
16	Hajriyanto Y Thohari	Politik di Arab, Teologi di ...	1 June 2015
17	Masdar Hilmy	Peran Politik Ormas Islam	20 Juni 2015
18	Asep Salahuddin	Moralitas Politik	4 July 2015
19	Zuly Qodir	Partai Islam dan Demokrasi	25 Sep 2013
20	Azyumardi Azra	Haji dan Politik, Indonesia dan	29 Sep 2015
21	Azyumardi Azra	Politik Tunaetika	22 Dec2015
22	Azyumardi Azra	Politik Primordialisme	11 Oct 2016
23	Noor Huda Ismail	Media Sosial dan Gerakan Politik	2 Jan 2017
24	Azyumardi Azra	Politik Identitas dalam Pilkada	21 March 2017
25	Fathorrahman Ghufron	Radikalisme dan Politik Identitas	5 Mei 2017
26	Abdillah Toha	Politik Paranoid	23 Aug 2017
27	Azyumardi Azra	Komunisme-Populisme Religio ...	3 Oct 2017

Table 4**Popular Article on Politics and Islamic Party Published in *Republika* within the Period of 2013-2017**

1	Azyumardi Azra	Rasionalisasi Parpol	17 Jan 2013
2	Azyumardi Azra	Senja Kala Partai Islam?	7 Feb 2013
3	Nasihin Masha	Keharusan Politik Asketis Partai	15 Feb 2013
4	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Partai Islam dan Masalah ...	2 Apr 2013
5	Yudi Latif	Islam dan Politik	15 Mei 2013
6	Masdar Hilmy	Peran Politik Ormas Islam	20 June 2015
7	Ikhwanul Kiram	Partai Islam Harus Belajar ..	9 Nov 2015
8	Arif Nurul Imam	Tensi Politik Pasca Ahok ...	16 Nov 2016
9	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Seni dan Politik (1)	3 Oct 2017
10	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Seni dan Politik (1)	10 Oct 2017

Our investigation in this present study, reveals that popular articles on politics and Islamic parties published in *Kompas* and *Republika* between the period of 2013-2017 revolved around political power issues before the 2014 Election. The authors described the turmoil political situation, the fate of the Islamic political parties who are becoming less popular, such as written by Salahuddin Wahid.²¹ Masdar Hilmy²² notes that the unpopularity, among others, is caused by the strong influence of the New Order who strictly check and balance the influence of Islamic political power, which is strengthened by the campaign tagline, “Islam yes, Islamic Party No” popularized by Nurcholish Madjid.²³ Meanwhile, Azra see the political behavior of these Islamic politicians as the roots of the decrease of Islamic parties popularity.²⁴

Hidayat notes that the defeat of the religious parties within the national politics indicates a need for further investigation, at least on three aspects. “First, within the plural Indonesian society and the state that ensure the freedom of religious expressions, perhaps the most suited ones are open, inclusive parties, which does not exclusively

²¹ (2013, 6)²² (2015, 7)²³ (See also Hidayat, 2013, 6; Qodir, 2013, 6)²⁴ (2013a)

limit themselves on religious ideology, considering that the population is already religious. Second, whether we like it or not, secularization of Indonesian politics is strengthening; politics that based on logical argumentation and rational discourse based on the constitution as a state and not as a religious state. Third, currently, religious parties are yet able to create figures of statemen in its vision and missions and are yet proven to overcome direct significant challenges among the people.²⁵

Nevertheless, Yudi Latif sees another more interesting development than the defeat of Islamic parties, which is the willingness of the Islamic figures to join nationalist parties. The parties are not only limited to the Golongan Karya Party as what happened to Islamic Students Unions (HMI) figures during the New Order era, but also their willingness to join other nationalists' parties such as, Demokrat, Gerindra, Hanura, even PDIP who is considered as the representative of the *abangan* (non-religious Muslims). Within such development, Latif argues, the tendency for Islamophobia in Indonesian politics is starting to decrease, along with the weakening of the formalists' Islamic political power. This provides a balance of moderation in Islamic political expressions in Indonesia. Such development is a solid foundation for the democracy development and the growth of democrat Muslims Indonesia.²⁶

Religious and Spirituality

There are 59 popular articles on religious and spirituality theme published in *Kompas* and *Republika* between 2013–2017. Those articles are classified into 20 articles published by *Kompas* and 39 articles published by *Republika*.

Table 5
Popular Articles on Religious and Spirituality Published in
***Kompas* between 2013-2017**

1	Azyumardi Azra	Waspadai Sektarianisme	11-Jan-13
2	Komaruddin Hidayat	Menimbang Partai Agama	20-Feb-13
3	Salahuddin Wahid	Memudarnya Partai Islam	28-Feb-13
4	Azyumardi Azra	Arnie Karlsson dan Agama	21-March-13
5	Zuly Qodir	Partai Islam dan Demokrasi	25-Sep-13

²⁵ (2013)

²⁶ (2013, 6)

6	Azyumardi Azra	Simbolisme Islam dan Pilpres	21 May 2014
7	Salahuddin Wahid	Menimbang Partai Islam	14-Apr-14
8	Salahuddin Wahid	Keindonesiaan dan Keislaman	16 Aug 2014
9	Teuku Kemal Fasya	Agama dan Warga Negara	14-Nov-14
10	Ahmad Najib Burhani	Milad 105 Muhammadiyah dan	20-Nov-17
11	Syaiful Arif	NU dan Islam Nusantara	13-Apr-15
12	Azyumardi Azra	Islam Indonesia Berkelanjutan	3 Aug 2015
13	KH. Ma'ruf Amin	Khitah Islam Nusantara	29 Aug 2015
14	Masdar Hilmy	Peran Politik Ormas Islam	20 June 2015
15	Andi Rahman Alamsyah	Anak Muda dan Radikalisme	4-Nov-15
16	Andi Faisal Bakti	Tangkal Radikalisme Kaum Inte..	23-March-16
17	Komaruddin Hidayat	Peran Sosial Agama	26-Apr-16
18	Yudi Latif	Serangan Jantung Budaya	30-Dec-16
19	A Helmy Faishal Zainy	Agama yang Melindungi	15 Aug 2017
20	Syaiful Arif	Pancasila, Esa dan Ketuhanan ...	21 Oct 2017

Table 6

**Artikel Populer tentang Agama dan Spiritualitas
Republika 2013-2017**

1	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Partai Islam dan Masalah ..	2-Apr-13
2	Azyumardi Azra	Transnasionalisasi Islam Indonesia (1)	16 April 2015
3	Azyumardi Azra	Transnasionalisasi Islam ... (2)	23-Apr-15
4	Yudi Latif	Islam dan Politik	15 Mei 2013

5	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Dunia Islam yang Ringkih	4 Jun 2013
6	Azyumardi Azra	Arnie Karlsson dan Agama	21-March-13
7	Azyumardi Azra	Negara dan Filantropi Islam (1)	19 May 2014
8	Azyumardi Azra	Islam dan Pilpres 2014	5 June 2014
9	Azyumardi Azra	Agama untuk Perdamaian (1)	7 Ag 2014
10	Azyumardi Azra	Agama untuk Perdamaian (2)	14 Aug 2014
11	Azyumardi Azra	Agama dan Sejarah Kekerasan (1)	11-Dec-14
12	Azyumardi Azra	Agama dan Sejarah Kekerasan (2)	18-Dec-14
13	Azyumardi Azra	Religion is Good for You (1)	18-Apr-15
14	Azyumardi Azra	Religion is Good for You (2)	25-Apr-15
15	Azyumardi Azra	Islam Nusantara: Islam .. (1)	18 June 2015
16	Azyumardi Azra	Islam Nusantara: Islam ... (2)	25 June 2015
17	Azyumardi Azra	Kebebasan Berekspresi dan ...	29-Oct-15
18	Azyumardi Azra	Agama: Tradisi, Memori, dan .. (1),	12-Nov-15
19	Azyumardi Azra	Agama: Tradisi, Memori, dan .. (2)	19-Nov-15
20	Said Aqil Siroj	Deradikalisasi Nusantara	20-Jan-16
21	Azyumardi Azra	Kebebasan Beragama; Asia ... (1)	25-Feb-16
22	Azyumardi Azra	Kontes Islam Indonesia .. (1)	4-Feb-16
23	Azyumardi Azra	Kontes Islam Indonesia ... (2)	11-Feb-16
24	Azyumardi Azra	Kontes Islam Indonesia ... (3)	18-Feb-16
25	Azyumardi Azra	Kebebasan Beragama; Asia .. (2)	3-March-16
26	Azyumardi Azra	Agama dan Nasionalisme	10-March-16
27	Komaruddin Hidayat	Kita dan Wajah Suram Arab	28-March-16

28	M Dawam Rahadjo	Epistemologi Islam Berkemajuan	27-Jul-16
29	Hilman Latief	Filantropi Islam dan Kemiskinan	3 Aug 2016
30	Azyumardi Azra	Melawan Ekstrimisme dan ... (2)	22-Jan-17
31	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Tenggulun, Terorisme, dan ... (1)	25-Jul-17
32	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (1)	1-Jul-17
33	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (2)	3-Aug-17
34	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (3)	10-Aug-17
35	Azyumardi Azra	Khilafah (4)	24-Aug-17
36	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Ateisme di Dunia Arab (1)	12-Sep-17
37	Ahmad Syafii Maarif	Ateisme di Dunia Arab (2)	19-Sep-17
38	Haedar Nashir	Agama Jadi Tersangka	26-Nov-17
39	Masykuri Abdilllah	Harmoni Agama dan Negara	27-Dec-17

Azyumardi Azra wrote that acculturation between the culture in Nusantara and the intrusion of the large religions has been happening for centuries with almost no significant conflicts between the two.²⁷ Similarly, Abdillhalso pointed out that the spread of the religions in Nusantara were peacefully introduced.²⁸ There were small conflicts that last only for a short time. However, some scholars have seen the threats of this interreligious harmony and the raising of radicalism among the society.²⁹ Psychosocially, Andi Rahman Alamsyah sees that the emergence of radicalism is a response toward threat, loss of employment, income that did not meet expectation, and excessive expense due to industrialization and modernization. Within such condition, extremes movement emerge and offer escape mechanism. At the same time, the state absence to provide assurance for this people. This condition gives various psychological

²⁷ (2013b)

²⁸ (2017)

²⁹ (Azra, 2015a, 6)

impact on precariat generation, especially increasing anxiety due to present and future life uncertainty.³⁰

In addition to the emergence extreme and radical diversity, industrialization, and modernization also give raise to disbelief in religion or a view that religion is not important in life. This attitude is an alarm bell for religious leaders, religious institutions, and other religious authority.³¹ Ma'arif describes that when spiritual needs are not accommodated by rational life, religion tends to be abandoned. Similar cases are often happened in modern states citizens, who believe in religion and often negating the existence of God by being atheist.³² Their resistant toward religion can be carried out either sporadically, systematically, or even using the state's power such as the case of the communists-atheist countries, and non-Muslim countries. In this situation, religion is becoming an irrational attachment, a myth, and a legend. Religion becoming an escapism from inability to face the life's problems.³³

Azra describes since the beginning of the religion in relation to faith that can only be accepted through faith and not sense. Even though religion has some rational teachings, it does not necessarily mean that it can be fully understand merely by using intellectual. This property differentiate religion from science and other intellectual products.³⁴ Therefore, in relation to religion, the most important thing is believing practicing and experiencing. By practicing these three things religion, human being will get the sense that 'religion is good for us.' Hidayat notes that the ability to provide meaning and fulfilling the expectation of a struggling person and understanding mysteries of this life that cannot be understood by the mind. This ability made religion endure the test of time. In other words, religion provides sense of meaning and purpose of life due to faith. This strength is also criticized as the weakness of religion that often considered as manipulation of life sufferings and mysteries with speculative metaphysical.³⁵

D. Religious Discourse in *Kompas* and *Republika*: A Critical Review

Popular articles printed in both newspapers are non-journalistic works written by Islamic scholars through selection process of the opinion editors. This selection is

³⁰ (2015, 6)

³¹ Azra, "Arnie Karlsson Dan Agama."

³² (2017, 9)

³³ Azyumardi Azra, "Moderasi Islam," *Republika*, December 2015.

³⁴ (2015a)

³⁵ (2016, 6)

based on philosophical standard, ideological standard, technical, and market reach of these articles. Market here refers to the contemporary media industry with the emphasis of product feasibility to be offered in the market. Printed media is an industry that competes with other media to influence public or to get a market share. Within this context, mass media is power entity build on public trust. Before it can influence public opinion, media is also influenced by public. Mass media is mirror of mass.³⁶

Popular articles in printed in these two media are winning articles that had gotten rid of its competitors based on the standard above. Based on our critical review on articles printed in *Kompas* and *Republika*, we arranged them in the following orders; 1) Popular articles authors' network in *Kompas* and *Republika* and 2) ideology anomaly of *Kompas* and *Republika*.

Writing is an intellectual work as well as part of the task and responsibilities of scholars. Ali Shari'ati describes that it is scholars' job to free the people from oppression, ignorance, and underdevelopment, through education. It is an intellectual's responsibility to spread new ideas and solutions for the society, through various means, including mass media. Amidst the bombardment of social media, mass media needs to be strengthened by the scholars for this public opinion not to be steered by the market. Public opinion should be initiated from university for the enlightenment of manners and civilization. In addition, writing is also one of the da'wah, as it is known to call out people to the rightness through writings (*al-dakwah bi al-qalam*).³⁷ This has been done by our Ulama in spreading their thoughts to the ummah through mass media.

Muslim scholars should keep up with the development of mass media to play their parts in developing public opinion and becoming part in it. This is one of the da'wah works that needs more work on. This is similar to Ziauddin Sardar who wrote on how weak *gazwul fikri* among the Muslim ummah in the today's mass media who are now has become a mega industry.³⁸ Andi Faisal Bakti wrote that the concept of Islamic da'wah is taken from the Qur'an, delivering (*tabligh*) them as information on righteousness, moving them for changes (*taghyir*), and calling for righteousness and preventing evilness (*amar makruf nahyi munkar*), and developing good civilization (*akhlak*). This has been written by our ulama and scholars in the printed mass media since the beginning of the 19th centuries to this day.³⁹

³⁶ (Kaale & Jukka, 2010, 136–158)

³⁷ (1995)

³⁸ (1991)

³⁹ (2011)

Mass media serve to inform, to educate, and to provide social critics, and to entertain.⁴⁰ Becoming a columnist or in this article refers as popular article writer is to act as a beacon and to take a stand on an issue.⁴¹ Becoming a popular article writer also need a sense of journalism, a sense of analysis, sense of critic and has a willingness to go through creative process.⁴² Alfian further argues that writing needs strong willingness to contribute and participate in discussing the ongoing issues. Therefore, a columnist should always be on the loop with the current development. Initial ideas often come from that news. In addition, writing a column also demands a columnist to read extensively. Writing and reading are the activities of the scholars, academics, researchers, journalists, and man of letters. Alfian admits that he has been reading various comprehensive readings aside from school text books.⁴³

Popular scientific works in this article refers to popular articles with the main characters of popular, actual, interesting, and adhere to the standard of present journalism and the standard of mass media industry. For this specific study, this printed media only published only have 47 authors for the period of 2013 – 2017. The number of women writers were only a few, two authors compared to 45 male writers. The small amount of writers, especially in radicalism and contemporary Islam in general are an indication of further study to investigate the dynamics of creative writing in higher education institutions. This fact showed that the ability and willingness to conform to popular article standard in printed media are seriously lacking.

The fact that on the very limited number of academics who wrote popular articles in printed media, within the context of this study, is a critic for religious higher education institutions. Ahmad Najib Burhani pointed out that the issue is due to the lack of strong scientific tradition or lack of academic cultures among our academics.⁴⁴ The limited number of Muslim scholars who wrote in printed media, especially in *Kompas* and *Republika* is also a critics for these two media due to their preference to only publish articles written by well-known Indonesian scholars or academics who hold strategic positions. Particular critic is also addressed to *Kompas*, which rarely published articles written by new authors, compare to *Republika* who provided sufficient space for new writers.

⁴⁰ (See Bungin, 2009)

⁴¹ Thomas L. Friedman, *Membangun Optimisme Untuk Melangkah Maju Di Era Akselerasi* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2010).

⁴² Alfian Alfian, "Menulis Kolom Itu Seni," rilis.id, 2018.

⁴³ (2016)

⁴⁴ (2019)

There are three most active Muslim scholars who wrote in *Kompas* and *Republika*, namely Azyumardi Acra with 37 articles in *Kompas* and 98 articles in *Republika* with total of 135 articles; followed by Ahmad Syafii Maarif who wrote 5 articles in *Kompas* and 26 Articles in *Republika* with the total of 31 articles. The third person who often write popular articles is Yudi Latif with the total of 8 articles, 4 articles for each newspapers. These three writers, based on the hierarchy of influence in media content theory, are classified into individual level, media routines, extra media level. The three authors also surpassed the ideology level selection due to their scholarly fame. Based on the quantity of their writings, Azra is the most active one, where apart from writing about radicalism, politics, and democracy, he also writes feature on common people published by *Republika* newspaper.

Apart from this three, there are also figures such as Masykuri Abdillah and M. Dawam Rahardjo, who write one article for each media. Some scholars prefer to only publish their writings in one media such as Salahuddin Wahid (6 articles), Komaruddin Hidayat (5), Fathorrahman Ghufroon (3), Zuhairi Misrawi (3), Andi Faisal Bakti (2), Asep Salahudin (2) and Teuku Kemal Fasya (2) who only write in *Kompas*. However, it does not mean that they only write exclusively for *Kompas*, because their name also appear in popular column in *Sindo*, *Media Indonesia*, and *Tempo*.

The authors who wrote the most in *Republika* are Ikhwanul Kiram Mashuri (23), Ahmad Khoirul Fata (5), Nasihin Masha (5) Haedar Nashir (2), Muhibb and Abdul Wahab (2). Ikhwanul Kiram Mashuri and Nasihin Masha are editors in *Republika*. This means that they are the “insiders” whose articles are published and selected by their fellow editors. This is a professionalism bias in *Republika*. Such practice should be avoided and the management of *Republika* should have made a policy to create a new rubric assigned for the editors team. Whereas public opinion rubric and *Resonance* rubric should be provided for the outside authors.

Our study also shows a lack of female writers to write about the religious themes and movement. There are only two female writers who wrote for *Republika*, Asma Nadia and Pranawati. However, they are both prolific writers and do not write in their scientific capacity.

E. Kompas – Republika an Ideology Anomaly

Based on the hierarchy influence in media content theory, one of the things that influence the content of mass media is the ideology. Each mass media has ideology as

their ideal foundation that will support their commercial foundation.⁴⁵ Ideology and commerce are two sides of a coin that mass media plays in this information industry era. Whereas, based on critic discourse analysis theory, discourse is ideology representation.

Kompas newspaper is established from Catholic activities but it admits to opt accommodative and humanist journalism, and not the ideology of its founding activists. This is at least evident in their printed media products.⁴⁶ *Kompas* is aware that catholic is a minority in Indonesia. Thus, if they brought forward religious ideology, it would be hard for them to compete in the market. Therefore, *Kompas* plays a strategic role, accommodates all public interest above their group ideology. In other words, *Kompas* disguise their ideology by setting up a new ideology that can be accepted by the market. However, there are another hypothesis pointing out that the change is due to the changes happened within *Kompas* post-Jacob Oetama leadership. This shift of ideology may due to the regeneration of editors, as theory proposed by Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, where individual influence and routine level are able to change vision and mission.

Even more that there is currently new challenges and social political changes. *Kompas* is even publicly criticized as it often takes cautious steps to deal with “delicate” cases. During the reunion of Gerakan Aksi Bela Islam (Defending Islam Action Movement) 212 in 2018, *Kompas* was bullied by the netizen when it did not publish pictures and news about this massive event in their front page. We see this action as the attitude of journalism and news value, no matter how great an event is when it is repeated, it is no longer new. So much that *Kompas* had published the ABI 411 and 212 in its front page. During the Reuni ABI 212 in 2018, *Kompas* had mischievously placed its main report on daily mounting trash in Jakarta. On the other hand, *Republika* was established by carrying out the ideology of its founders. At the beginning, this newspaper was published by ICMI (Association of Indonesian Islamic Scholars), however *Republika* commits to implement professional journalism. Nevertheless, Arifatul Choiri Fauzi still sees that Islamic ideology is strongly influenced *Republika* in its news production related to the Bali Bombing.⁴⁷ This tendency had shrunk the market share of *Republika*. Even, if *Republika* is not careful, it may turn out to be a community media.

⁴⁵ Bill Kovack and Rosentiel, *Sembilan Elemen Jurnalisme* (Jakarta: Pantau, 2003).

⁴⁶ (Oetama, 2001, 144)

⁴⁷ (2007)

This present study has pointed out an anomaly in these two printed media. *Kompas* who was considered as a media owned by Catholic group rather prints popular articles with Islamic nuances, e.g, this following popular article by Ahmad Syafii Maarif:

Finally, a saying from the Qur'an within the surah al-Hasyr ayah number 2, which interpretation is "Then take the moral lesson, oh you who have clear sight," maybe it needs to be rethink in an extremely uncertain situation like today.⁴⁸

Similarly, *Republika*, a newspaper which considered as the representation of Islamic ideology, is more open and willing to publish articles that has a contradictory ideology with its ideology at its early days. *Republika* is also not so inflexible in publishing an article.

In the dialogue among the priests, I also sense a concern on the gap between 'personal piety' and 'social piety' thus, causing corruption epidemy and various other violation of religious and states' laws. When I talk about this gap among the Muslim ummah in Indonesia, a priest also saw similar phenomenon among the believers of other religion, as he saw in his hometown in NTT...⁴⁹

Meanwhile, in other popular article, there is a sense of pessimism and critics toward the religious phenomenon such as in the case of political turmoil case in the Middle East. As seen in the following excerpt:

However, so far the Arab world is yet to take drastic action or take serious effort to combat this atheism movement. This virus is not only attacks Islam, but also creates spiritual emptiness among the people and encourage them to no longer worship their creator⁵⁰.

This anomaly points out a fact that the general idea about these two media is not always correct. As market niche segmentation happens across the newspapers. For instance, the *Gadis* magazine was prepared as the reading materials for young girls, in fact, this magazine is also liked by young boys. Similarly, the male's magazine *Matra* is also liked by female readers. Nevertheless, in the case of popular articles, the determining factor is the popularity of its writers, thus ideology influence is not significant due to the more dominant external level in sub ideology versus ideology. This case is not applicable for green writers in sending their articles to mass media.

⁴⁸ (2013)

⁴⁹ (Azra, 2013c, 9)

⁵⁰ Maarif, "Ateisme Di Dunia Arab (I)."

Young writers should understand the general character of the media before sending their article to the media as an effort to meet the “taste” of the opinion column editors. Opinion editors, in this context are the gate keeper of the ideology of that particular mass media.

This anomaly is bound to happen when there is a shift of editors from time to time, from the early, mid, to recent period changes of editors. During the early period, the founders were very consistent to achieve the vision of the media, while during the medium period, and following that period, an external level, the background of editors (individual level), and publication routine (routine level) influences the editors. According to Azra, post-Jacob Oetama time in the early generation, *Kompas* campaign was highly independent, but now it is clearly more inclusive. This is clearly different from *Republika* post-ICMI who campaigned for Islam *washatiyah*, but now their ideology anomaly made them becoming the “far right”. Such change is common happen in mass media, especially at the era where information becomes part of capitally compressed media, full of interests, also media is influenced by the political patrons of the media owners. Unconsciously, the business orientation and political orientation influence the editors’ team, thus the opposite changes from the initial objectives of the mass media establishment are possible.

F. Closing

Popular articles on religious discourse in *Kompas* and *Republika* has similarities in a sense that both campaign for the moderate ways of practicing religions (wasathiyah). Nevertheless. *Republika* has strong Islamic sense, whereas *Kompas* is more inclusive. The articles published by both newspapers experienced ideology anomaly along the changes and regeneration of editors’ team. Post-Jacob Oetama’s leadership, *Kompas* tends to be more open toward moderatism and democratization, whereas post-ICMI’s leadership, *Republika* inclines to show its Islamic features and tries to become the media of the Islamic ummah by preserving its moderate’s (wasathiyah) way.

The themes of the popular articles published in *Kompas* and *Republika* within the period of 2013-2017 revolve around the state existence issue with the democratic system, politics dynamic and Islamic party, interreligious conflicts, intra-religious conflicts, and spirituality issues. The religious discourse contestation in *Kompas* and *Republika* are discussed by those Islamic scholars who are the professors and ulama who lead educational institutions, and/or public organizations. The popular article’s authors in *Kompas* are dominated by certain well-known figures, and thus, gave less

chances for new authors. Therefore, the published popular articles about contemporary Islam are mainly the voice of the same group scholars. There are no significant changes from time to time.

In reverse, *Republika* orbited new articles' authors, by maintaining the space for same big name in the industry. These new names emerge in opinion column of *Republika* as a response toward the social phenomena. Nevertheless, *Republika* also publishes popular article writers on Contemporary Islam from its internal group. The chief editors also participated in opinion column, the column, which initially provided for public to response toward the social phenomena. The chief editors or editors should publish their ideas for public within the editorials. The presence of the chief editors or editors in opinion column weaken the performance of this opinion column as a space for the outsiders scholars.

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