



## IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF ISLAMIC MEDIA IN INDONESIA ON DEATH PENALTY ISSUE

Yuri Alfrin Aladdin<sup>1,\*</sup>, Udi Rusadi<sup>2</sup> and Mirza Ronda<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student Doctoral Program of Communication Science Post Graduate School Sahid University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Post-Graduate School of the Political and Social Science Institute (IISIP), Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Doctoral Program of Communication Science Post Graduate School Sahid University, Indonesia

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2021  
Received in revised form  
14<sup>th</sup> March, 2021  
Accepted 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2021  
Published online 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

#### Key Words:

Counter-Hegemonic,  
Representation, CDA,  
Islamic Media,  
Death Penalty Issue.

### ABSTRACT

During the first two years of Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla Government (2014-2015) in Indonesia, precisely 18 death row inmates who were guilty of drugs had been executed. The government believed that death penalty is the effective solution to overcome the high rate of narcotics crime. It becomes an interesting case due to the pressure of hegemony of the European Union over the government of Indonesia. One of the major national media in Indonesia, namely [Republika.co.id](http://Republika.co.id), supports the implementation of death penalty. This study aims to reveal the counter-hegemonic representation of [Republika.co.id](http://Republika.co.id) in opposing the hegemony of the EU related to the issue of Human Rights, particularly death penalty. This study applied Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough and critical theory of Hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. The result shown that [Republika](http://Republika.co.id) represents counter-hegemonic in its reporting since it rejects the EU's attitude considered to impose its standard principles of human rights on Indonesia.

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Citation: Yuri Alfrin Aladdin, Udi Rusadi and Mirza Ronda. "Ideological Representation of Islamic Media in Indonesia on Death Penalty Issue.", 2021. *International Journal of Current Research*, 13, (05), 17294-17298.

## INTRODUCTION

Death penalty is a form of punishment that has been implemented in Indonesia long before the governance of Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla (Jokowi-JK). As mentioned on the website of the Imparsial (The Indonesian Human Rights Monitor) [www.imparsial.org](http://www.imparsial.org), referring to the note by the Commission of Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KONTRAS), Indonesia successfully executed 56 death row inmates in total during the New Order period (1979 - 2007). The number has increased in 2008 to 2015, comprising 71 death row inmates. On the website, Imparsial stated that the number has specifically increase rapidly during the governance of Jokowi-JK. Even the government period hasn't fully passed its second year, the government (2014-2015) has executed 18 drug convicts. The main argument provided by Jokowi-JK for the execution is that death penalty is the most effective

solution to overcome the high rate of narcotics crime in Indonesia. The punishment is expected to provide a deterrent effect for narcotics criminals. However, according to Imparsial, this policy leads to an impression that the government is not concerned about other crimes such as corruption. Since the corruptor, whom have been inflicted a financial loss of billions of rupiah on the country, only been jailed for several years instead of given a death penalty as in China. The policy on death penalty received protests from human rights (HAM) institutions and also criticism from Imparsial and Amnesty International since the penalty is considered to violate human rights (McRae, 2017). Humanitarian activists even questioned one of Jokowi's promises in Nawacita that guarantees respect, protection, and fulfillment of human rights (Patra, 2018). Western media generally have reporting Indonesian Government policy on human rights in bad angle, specifically in reporting death penalty in Indonesia. They reported this particular decision of the Government of Indonesia by selecting and interviewing the media sources or news makers whom made criticize or contras statement to the Indonesian Government. The EU pressure on the Government of Indonesia by issuing releases condemning the death penalty as violation of human rights in EU media

\*Corresponding author: Yuri Alfrin Aladdin,  
Student Doctoral Program of Communication Science Post Graduate  
School Sahid University, Indonesia.

discourses'. Western media (especially EU and US) are frequently deemed to have an extraordinary influence in determining the direction of global media coverage. The EU influence is also evident in Indonesian media reporting on human rights issues such as death penalty in Indonesia. Various media in Indonesia even report this issue from two perspectives: pros and cons. Media represent the realities in their news discourse based on many factors, such as intra and extra media factors (Sya & Marta, 2019). This research studied the ideological Islamic media representation on the issue of Human Rights, in particular the death penalty issue. Human Rights (HAM) are rights given to humans not by the community (Marta & Fernando, 2020). These is not based on applicable positive laws, but based on their dignity as human beings. The country may not acknowledge these human rights. However, the rights cannot be removed or declared invalid by a country (Foroudi et al., 2016). Republika is the media which reporting the human rights issue. It reports frequently is connected with it support to Islamic view. Indonesia is one of Moslem biggest country in the world. Hence, the issue of human rights particularly death penalty for drugs dealer or convicted in Indonesia, could not be separated from the Indonesian Moslem supports. Here, we will discuss about the Islamic view or perspective of death penalty for drug dealers in Islam.

As quoted in Hidayatullah.com (an Islamic news portal) on April 24, 2015, Dr. Ahmad Zain An-Najah, MA, an expert of fiqh who obtained his doctoral degree in the field of fiqh in Al-Azhar, Egypt, states that most ulama argue that death penalty is an appropriate punishment for drug dealers. His argument based on the argument that illicit drugs have caused great damage to religion, nation, and country, particularly the younger generation. The war of position in this study is the counter-hegemonic attitude of Republika.co.id towards the hegemony of EU. EU wants Indonesia to abolish death penalty. EU also possibly press over Indonesia regarding the issue of Human Rights (HAM) and death penalty, by connecting it with the Indonesian-EU trade and investment dependence. Republika tends to use its news reporting to make the counter hegemony for UE by supporting the Indonesian government's policy of death penalty. This research is interesting due to the pressure of hegemony of the European Union (EU) over the government of Indonesia. One of the major national media in Indonesia, namely Republika--with its online portal, Republika.co.id, supports (pro) the implementation of Indonesian Government policy on death penalty. It also implies resistance to the pressure of hegemony of the EU.

Republika has image profile as media with ideology that close to Islamic ideology and support the Islamic values. The history of Republika is closely related to the history of the New Order press and the end of authoritarianism (Saepullah & Muchtar, 2020). In 1993, the Indonesian Association of Moslem Intellectuals (ICMI) sought permission to publish a newspaper. The association was fortunate because it was able to utilize the license of Berita Buana that was closed a year earlier and whose former owner was concerned that the SIUPP (Press Issuance Business License) would be revoked (Steele, p. 90). ICMI was founded in 1990 under the leadership of The Ministry of Research and Technology Prof. Dr. B.J. Habibie. Following the development of media technology, Republika developed an online version of Republika Online (ROL) on August 17, 1996.

In 1998, Soeharto resigned as the president and was replaced by B.J. Habibie who helped raise the prestige of Republika. In 2000, new investor Mahaka Media bought Republika and changed its economic basic. Republika.co.id shows different attitude from other mainstream media. It supports the government of Indonesia by quoting the support statements from various media sources for the severe sanction of Indonesian government on those convicted of drugs. The opinions came from officials, academics and communities, considering that Indonesia is on the verge of a drug emergency. This research question is "How the ideological representation of Republika.co.id making this media pro-death penalty?". The objective of the study is to reveal the media ideological of republika.co.id on the issue of Human Rights, in particular the death penalty issue. The academic significance of this research is to give contribution on media and journalism studies in the perspective of critical paradigm, particularly about the media ideological representation and critical discourse analysis studies.

## METHODOLOGY

This research used critical paradigm with descriptive analysis and qualitative approach (Menayang & Marta, 2020). Critical theory used in the discussion of the findings to uncover the nature behind reality (Liu & Guo, 2016). Paradigm has important aspects observed from the aspects of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Mayring, 2014). The question to answer in the ontological aspect is the nature of the reality studied. In the epistemological aspect is the nature of the relation between the researcher and the object of research (Nakaya, 2018). In the axiological aspect, the question to answer is the values and benefits of a study (Flatschart, 2017). And in the methodological aspect is how the researcher obtains the knowledge. The research used interview and text analysis to collect the data. The study used Norman Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis method (Ziskin, 2019). Critical discourse analysis is study that attempts to express activities, perspectives, and identities based on the language used in the discourse. Fairclough argued that *discourse is a social practice*. Discourse analysis using a critical approach shows the cohesiveness of: (a) text analysis; (b) analysis of the process, production, consumption, and distribution of text; and (c) sociocultural analysis that develops around the discourse. Fairclough's model (Nieto-Galan, 2011) divided critical discourse analysis into three dimensions: *text, discourse practice, and social practice*.

**Textual Dimension (Microstructural):** Text has three functions are representation, relation, and identity. Representation is related to the methods applied to present social reality in text. The analysis of textual dimension is related to linguistics. For example, such as vocabulary, semantic, grammar analysis, the structure of sentence, coherence, cohesiveness, phonology, writing systems, and how the unity forms an understanding. Fairclough's approach to analyze texts attempts to unite three traditions (Irawan & Adnan, 2018):

- ) Detailed textual analysis in the field of linguistics
- ) Macro-sociological analysis of social practice
- ) Interpretative and micro-sociological

traditions in sociology (including ethnomethodology and conversation analysis) where daily life is treated as a product of one's actions. The action follows a series of procedures and "rules of common sense".

**Dimension of discourse Practice (Mesostructural):** The interpretation is carried out on the processing of discourse. It is related to the aspects of text production process (Such as media organization, values, patterns, routines, and etc.), distribution, and text utilization or consumption.

**Practical Dimension of Socio-Culture of Media (Macrostructural):** A macro-level analysis based on the existing social contexts outside text or media. Those are influencing media discourse. For example, the society's ideology, economic context, historical context, the situation or relation to certain political communities or cultures, and etc.

Therefore, unit analysis was separated into three parts: *First*, *Republika* news (For the text analysis level); *Second* is Informants (For discourse and socio cultural practice level); and *third* is text literature (For socio cultural practice level). The news used in the micro level study are the news in *republika.co.id*, published from December 1-31, 2016 (one month). The news related to the issues and the government policy on death penalty for drug dealers in Indonesia during the governance of Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla. The news is selected. The criteria of the news are: 1) Straight news; 2) Discussing the decision of the Indonesian government or EU attitude regarding death penalty for drug dealers.

At the meso level, the researcher conducted an interview with the editor of *Republika.co.id* to analyze the ideology of the media. At the macro level, the researcher conducted literature study and interview with representatives of the European Commission in Jakarta. Furthermore, the researcher conducted analysis of counter-hegemony of *Republika.co.id* against the EU hegemony in news reporting of death penalty. This analysis and discussion based on the critical theory of hegemony of Antonio Gramsci.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Textual Dimension (Microstructural)

#### *Republika* Text

#### Text Analysis on News 1

*"MUI: Jokowi Adil Hukum Mati Gembong Narkoba"*  
 ("MUI: Jokowi is Fair to Execute Drug Dealers")  
 Monday, Jan 19, 2015 08:49 WIB  
 Rep: C13/ Red: Erik Purnama Putra

**REPUBLIKA.CO.ID, JAKARTA:** *The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) deems those who disapprove death penalty for drug dealers and users unfair. Death penalty issued by President Jokowi to a number of drug dealers does not receive the support of all parties. Several people state that, ideally, the political policies issued by Jokowi should also portray his favor with a sense of justice. The Chairman of the Central Committee of MUI National Anti-Narcotics Movement (Gannas), Anwar Abbas, expresses his surprise at those opposing death penalty. According to him, these people*

*disagree that Jokowi approves death penalty for killers. In fact, he continued, if they were consistent with their expectation that Jokowi will favor the sense of justice, they should support the approval."Jokowi has obviously been notably fair as expected," Anwar told *Republika*, Monday (1/19). Anwar reveals that death penalty is a fair sentence for drug dealers because they have revoked the right of other people to live. Therefore, Anwar perceives that it is only fair to revoke their right to live as well. According to him, the country has properly carried out the task."Where is the unfairness of the country and Jokowi in this matter? Isn't it the duty of the country to protect its people?" Anwar inquired. He argues that the country must be fair and not discriminating in protecting its people. (\*)*

### Analysis of Representations in Sub-clauses

**The headline** "*MUI: Jokowi Adil Hukum Mati Gembong Narkoba*" shown that *Republika* consents to the statement of a speaker of MUI related to the issue of death penalty. The title used a variety of journalistic languages that eliminate some conjunctions. The standard sentence in bahasa for the title is "*Jokowi (Bersikap) Adil (dengan) (Meng)hukum Mati Gembong Narkoba*". It indicates that President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) is fair when issuing death penalty for drug dealers. In this clause, "Jokowi" is the subject, "adil" is the adjective expansion, and "dengan" is the conjunction omitted, followed by the phrase "*Hukum Mati Gembong Narkoba*". The title "MUI: Jokowi is Fair to Execute Drug Dealers" shows that MUI supports the policy on death penalty issued by Jokowi, while the subclause "Execute Drug Dealers" is a representation of the agreement of MUI that drug dealers should be sentenced to death. The phrase "drug dealers" is a pronoun for drug traffickers, a cliché known to the public in a negative context. The use of this phrase shows *the ideological representation* of *Republika* raising the issue from the perspective of MUI that *supports death penalty*.

**Analysis of Representation in the Combination of Sub-clauses:** Paragraph 5 of the news article reads "*Anwar reveals that death penalty is a fair sentence for drug dealers because they have revoked the right of other people to live. Therefore, Anwar perceives that it is only fair to revoke their right to live as well. According to him, the country has properly carried out the task.*" This analysis observed the coherence and the cohesion of the two aforementioned sub-clauses. *The first* sub-clause reads "... death penalty is a fair sentence for drug dealers" followed by the *second* sub-clause "... they have revoked the right of other people to live". Between the two sub-clauses there is indeed a logical coherence that the death penalty is fair for drug dealers because the drug dealers have taken the lives of other people. In terms of cohesion, the conjunction used is the word "because", showing a cause that must have an effect. The first event leads to the *second event*. In other words, the decision regarding death penalty is the result of the actions of drug dealers taking the lives of other people. The sub-clauses "... *the reason for the death sentence is fair for drug dealers*" ... and "... they have revoked the right of other people to live" show a metaphor. The phrase "*have revoked*" indicates the ideology of *Republika* that supports death penalty for drug dealers.

### Analysis of Representation in the Series of Sub-clauses

**Summary:** The news article entitled "*MUI: Jokowi is Fair to Execute Drug Dealers*" represents the support of MUI towards Jokowi.

*Paragraph 1*, shows that Indonesian Ulama Council/MUI supports the policy on death penalty issued by Jokowi and condemn those opposing the policy. The first sentence only mention MUI as the subject, expressed by the MUI board/leader of MUI. This sentence states that MUI deems those opposing death penalty unfair, implying that MUI considers death penalty issued by Jokowi to be in compliance with Islamic law. *Republika* selects MUI as the speaker to show its support for Islamic ideology and death penalty to be in compliance with sharia law. *Paragraph 2*, reveals that the source is the Chairman of the Central Committee of MUI National Anti-Narcotics Movement (Gannas), Anwar Abbas. His statements defend the policy of death penalty issued by president. The clause "*Anwar Abbas expresses his surprise at those opposing death penalty*" shows the ideological stand point and representation of *Republika* that supports death penalty and condemns those opposing death penalty.

In *paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6*, Anwar Abbas states his disapproval of those opposing death penalty using logical coherence that people upholding justice should support the policy issued by Jokowi. This is because of drug dealers have deprived others of their rights to live, hence the fairness of revoking the rights of drug dealers to live. The metaphor "revoke" in paragraph 4 shows that *Republika* supports the equal retribution for the drug dealers crime. The clause "... *the country must be fair and not discriminating in protecting its people ...*", shows that *Republika* considers death penalty to be a fair action issued by the state. It represents the ideology of *Republika* that supports death penalty for drug dealers.

**Relation:** The aforementioned news article only involves one participant, namely the Chairman of the Central Committee of MUI National Anti-Narcotics Movement (Gannas), Anwar Abbas. It indicates the selective attitude of *Republika* in deliberately appointing a source due to their similar perspective to *Republika's* ideological struggle against the pressure of the EU for abolishing death penalty.

**Identity:** Paragraph 2 of the news article reveals that the source is Anwar Abbas, the Chairman of the Central Committee of MUI National Anti-Narcotics Movement (Gannas). Gannas is one of the groups in MUI. Instead of the chairman of MUI leader, Abbas does have the capacity to speak on behalf of MUI, even though his credibility is not as strong as them.

**Dimension of Discourse Practice (Mesostructural):** *Discourse Practice of Republika:* Discourse practice is a dimension related to the process of producing and consuming texts, for example work patterns, charts and routines when producing news (Gowhary et al., 2015). The further explanation will start from the ideology of Islamic media (Media Ideology of *Republika*), prior to be focusing on the production of news by *Republika*.

**The Understanding of the Editor of Republika:** The Editor-in-Chief of *Republika* Irfan Junaidi (2019) states that *Republika* considers itself as the media of aspirations of Moslems in Indonesia. Approximately 80 percent of the total population in Indonesia is Moslems, encouraging *Republika* to be the media bridging the aspirations of Moslem in Indonesia. Related to the issue of death penalty, according to Junaidi, *Republika* respects the articles as positive law that must be followed by the citizens. Referring to the stance of *Republika* on the issue of human rights and the pressure of the EU regarding death penalty, Junaidi stated that *Republika* is

obliged to defend the law and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia against countries that do not respect the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.

**The Policy of Republika in Reporting:** According to News Editor of *Republika Online Damhuri* (in interview in 2019), in terms of raising issues, the angle of news reporting by *Republika* may be different from other media. For example, other media always report the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) negatively, carrying out unlawful acts, raiding places of prostitution and locations selling liquor, and others. However, they do not observe the action roots underlying the actions by FPI due to obstructions in legal channels.

**The Reporting by Republika Regarding the Issue of Death Penalty:** Senior Journalist of *Republika*, Ginting (in interview in 2018) explained that *Republika* refers to the law of the Republic of Indonesia. *Republika* will approve of the government issuing or abolishing death penalty. Nevertheless, *Republika* news reporting also respects the law of other countries. For example, Thailand, India, and Singapore impose death penalty, thus *Republika* respects and does not interfere with their sovereignty. Therefore, *Republika* instead questions some cases where drug dealers are not sentenced to death, as it shows ambivalence towards the justice system in Indonesia.

**Practical Dimension of Socio-Culture (Macrostructural):** *Socio-Cultural Practice of Republika:* Social cultural practice dimension is related to the external situation or context outside text, influencing *republika*. For example, the context of situation or media in relation to certain political communities or cultures.

**The Ideology of the EU Related to Human Rights Enforcement:** Referring to the ideology of the EU related to human rights enforcement, Human Rights and Political Attaché of Delegation of European Union for Indonesia, Florian Witt (in interview on July, 22, 2019) stated that all members of the European Union have one rule in common in relation to death penalty, namely to abolish death penalty in their legislation. According to Florian Witt, there are no studies concluding that death penalty has a deterrent effect on other drug dealers. According to him, the EU is an important player in human rights enforcement in the world. The funds allocated by the EU for human rights enforcement are enormous, particularly for campaign, exchange of officials, training NGO activists, seminars, discussions, workshops for journalists and activists, and others. These statements represent the attitude of the EU to have its ideology concerning the issues of human rights, particularly the abolition of death penalty.

**The Resistance of Republika to the Ideology of the EU Regarding Human Rights:** The Editor-in-Chief of *Republika*, Irfan Junaidi (in interview in 2019) rejects the attitude of the EU considered to impose its standard principles of human rights on Indonesia. The EU is considered "*pretentious*" to present itself as a global human rights enforcer, despite its frequent ambivalent actions. It looks like double standard. *Republika* shows representation of sympathy on the struggle of anti-Western Islamic groups, behind its support for death penalty in Indonesia and its satire or criticism for EU. On the other side, the *Republika* rejected the attitude of the EU considered to impose its standard principles of human rights on Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, CDA method by Fairclough applied to the *Republika* reporting on the issue of death penalty for drug dealers in Indonesia. The result shown that at the level of *Text, Discourse Practice, and Social Practice*, *Republika* represents as the media with Islamic ideology supporting death penalty. *Republika* frame drug dealer as major crimes. This is in accordance with Islamic teachings, namely to impose severe punishment to the perpetrators of major crimes against humanity. Referring to the theory of hegemony by Gramsci, *Republika* represents counter-hegemonic attitude in its news reporting. *Republika* rejects the EU imposing its principles of human rights on other countries, including Indonesia. The EU is considered "pretentious" to present itself as a global human rights enforcer, despite its frequent ambivalent actions. The *Republika* news reporting in fact, tends to support or pro to the policy of the government of Indonesia on applying death penalty for serious crimes.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to say thank you and appreciation to LP2M (Research and Community Service Institutions) and Communication Program of Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia (UAI) for the support.

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