Radicalism in the Reality Construction of Indonesian Media

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Abstract

This research aims to reveal the way mass media in Indonesia frame the radicalism and the multiculturalism issues in its relation to the radicalists’ needs to publicize their acts. Ten news items published in Tempo magazine were analyzed by using Robert N. Entman’s framing model. The analysis shows that Tempo views radicalism as a dangerous threat so that revising laws is regarded as the feasible solution. Some radicalist attacks taking place in Indonesia are always connected to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria including Thamrin Bombing.

Keywords

Media, News, Radicalism, Framing, Reality Construction.

Introduction

After the fall of Orde Baru regime, and radicalism act in Indonesia spread out. In less than a decade, successive bombs rocked the pluralistic republic. The first one was Bali Bombing I, followed by Bali Bombing II, Australian Embassy Bombing, J.W. Marriot Hotel Bombing I, J.W. Marriot Hotel Bombing II, Ritz Carlton Bombing, “Book Bomb” addressed to a number of figures, “Friday Bomb” at Mapolres mosque in Cirebon, and “Suicide Bombing” at Gereja Bethel Injil Sepenuh (GBIS) Kepunton Solo. All of these cases were not spared from the mass media monitors who tend to provide more extensive space for publicity to the radicalist acts in Indonesia.

Radicalism is a “sexy” issue for the mass media in either local or global context. For example, the bomb exploded in the heart of the capital city became the news item which never ended. The editorial crew presented the events from various angles either in the way
the pictures displayed or the news reviewed by presenting different speakers. The media seemed to make some profit from the victims. An action using “concert” as its password became the headline of most mass media in Indonesia. Consequently, the radicalism acts done by a group of people contain an important element in the news which is a “conflict” value. Likewise, the number of the losses killed and the size of the damage inflicted by the radicalism acts are also regarded as vital elements exposed by the mass media.

The litigation toward the existence of the mass media in the activities against radicalism then emerges. An accusation called that both mass media and radicalists have similar interest. At this level, the radicalists organize and make use of the mass media strategies, and on the other side, the mass media put their attention on the radicalists’ activities. In this relation, radicalism could not merely be regarded as violence but also as the combination of propaganda and violence (Schmid and Janny de Graaf 1982). The impacts of the radicalism acts published by the mass media could raise hatred toward the radicalists. Furthermore, it is possible for the government and the mass media to work together to plan strategies to fight against terrorism which is a crime against peace and security of humanity (Behm 1991)

The Press Council as the organization of the mass media in Indonesia issued the Press Council Regulation No. 01/Regulation-DP/IV/2015 about the guidelines for terrorism coverage on April 9th, 2015. It explains that radicalism is an extraordinary crime which requires the involvement of all parties, including the media to prevent it. The regulation shows that the mass media in Indonesia should work against terrorism. The guidelines include thirteen items to be followed by journalists as regulation in reporting the news on radicalism. If the journalists comply with this guidelines, then cases alike in Mumbai will never occur in Indonesia. In the context of radicalism prevention as what is issued by the Press Council in the guidelines, then it is certain the role of journalists is to reveal the truth.

The reality indicates that, when radicalism acts take place, mass media stand in the middle of the social reality burdened by various interests, conflicts, complexities and numerous tricky facts. Reality results from the creation of the creative people through the power of social construction toward the world around them. The social world is the reality which stands alone outside the individual, that according to his impression, reality “exists” in oneself and is regulated by the law. Supporting public interests is the last position of the mass media.

Robert N. Entman (1993) established the foundations for conducting framing analysis related to media content studies. The framing concept proposed by Entman is used to
describe the selection process and to display particular aspects of the reality. He divides framing into two significant dimensions: selection issues and overemphasizing on certain aspects of the issues. It is done by selecting certain issues and ignoring the others and displaying the aspects of the issues by using various discourse strategies, such as publishing the issues in the front or the back of the headline. The framing could appear in two levels. First, a mental conception which is used to process information as the characteristics of the news items. Second, the specific materials of the news narration used to build an understanding of an event. The frame of news could be seen from the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and images presented in the news narration. Under Entman’s conception, framing refers to providing definition, explanation, evaluation, and recommendation in a discourse to emphasize specific framework of the event (Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991; Zaller 1992).

Also, he proposes that the news framing is done in four ways. The first one is defining the problems. Defining the problems is be as the master of the frame emphasizing on how the event is understood by a journalist. The similar event might be understood differently by different journalists. For example, a demonstration carried out by the students which then was ended with a clash could be seen as anarchism by some journalists and might be viewed as a sacrifice by the others. The second way is diagnosing the causes. This element is used to frame anyone or anything believed as the actor of an event. The causes could be ‘what’ or ‘who’. The way by which the event is understood certainly determines ‘what’ and ‘who’ is regarded as the source of the problem. Hence, when a problem is understood differently, the causes would also be understood differently. In other words, the way the sources of the problem defined explains who is regarded as the doer and who is considered as the victim in an event. The third way is making a moral judgment. Moral judgment is done to justify or to provide an argument on the definition made. Once the problem is defined and the causes of which are determined, strong arguments or evidence are needed to support the ideas. The ideas cited should be familiar to the public. The last way to frame the news is by treating the recommendation. This framing element is used to justify the definition of the problem made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 The framing items of Robert N. Entman (1993)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Defining the Problems</td>
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<td>Treatment Recommendation</td>
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</table>
Methodology

This research applied descriptive qualitative method. It also used framing analysis method and constructivism approach or paradigm (Creswell 1998; Lowenberg 1993). The constructivism paradigm views that there is no reality which is objective as it is created through the construction process and particular point of views (Schwandit 1994). This research seeks to describe, to review various conditions, situations or phenomena of social reality in a community taken as the object of the research, and to draw the reality to the surface as a characteristic, model, symbol or description about a particular condition, situation or phenomenon. Hence, the descriptive qualitative format is more appropriate to be used in analyzing the problems that require in-depth studies such as the study of consumers’ behaviors, media effects and the implementation of policy.

This article focuses on the news items on radicalism taking place in Indonesia which were published in Tempo Magazine from February 1st to February 7th, 2016. This period was chosen as during this time, discussions about Sarina Thamrin Bombing on January 14th were presented more comprehensively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>The News Title of Tempo Magazine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Terror from inside the prison</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Duo controllers from inside the prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Santri Kalong (boarding school students who do not live in the dormitory) from Cimalaka</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Result and Discussion

Almost all of the radicalist acts have got extensive attention from both printed and electronic media. The news on radicalism was presented very sensationally, even some of which was very spectacular. That news gives positive effects to the media, such as the increasing number of circulation for the printed media and the rise of the rate for the electronic ones. Thus, the media owners are benefited economically. At the same time, the radicalists also get benefits regarding publicity as Turk (2004) mentions that radicalism is a communication. Publicity has become an essential mean of conveying a message or ideology for the radicalists to the authorities and the public. Usually, the message contains an expression of dissatisfaction with the government. Also, the mass media is also used as a mean to gain support from the community. Furthermore, the radicalists also make use of the mass media to recruit new members who are generally at a young age. The mass media could also influence the public opinions either to stand against or in favor of radicalism. The role of the mass media here is at two positions: positive and negative. The mass media
can also be of high power. They are often considered as one of the most important aspects affecting the social, economic and political changes in society. As the news messenger, the media can shape the public opinions, but also can be an oppressive power against an idea.

News on Radicalism in Tempo Magazine

Radicalism and mass media are closely related. In contrast to the past, the radicals nowadays are highly dependent on the mass media to publicize their acts. The radicalism acts might have different motives such as to draw people’s attention, to demonstrate their ability, to flatten the government image, to intimidate people, and to get support for their ‘struggle’. Publicity would make their acts “echoed”. Even the former Prime Minister of British, Thatcher (1985) said that “Publicity is oxygen for the radicalists”. They need a stage to show off their acts, and the stage is the publicity of the mass media. The Red Brigade group in Italy used to carry out terrors on Saturday to be published on the next day (weekly) newspapers that have greater circulation.

1) Terrors from the Prison

Tempo had essentially published the attack on January 14th, 2016. Four days after the sadism act took place. This act was called as a “concert”. In this edition (January 18th - 24th, 2016) Tempo entitled the news "Jakarta, January 14th, 2016” but this time, it displayed more pictures rather than the news. After several editions, Tempo again published similar issue which was the attack on Sarina Thamrin Jakarta. This time, Tempo entitled the news "The Witness from a Police, One of the Thamrin Terror Victims". In opinion section, as the opening of further news, Tempo wrote “Terror from Jail.” Through such news, Tempo constructed the issue of the radicalism act code-named "concert" as an act directed from inside the prison. The tempo seemed to believe that the terror was closely related to Aman Abdurrahman, a prisoner at Kembang Kuning penitentiary in Nusa Kambangan, Jawa Tengah (Central Java). He is one of the founders of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah, whom according to Tempo had stated his allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Tempo has also constructed that the incident in January 2016 resulted from the government negligence in supervising the imprisoned radicals, and this carelessness has been long highlighted. Many inmates are nowadays getting smarter and able to develop their network from the jail. For example, a drug lord was able to control his men from the prison and so do the radicalism prisoners. Moreover, there are about 250 radicals now secluded in several prisons scattered in various provinces in Indonesia.
Tempo exposed the construction of reality toward religion. Aman Abdurrahman as the founder of *Jamaah Ansharul Daulah* positively demolishes the excellent image of Islam as the religion of peace and non-violence. Also, the use of word “*amaliyah*” is similar to the term used to commit an attack; it certainly does damage the good image of Islam even more. The word “*amaliyah*” is in fact very precious and has lofty meaning in Islam which is the devotion to God.

Furthermore, Tempo also constructed that the de-radicalization program which spent hundred billions of rupiahs was ineffective, and it is expected the government to work together with other related institutions efficiently to achieve the targets. This construction is reasonable as there are about 400 ex-radicalism prisoners who had served their sentences and got back to the society.

### Table 3 Terror from the Jail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining the Problems</th>
<th>The radicalism act taking place on January 14th, 2016 was directed from 4 jails.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosing the Causes</td>
<td>Aman Abdurrahman, the founder of <em>Jamaah Ansharut Daulah</em>, has a role in the attack of Sarina-Thamrin Jakarta. Four of the radicals, Afif, Dian Juni Kurniadi, Muhammad Ali and Ahmad Muhazan met Aman Abdurrahman in Nusakambangan. They asked for the “<em>amaliyah</em>” blessing, the term they used to refer to “committing an attack.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Moral Judgment</td>
<td>The government was insensitive in monitoring the ex-radicalism inmates. Many criminals are getting smarter and can develop a network from inside the jail. There are about 250 radicals secluded, and there are about 400 ex-prisoners of radicalism who had served a sentence and got back to the society. The de-radicalization project is considered as a failure in educating the ex-radicalism criminals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Recommendation</td>
<td>The government has to strictly monitor the prisoners so that they can hardly communicate with their colleagues and plan an attack.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Duo Controllers from the Jail

The main report published in Tempo on February 1st - 7th 2016 edition focused on the involvement of the founder of *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah* Aman Abdurrahman in the attack on January 14th. This report focus could be seen in the news lead entitled “Duo Controllers from Jail”. The lead described:
The Thamrin bombers got military training before they did the terror on M.H. Thamrin Street. The relationship between Aman Abdurrahman with the perpetrators is obviously disclosed. Together with Rois, the death row inmate for Australian Embassy bombing, Aman built a network from the prison.

Through the title “Duo Controllers from the Jail”, Tempo described the radicalism act on January 14th, 2016 was instructed by Aman Abdurrahman from the prison. He approved the perpetrators Afif, Dian Juni Kurniadi, Muhammad Ali and Ahmad Muhazan to commit the terror when they met him in Nusakambangan. The widespread use of Arabic words in delivering the news is also considered as the way Tempo constructs the reality which directs people to think that radicalism acts are strictly related to Islam. For example, Tempo used tadrrib to describe military training, toghut to refer to enemies (in this case is the Detachment 88 Anti-Terror), amaliyah to refer to radicalism efforts and fa’i to indicate an emergency condition in which robbing and stealing are allowed. The use of dictions which are also used in Islam could lead to the perception that Islam is identical with radicalism and radicalism.

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3) Santri Kalong (Boarding School Students Who Do Not Live in the Dormitory) from Cimalaka

In its news, Tempo constructed that pesantren (Islamic boarding school) are closely related to radicalism and radicalism. This construction could be seen from the title “Santri Kalong from Cimalaka” confirming that the construction of the news is intended to show people that the radicalism act was committed by those graduated from pesantren. Here, Aman Abdurrahman was described as someone who is fond of learning religious knowledge since he was in the fourth grade of elementary school. This fact was quoted from what was stated
by a teacher teaching Aman at Pesantren At-Tarbiyah. It then exacerbates the image of Islam. “Santri Kalong” is used to refer to the students studying in pesantren, but they stay at home instead of the dormitory. The word “santri” is used to describe students studying at Islamic boarding school in which they study religious knowledge such as Al Qur’an and Hadist. Moreover, the use of “tauhid wal jihad” meaning oneness of God and holy war, “milla Ibrahim” meaning the religion of Ibrahim and “tausiyah” meaning advice or lesson. The use of these terms strongly proves that Tempo is constructing the news while making a linkage between pesantren and Islam with radicalism acts.

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**The Reality Construction of News on Radicalism in Tempo**

On the 1st - 7th of February 2016 edition, Tempo mentioned the relationship between radicalism and radicalism with Islam. There are five news construction realities established by Tempo. There are: (1) the involvement of Aman Abdurrahman in the attack of Sarina Thamrin; (2) the control of the radicalists from the prison; (3) the relationship between Islam with radicalism and radicalism in Indonesia; (4) pesantren and Islamic education institutions are the sources of radicalism and radicalism, and (5) there was a correlation between radicalism acts in Indonesia and ISIS. The followings are the media reality constructions in publishing news on radicalism.

**The Involvement of Aman Abdurrahman in the Attack of Sarina Thamrin**

The radicalism acts at Sarina-Thamrin Street on January 14th, 2016, by the news published by Tempo, correlates with Aman Abdurrahman, the founder of Ansharut Daulah. It could
be seen from the way Tempo constructed the news in which it conveyed “The police managed to dismantle the role of Aman Abdurrahman and other perpetrators in a short time. However, the involvement of this 44 years old man indicated the negligence of the government in controlling the radicalists”. Tempo believes that Aman Abdurrahman was directly involved in the radicalism acts. Even it constructed that Aman Abdurrahman is a dangerous person and the 44 years old man is the leader of ISIS in Southeast Asia. In addition, Tempo also mentioned that Aman Abdurrahman was the one persuading Ustadz Abu Bakar Ba’asyir to pledge to ISIS of Southeast Asia.

Controlling the Radicalists in the Jail

In the further reality construction, Tempo correlates the prisoners to the attack on Thamrin Street. It thinks that the government has failed in controlling or monitoring the radicalist inmates and the terrors taking place in Indonesia such as those happened in Starbucks Coffee and other places during January 2016. Tempo mentions that the government could not manage the ex-radicalism prisoners’ acts although the country has spent much money to finance the projects called as de-radicalization.

The Correlation between Islam to Radicalism Acts

The correlation between Islam to radicalism in Indonesia is not a new phenomenon. Every act of radicalism is often associated with Islam and radical people. In the case of Thamrin terror, Tempo straightforwardly shows its reality construction toward Islam. Anyone reading Tempo would think that radicalism is identical with Islam. The tempo seems to repeat the Arabic terms which in fact have precious and lofty meanings in Islam. In the news, however, the meanings of the terms are distorted. Some of the terms are “tauhid wal jihad”, “milla Ibrahim” and “tausiyah”. Tempo tries to make a linkage between pesantren and Islam with radicalism acts. Furthermore, it entitled the sub-title “The Dream of Daulah Islam Sang Amir” to justify the radicalism acts to build a Daulah Islamiyah (Islamic State).

Radicalism acts, in fact, should not be correlated to Islam or other religions. Islam does not tolerate violence and aggression against others. Nevertheless, the radicals often legitimate their acts as a part of jihad. Jihad, in the context of Islam, is a war approved by the religion and it should meet several conditions. Committing violence against innocent people is not allowed in Islam. The following are several acts considered as terrors: (a) attacking civilians or citizens causing death or serious injury, (b) taking civilians as hostages, and (c) damaging public properties. The three actions are aimed to provoke, terrorize the country in general, a group of people, individuals, and also to intimidate the government or international organizations to take specific actions.
Pesantren and Islamic Educational Institutions are the Sources of Radicalism

The further reality construction is the correlation between Islamic Educational Institutions such as pesantren to radicalism acts and radicalism. This construction started from the title written by Tempo “Santri Kalong from Cimalaka”. Then it was aggravated by the news mentioned that Aman Abdurrahman was interested in studying religious subjects since he was young and went to pesantren. After serving a sentence, Aman worked as a lecturer in the campus where he studied, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (LIPIA) or Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences, and became an imam in the mosque of ‘Al-Sofwa’ Foundation.

There is a Correlation between Radicalism Acts in Indonesia to ISIS

A number of radicalism acts taking place in Indonesia were always correlated to ISIS. This could be seen from the news published in Tempo mentioning that Aman Abdurrahman was the founder of Ansharut Daulah and had pledged to ISIS of Southeast Asia. In February 2015, Aman, from the prison, instructed all of his groups to support Islamic State of Iraq and Syria to merge into one group namely Ansharut Daulah Indonesia. Tempo believes that Aman has already joined ISIS since the beginning of January 2014 and sent his members to Syria.

Conclusion

Typically, the final objective of the research was to answer the problems of research and to prove the purposes of the research. Therefore, based on the research findings and the results of the interpretations, it is concluded that:

First, the radicalism act on Sarina–Thamrin Street on January 14th, 2016, under the news published in Tempo, was closely related to Aman Abdurrahman, the leader of Ansharut Daulah. Second, Tempo connected the radicalism prisoners to the bombing on Thamrin Street. Third, Tempo straightforwardly shows its reality construction toward Islam. Anyone reading Tempo would think that radicalism is identical with Islam. The tempo seems to use the Arabic terms which in fact have noble and lofty meanings in Islam. In the news, however, the meanings of the terms are distorted. Fourth, pesantren and Islamic educational institutions are regarded as the sources of radicalism and radicalism. Tempo constructed the reality that there was a correlation between Islamic educational institutions to radicalism and radicalism which could be seen in the news published on February 1st - 7th, 2016. The construction started from the title “Santri Kalong from Cimalaka.” Fifth, there is a relationship between the radicalism acts and ISIS. Some radicalism attacks taking place in
Indonesia are always connected to ISIS including Thamrin Bomb in January 2016. This connection could be seen from the news mentioning Aman Abdurrahman as the founder of Ansharut Daulah and has pledged to ISIS of Southeast Asia.

Based on the conclusions, it is recommended to the upcoming researchers to study the similar topic with different framing models, conduct similar research by applying other discourse analyses and approaches, and analyze the independence of media in publishing radicalism issues in Indonesia.

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