



## **Commodification of Religious Sentiments and Threats to Diversity on YouTube Religious Content**

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### **Abstract**

YouTube has become a lucrative platform for content creators, fostering the rise of popular Muslim scholars with distinct specialties and audiences. This phenomenon has been exploited by creators who commodify religious lectures by framing them as debates, contributing to the growing polarization among Indonesian Muslims. This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing the framing analysis model of Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki to examine how religious sentiments are constructed and commodified on YouTube. It further explores audience interpretations to assess the impact of such framing. The findings reveal that content creators manipulate frames through strategically designed thumbnails and titles as key syntactic elements, while the sequencing of video clips reinforces framing at the script, thematic, and rhetorical levels. Audience engagement, as reflected in comments, largely demonstrates support for the content creators and the religious figures portrayed as victors in these debates. The study

concludes that the commodification of religious sentiments through framing significantly intensifies polarization within the Indonesian Muslim community, posing a considerable threat to social and religious diversity.

**Keywords:** *Framing, Commodification, Religious Sentiments, YouTube*

### **Abstrak**

YouTube telah menjadi platform yang menguntungkan bagi para kreator konten, mendorong kemunculan ulama Muslim populer dengan keahlian dan audiens yang berbeda-beda. Fenomena ini dimanfaatkan oleh para kreator yang mengkomodifikasi ceramah keagamaan dengan membingkainya sebagai perdebatan, sehingga berkontribusi pada meningkatnya polarisasi di kalangan Muslim Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menerapkan model analisis framing Zhongdang Pan dan Gerald M. Kosicki untuk mengkaji bagaimana sentimen keagamaan dikonstruksi dan dikomodifikasi di YouTube. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga mengeksplorasi interpretasi audiens guna menilai dampak dari framing tersebut. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa para kreator konten memanipulasi framing melalui desain thumbnail dan judul yang strategis sebagai elemen sintaksis utama, sementara penataan klip video memperkuat framing pada tingkat skrip, tematik, dan retorik. Keterlibatan audiens, yang tercermin dalam komentar, sebagian besar menunjukkan dukungan terhadap pemilik akun dan tokoh agama yang digambarkan sebagai pemenang dalam perdebatan tersebut. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa komodifikasi sentimen keagamaan melalui framing secara signifikan memperburuk polarisasi di kalangan komunitas Muslim Indonesia, yang pada akhirnya menjadi ancaman serius terhadap keragaman sosial dan agama.

**Kata Kunci:** *Framing, Komodifikasi, Sentimen Keagamaan, YouTube*

### **Introduction**

Religious content has become a significant area of interest among YouTube audiences, reflecting a shift in mass society where religion is often viewed more as entertainment than as a guiding principle. This type of content appears to occupy a distinct niche, driven by the unique characteristics of Indonesian society, where demand for religious material remains consistently high. In the Muslim community, many of the most popular scholars have gained widespread recognition across Indonesia through their YouTube presence. Figures such as Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS), Gus Baha' (Rohmatulloh, As'ad, and Malayati 2022), Gus Miftah, and Ustadz Adi Hidayat (UAH) have amassed large followings (Malik et al. 2023).

The appeal of religious content is further amplified by its intersection with political discourse, making it even more attractive for YouTube creators (Rodelo 2022). Since the rise of polarization during the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, as well as the Jakarta regional elections, religious issues have become increasingly entangled with political narratives

(Afrimadona 2021). This blending of religion and politics contributes to the broader challenges faced by Indonesian Muslims, a community characterized by its inherent diversity and pluralism (Zulfikar Rakita Dewa et al. 2023). The growing presence of religious content on YouTube reflects not only the market demand but also the complexities and divisions shaping contemporary Indonesian society.

The rise of new media has shifted the source of religious authority from traditionally recognized scholars within society to impersonal online platforms (Budiawan 2020). Today, individuals can easily access answers to religious questions by simply using search engines, bypassing the need to consult credible clerics directly. This convenience allows users to selectively choose information that aligns with their personal preferences and needs (Afandi et al. 2021). However, the limited understanding of digital ethics among content creators has contributed to the proliferation of counterproductive material, often driven by personal profit rather than the dissemination of accurate or beneficial religious knowledge (H. Campbell 2007). This shift not only diminishes the role of traditional religious authorities but also raises concerns about the reliability and integrity of religious content in digital spaces.

Islam in Indonesia is characterized by diverse interpretations and practices, as it is not guided by a single religious school of thought, making differences of opinion among scholars common (Kuswana and Pauzian 2023). This diversity is reflected in the varied typology of Islamic thinkers. According to Abdullah Saeed, Islamic thinkers can be categorized into six groups: (1) those who focus on fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence); (2) those who emphasize ethical and doctrinal aspects of Islam; (3) those engaged in Islamic political discourse; (4) groups inclined towards violence; (5) individuals who view religion as a private matter; and (6) contemporary thinkers who integrate classical Islamic insights with modern perspectives (Rabbani 2021). This plurality of thought creates opportunities for content creators to exploit differences and pit scholars against one another, commodifying their views for economic gain. In some cases, this is done deliberately to incite controversy and fuel conflict. By selectively cutting, splicing, and recontextualizing videos - often accompanied by provocative captions - content creators produce polarizing material that, despite its divisive nature, garners significant audience attention and engagement (Ridho et al. 2023).

A 2019 report by the Indonesian Telematic Society reveals that SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations) issues are the second most common topic used to spread hoaxes, following socio-political content (Arisanty et al. 2022). This finding highlights how easily individuals can fall into the trap of accepting and even contributing to the dissemination of religious hoaxes. In some cases, this behavior has become habitual, with users frequently producing, modifying, and resharing false information through social media platforms (Park and Rim 2020). While social media serves as a powerful tool for the rapid dissemination of information, its impact can be harmful, as the content often bypasses social norms and ethical considerations, contributing to the spread of misinformation (Tchakounté et al. 2022).

This study aims to analyze two key aspects: (1) how religious sentiments are constructed and commodified, and (2) how audiences interpret this content to assess the impact of framing. The research seeks to raise awareness and deepen public understanding of how religious sentiments are manipulated for commercial gain, as well as the broader social consequences of this practice. By shedding light on the provocative framing of religious content, the study highlights the potential risks associated with the commodification of religious discourse and its impact on societal polarization.

## **Method**

This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing the framing analysis model developed by Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki to examine the construction of framing in YouTube content (Pan and Kosicki 1993). The research subjects were identified by entering relevant keywords related to religious sentiment. From the search results, accounts were selected based on specific criteria, including having the highest number of subscribers compared to similar channels, a large volume of content, and a predominant focus on religious sentiment.

Following the identification of suitable accounts, content for analysis was selected based on additional criteria. This included choosing videos with the highest viewership or popularity, as well as those with significant engagement, measured by the number of comments and likes. This selection process ensures that the study focuses on influential content that resonates widely with audiences, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of

how religious sentiments are framed and received on the platform. The following content has been selected based on the selection criteria above:

**Table 1.** Content Selected as Research Subject

Account name	Nafas Pembaharu
Total content	4,253 videos
Number of subscribers	847K
Selected content titles	Politik Terkini! Gemetaran! Tak Terima Gus Miftah 'Dikafirkan', Gus Baha Turun Tangan Ceramahi UAS!
Viewer	3.922.645
Number of likes	25 thousand
Number of comments	19.215

Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki's framing model posits that every news story is constructed around a central frame, which organizes and shapes the presentation of information. This frame serves as the foundation for the narrative and can be broken down into concrete elements that contribute to the overall discourse. Newsmakers compile and manipulate these elements to influence how the audience perceives and interprets the story. The model identifies four key structural components that shape this framing process: syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical elements. Each of these structures plays a distinct role in guiding the construction and delivery of media content, ultimately shaping public consciousness and understanding. (Pan and Kosicki 1993).

*Syntactic* refers to how a newsmaker interprets events and organizes facts into standard news formats, including elements such as leads, backgrounds, headlines, and quotes (Miller and Toman 2016). *The script* focuses on the narrative strategies employed by newsmakers, particularly their use of the 5W+1H principle (who, what, where, when, why, and how) to package events effectively. *Thematic* examines how news creators construct events into coherent propositions, sentences, or relationships between sentences, which in this study extends to the connections between video segments. Finally, the *rhetorical* emphasizes how newsmakers embed specific meanings into their content. This can be observed in their choice of words, idioms, graphics, and images, which not only enhance the narrative but also shape and emphasize particular interpretations for the audience (Nee and Santana 2022).

Finding and Analysis  
Construction of Framing Religious Sentiments

The framing construction of the research subjects is dismantled through four analytical devices, namely syntactic, script, thematic and rhetorical structures:

Table 2. Framing Analysis Tools

Framing Devices: Syntactic Structure	
Observation Unit	Observations
Heading	<i>Politik Terkini! Gemetaran! Tak Terima Gus Miftah 'Dikafirkan', Gus Baba Turun Tangan Ceramahi UAS!</i>
Leads	<p>The lead for this content is represented by a thumbnail that provides a concise preview of the video's focus. The thumbnail features the text: "Gemetaran!!! Gus Baba turun tangan – koar-koar kafirkan Gus Miftah, UAS terdiam ditekuk Gus Baba", accompanied by an image of three clerics. On the left is UAS, depicted with his hands positioned as though apologizing or saluting, while on the right, Gus Baha and Gus Miftah are portrayed in a posture suggesting they are offering advice. This combination of provocative text and imagery sets the tone for the content, aiming to captivate the viewer's attention and suggest a contentious interaction between the figures.</p> <div data-bbox="512 1072 1275 1498"></div> <p>Figure 1. Thumbnail View</p>
Background Information	Disagreements among religious on key issues such as the permissibility of Muslims maintaining close relationships with non-Muslims and the appropriateness of entering places of worship belonging to other religions.
Source Citations	<p>The video contains bits and pieces of video of the three clerics strung together so that it looks like they are arguing with their respective arguments.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> People today often misquote the Quranic verse that says, "Whoever befriends disbelievers becomes a disbeliever." This is a</p>

	<p>grave misunderstanding. If that interpretation were correct, then all the prophets would be considered disbelievers as well, because they too befriended non-believers.</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> "Whoever imitates the infidel then he is part of the infidel". It means that his heart leans towards the infidel.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> In the history of NU, there have been many saints classified as <i>jadzab</i> who, outwardly, were friends with those considered <i>fasiq</i> (morally corrupt). This often led people adhering strictly to <i>sharia</i> to question, "How can a saint be friends with someone <i>fasiq</i>?" However, if these individuals are seen as being guided or mentored by the saints rather than simply being their friends, the situation takes on a different perspective and no longer appears problematic.</p> <p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> "In the past, the purpose of da'wah (Islamic preaching) was to bring non-Muslims to Islam. But now, da'wah seems to be about labeling fellow Muslims as infidels."</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> Koreans are non-believers. They are not circumcised, they do not perform ritual purification, and they commit adultery. Let us not follow their ways.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> They (Prophets) also befriended infidels. Therefore, a fiqh-based analysis is necessary to understand the Qur'anic verse: "Whoever befriends them is considered one of them." Upon analysis through the lens of fiqh, it becomes evident that all prophets are referred to as "akh" (brother). For instance, "And to the people of Madyan, We sent their brother Shu'ayb," and "To the people of 'Ad, We sent their brother Hud." What does "akh" mean? It means brother, doesn't it?.</p> <p>The text appears "koar-koar kafirkan kyiai NU orasi di gereja, UAS diceramahi Gus Baha"</p> <p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> In the <i>Quran surah Al-Anam</i> Allah says "Do not insult the deities worshipped by others besides Allah, as it may cause them to insult Allah out of ignorance and beyond proper limits". Simply put, if you do not want your religion to be insulted by others then do not insult other religions.</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> "You will follow the traditions of the people before you, inch by inch, a cubit by a cubit, even if they enter the monitor lizard hole, you also follow into it".</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> It is the same. The Prophet befriended the infidels not because of a matter of friendship, but because of their being mentored by him. It is so because the Prophet was to Islamize the infidels. The Prophet was very long in contact with the infidels. Even the Prophet was commanded to be kind to them. But people now do not have knowledge with regard to this. Those who are extremist no longer use the science of jurisprudence (<i>usul fiqh</i>). They simply say, every qur'anic verse has its translation. So, the application of it has to match its meaning.</p>
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	<p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> How I reassure is by praying. Because the Quran says "whoever wishes to believe, let them believe, and whoever wishes to disbelieve, let them disbelieve." Your worship of Allah does not increase His majesty, and your refusal to worship Him does not diminish His glory. Therefore, for those who wish to have faith, go ahead. But remember one thing: never insult the objects of worship of others if you do not want others to insult your religion."</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> Is it permissible to celebrate Mother's Day? The answer is no, because it is a tradition of non-believers. Whoever follows the traditions of non-believers becomes one of them. Scholars have prohibited us from adopting the traditions of non-believers.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> It turns out that in the Qur'an, Surah At-Tawbah, there is a verse that means: "O Muhammad, if a disbeliever comes to you to learn the Qur'an, you must teach them until they hear the words of Allah. Once they are willing to learn, you must guarantee their safety."</p> <p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> Even the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said, "Would you want your parents to be insulted?" They replied, "Of course not, O Messenger of Allah. How could we insult our own parents?" The Prophet then said, "Therefore, if you do not want your parents to be insulted by others, never insult the parents of others."</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> But I can assure you that non-believers are capable of understanding the Qur'an. Sayyidina Umar converted to Islam after hearing his sister recite Surah Thaha. He was struck with awe and said, "It is impossible for this to be the work of man." Eventually, Umar embraced Islam.</p> <p><b>Kyai Marzuki Mustamar:</b> "We are not there to follow Christianity. Rather, we are there to convey the truth of Islam. Who knows, perhaps among them, there might be someone who is interested to embrace Islam."</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> Islam does not need to be taught how to interact socially with our non-Muslim brothers and sisters.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> Now, let me ask you: the person referred to as "<i>tabayyana labu al-haq</i>"—is that someone who understands or does not understand? Disbelievers reject the Qur'an after the truth has become clear to them. What does it mean for the truth to be clear to them? Does it mean they understand or not? Of course, they understand; however, they are afflicted with the disease of "<i>hasadan min 'indi anfusihim</i>" (envy from within themselves).</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> Nowadays, many people go overboard because they cannot distinguish between tolerance and salted eggs. It should be distinguishable.</p> <p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> Some people interpret tolerance in an excessive manner. Let me give an example: there are those who say that all religions are true. In my opinion, this statement is appropriate but incomplete. To me, the correct understanding is that all religions are true for their</p>
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	<p>adherents. Therefore, the most accurate phrasing would be: all religions are true for their adherents.</p> <p><b>Ustadz Adi Hidayat:</b> It is forbidden to follow others in entering a church, as it means participating in their disbelief.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> They (non-believers), when faced with verses that challenge them, would say, 'Muhammad, you shouldn't deliver that verse. Find another topic.' Do they choose that topic because they understand it or because they don't? Clearly, it's because they understand it.</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> "How many Muslim families have died in a state of <i>su'ul khatimah</i> (bad ending), being called to by 'Hallelujah.' This is because, in the statue of the cross, there resides an infidel spirit. How did the infidel spirit get there? It came because of the statue."</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> Our scholars have classified non-believers (<i>kafir</i>) into different categories: <i>kafir harbi</i>, which refers to those we are in conflict with or at war against; <i>kafir mu'abad</i>, those who have entered into a treaty with us; and <i>kafir musta'man</i>, those granted safety and protection. Not all non-believers fall into the category of <i>harbi</i>. Not all are <i>dzimmi</i>, not all are <i>mu'abad</i>, and not all are <i>musta'man</i>. For a <i>harbi</i>, we are permitted to engage in war. For a <i>dzimmi</i>, we are obligated to nurture and protect them. For a <i>mu'abad</i>, we must act in accordance with the agreements, treaties, or MoUs we have established. Yet, interestingly, they are often well-versed in certain verses of the Qur'an.</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> Islam does not need to be taught how to interact socially with our non-Muslim brothers and sisters.</p> <p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> How I reassure is by praying. Because the Quran says "whoever wishes to believe, let them believe, and whoever wishes to disbelieve, let them disbelieve." Your worship of Allah does not increase His majesty, and your refusal to worship Him does not diminish His glory. Therefore, for those who wish to have faith, go ahead. But remember one thing: never insult the objects of worship of others if you do not want others to insult your religion.</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> It is illegitimate to enter someone else's house of worship, <i>baram</i>.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> So, here's what it means: if you're studying <i>ulumul Qur'an</i> (the sciences of the Qur'an), you need to understand, for instance, when a verse addresses a disbeliever, which type of disbeliever is it referring to? Is it addressing <i>ahlul kitab</i> (People of the Book) or a polytheist? But nowadays, people don't make these distinctions—they just lump everything together and call it <i>kafir</i> (disbeliever). That's why, if I'm invited to debate with them, it feels like I'm being invited to be foolish all over again.</p> <p><b>Gus Miftah:</b> "As long as there is goodness in it, yes, I will do it. And it's important to note that my presence there is not for worship or religious rituals, but for an inauguration event."</p>
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	<p><b>Kyai Marzuki Mustamar:</b> "Why is Gus Dur often invited to churches?" He replied, "Marzuki, delivering da'wah (Islamic teachings) is an obligation to everyone."</p> <p><b>UAS:</b> We can all accept and welcome everyone. Whoever comes, we are all neighbors, friends, and companions. However, when it comes to matters of worship or rituals, there is no room for compromise.</p> <p><b>Gus Baha:</b> So, all of you should avoid catching stupidity. What's done is done. Those who are already stupid, well, that's that—don't make it worse. There are already plenty of them.</p>
Opinion Statement	<p>In the description column of this content, the creator provides the following explanation:</p> <p>"Who doesn't know Gus Baha?" The cleric, whose full name is KH Ahmad Bahaiddin Nursalim, is widely recognized on YouTube and other social media platforms. His lectures, which range from short clips of 2-3 minutes to hour-long discussions, cover a wide variety of Islamic topics, including jurisprudence, economics, proselytizing, and more. Gus Baha is admired for his profound knowledge, often quoting extensively from the Quran, Al Hadith, and classical Islamic texts, while occasionally incorporating humor into his teachings. According to KH Maemoen Zubair, affectionately called Mbah Moen by his followers, some Muslims still frequently accuse others of being infidels, destined for hell, or beyond Allah's forgiveness—statements made casually, often without reflection. Mbah Moen emphasized that such judgments do not align with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).</p> <p>The video also highlights Gus Miftah, who recently stirred controversy with his participation in the inauguration of the Indonesian Bethel Church (GBI Amanat Agung Penjaringan), where he delivered a national oration. Gus Miftah responded to criticism by expressing gratitude: "Gus Miftah is angry? Don't be. In fact, thank God," he stated, viewing the backlash as a test of faith. He further criticized those who labeled him an infidel, remarking, "In the past, the task was to Islamize the infidels; today, proselytizing seems to focus on infidelizing Muslims." Despite his clarification, Gus Miftah continued to face criticism. In contrast, Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) holds a different view, opposing the idea of Muslims entering non-Muslim houses of worship, especially those containing statues. UAS explained that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also refrained from such practices.</p> <p>The channel "Nafas Pembaharu" presents this content as part of its focus on contemporary political events, packaging key moments involving prominent figures into concise and engaging videos. The creators emphasize that their videos are based on thorough research and sourced from credible media outlets, aiming to provide context and insight into the nation's socio-religious and political landscape.</p>

Cover	This content does not have a closure that summarizes the results of the entire video but the creator explains in the description column that the content has been researched and taken from an accountable source.
<b>Framing Devices: Script Structure</b>	
Observation Unit	Observations
What	Muslim law of befriending non-muslims and the problem of entering the church for muslims
Where	YouTube account <i>Nafas Pembaharu</i> .
Who	The subject of the content is today's popular clerics who are pros and cons to the legal issue of entering the church for Muslims
When	Uploaded on May 9, 2021
Why	The video seeks to provide a defense against clerics who are being criticized by banging the opinions of pro and con scholars.
How	The video is shown by arranging pieces of the video. Any opinion that is contra or contains a rejection of the theme raised is subsequently immediately clashed with an opinion that justifies even though the opinion suggested rejecting or defending it has a different context.
<b>Framing Devices: Thematic Structures</b>	
Observation Unit	Observations
Sentence proposition, relationships between sentences / video	In this video, the opinions of the characters who are bullied (Gus Baha) explain more about how to interact with infidels by explaining the kinds of infidels. Meanwhile, UAS discusses more about how to enter other people's houses of worship in terms of non-negotiable worship/rituals and not prohibiting friendships. Meanwhile, Gus Miftah explained more about the reason he was invited to the inauguration of a church. The opinions between the characters are combined with the spices of the image so that they appear intertwined. The proportion relationship between opinions in the video clip by clashing every detail of the character's opinion about a particular discussion with the opinions of other characters with discussions that have similarities.
<b>Framing Devices: Rhetorical Structures</b>	
Observation Unit	Observations
Word or speech idioms, descriptions showing Theme Explanation	In the description column, the content creator emphasizes the shop and credibility of a great cleric (Gus Baha) and tells how the fate of the cleric (Gus Miftah) who received a lot of criticism after speaking in the church. It then emphasizes that there are other clerics (UAS) who forbid a Muslim from entering the church. The description column closes with a sentence that the process of making a video has passed in-depth research and is sourced from credible media.

Through analysis on the syntactic structure it can be understood that the framing construction has been built on the title and thumbnail. The choice of the words *shaking*, *being*

*lectured, bent, speechless* as well as the choice of photos of each character placed face to face are a form of effort to create the impression that there has been a debate that ends with the dominance of one party and the weakening of the other. Thumbnails can almost occupy the position of the title of the content, the plastered text is easier to read.

In the script structure, it can be seen that the content creator is in an effort to defend one of the figures (Gus Miftah) by positioning the UAS as a figure who criticizes what Gus Miftah did in other people's houses of worship. The defense of Gus Miftah was done by presenting Gus Baha's opinion which was actually explaining in general terms about the various statuses of infidels and how to interact with them.

In the thematic structure, it can be understood that the video clips are arranged based on the similarity of the discussion points of each character because they actually have a different context. The account creator imposes a relationship between the video clips so that it seems that the characters respond to each other. Meanwhile, the rhetorical structure is focused on analyzing the account creator's explanation in the description column which seeks to use Gus Baha's notability to reinforce the argument that his opinion is more credible than the opinion of UAS as a figure who is suggested to criticize Gus Miftah's way of proselytizing. The description column closes with a statement that the compilation of the video was done with research and from credible sources, creators want to impress that the content is worth watching and trustworthy.

YouTube has something in common with television in that it combines written language, speech, images, and sounds to construct each of their versions of reality (Moschini 2014). It's just that the construction carried out is also influenced by who has the advantage or attracts profits or the party who benefits from the information (Hillrichs 2016). From viewership to society, meaning that a media has formed a reality from the results of the construction of reality then referred to by Burhan Bungin as media reality (Bungin, Teguh, and Dafa 2021).

The reality that has been shaped by the above content can be considered to deviate from the real reality (Husni and Napitupulu 2023). Creators understand the high level of clerical notability it is packing. Gus Baha, UAS and Gus Miftah who are in such a polluter position among Muslims are magnets strong enough to serve as subjects of framing (Rozzaq and Toipah 2021). People have a tendency to believe in information that supports their own

beliefs or ideology or that of their group (Khodafi 2024). Each character's lecture that is being framed actually has a different context, but the content is forced to be in the same context in order to create the impression of debate and eventually attract the attention of the audience for personal gain (Muhlis and Hannan 2023). If hoaxes are interpreted as false or fake information, then framing in this case can be considered a hoax (Pepicelli 2017).

In general, framing can be divided into two types according to the use for the recipient, namely broad framing and narrow framing (Dai, Chen, and Jin 2022). Narrow framing is a type of framing that aims to narrow the recipient's view of the context of the information presented, while broad framing is a type of framing designed with the aim that the recipient can view the context of information holistically (Memes 2012). The content in this study is clearly included in the narrow framing category.

The success of framing in general can be seen from the large number of viewers for the content above as many as 3,922,645, even those who liked reached 25 thousand without a single account that did not like, while comments on this content reached 19,215. If 1 million viewers are able to generate more than 500 US dollars per month, then this content can generate almost 2,000 US dollars per month and or the equivalent of 30 million rupiah per month.

Fuchs describes digital capitalism as a system where data becomes a primary commodity. Fuchs argues that this form of capitalism perpetuates wealth accumulation (Fuchs 2020). Algorithms play a crucial role in digital capitalism, shaping social interactions and economic transactions. Fuchs highlights that these algorithms are not neutral; they reflect and reinforce existing power asymmetries within society. Algorithms manipulate the market, influence market dynamics by controlling the flow of information and shaping consumer behavior and preferences. Fuchs' opinion is a kind of agreement with the finding that people who have an interest in the religious field in the digital space will continue to be controlled by algorithms, and in the end if this is not realized it will provoke the emergence of the same destructive framing content that only prioritizes profit (Fuchs 2021).

### **Audience Perceptions of Framing**

Here are the top ten comments on the content:

**EKA JAKA PURNAMA** 1 tahun yang lalu

"Pelaku adu domba tidak akan masuk surga." (HR Muslim no. 303)



2,3 rb



Balas

▼ 456 balasan

**Andriteguh Purwanto** 1 tahun yang lalu

Ya Allah semoga para ustad indonesia bersatu, dan tidak bisa di adu domba oleh media yang memotong motong dakwahnya.....aamiin...



128



Balas

▼ 16 balasan

**Eko Cahyo** 1 tahun yang lalu

Semoga umat Islam d Indonesia bisa bersatu agar tidak mudah terprovokasi... aamiin



51



Balas

▼ 2 balasan

**Bidji Mlejit** 6 bulan yang lalu

Tetep suka dengan Gus Baha dan UAS. Semoga Allah menjaga mereka



27



Balas

**Rusdi Gaza** 1 tahun yang lalu (diedit)

Inshaa Allah para viewer Muslim udh cerdas, jgn mau di adu domba ya...

Salam Ukhuwah Islamiah

We ❤️ to UAS dan Gus Baha



26



Balas

**KITA CINTA ILMU** 1 bulan yang lalu

UAS ORANG CERDAS. ❤️👍

**fariefend99** 1 tahun yang lalu

Cara dakwah NU adalah dengan cara fleksibel bisa menyesuaikan siapa dan di mana...berdakwah dgn menebar kedamaian Allahuakbar...semoga NU tetap sabar sampai hari akhir



28



Balas

▼ 2 balasan

**Fitra Hidayat** 4 bulan yang lalu

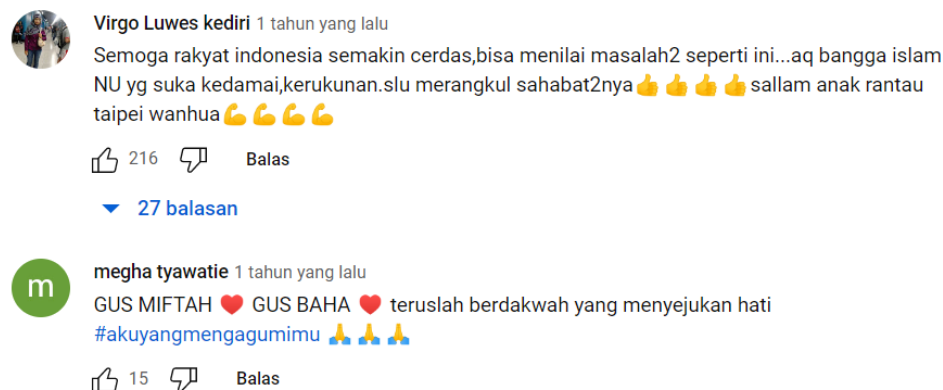
Semoga Allah panjangkan umurmu ustadz abdul somad aamiin....



3



Balas



**Figure 2.** Audience Comments

The comments above can be divided into two categories, namely comments that reject framing and comments that are affected by framing. Comments affected by framing tend to support or simply side with one of the opinions. Meanwhile, viewers who are not affected will judge the content as content with negative purposes such as fighting, slander and others. The top ten comments as shown above illustrate that some viewers are easily carried away by constructed framing, they are forced to choose the characters and opinions that are being clashed. Although the content forces debate but the number of accounts that like the content reaches 25 thousand, this shows that a large number of viewers have not been able to detect the framing construction carried out. This condition can trigger disputes between viewers which can be immediately seen from several comments containing approval, rebuttal, insults and others.

Positive comment by Andriteguh Purwanto's account: “*Ya Allah semoga para ustad Indonesia bersatu, dan tidak bisa diadu domba oleh media yang memotong-motong dakwahnya....aamiin...*” received the following response:

- *Lee Chong Lee Lee: Betul broo... yg ngaplod ni ad org yg suka curi2 WiFi tetangganya wkwk*
- *Dba John: Betul bos. Akun buzzer sring ngadudomba. Contoh puji salh satu ulama seakan2 ulama lain tdk dia sukai. Klo akun yg mncintai islam bkn sprti itu. Tdk mau seakan2 mmsbkan ustad a, b, c dsb.*
- *sunvondo narimah: Setuju om*
- *Kumakuelone: Channel dajjal ni tukang pitnah adu domba...dan potong2 vidio... Wooi channel laknat*
- *Merpati Nusantara Official: Enggak laaab, cuma karena UAS Sama UAH terpojok kali. Wkwk*
- *Nur Yana: Makanya pilih ulama yang membawa umat kejalan yang benar.klo belum tahu jangan menghukumi haramlah kafirlah, hati hati dengan kata kata itu.*



- 
- *Uzank Rusandi: Gas report bareng2*
  - *budab laut kidul: bagus jadi kelihatan, mana yang ceramah beneran dan yang ngumbar kebencian*
  - *Djumadi Sp: Maklum cari makannya emang spt itu.*
  - *Kiki Harahap: Gus mitab pereman bersorban*
  - *Dino Sofik: @Kiki Harahap nah klo kamu apa??*
  - *Budiyono Budi: @Dino Sofik Premannya preman*

The above responses indicate acceptance and rejection of framing in the content. Some support one opinion, some criticize and even insult other figures, others try to be careful in expressing opinion. The prominence of one opinion over another is responded to with a wide variety of perceptions by the audience. Eriyanto revealed that there is generally framing characterized by highlighting certain aspects of reality (Argawidyanti and Sari 2023). Sometimes the writing of the news is referred to as news consciously or unconsciously and is directed at certain aspects. This resulted in other aspects not getting attention.

The success rate of framing is influenced by the way the audience or reader thinks. There are two commonly used thinking systems, namely the experiential system and the cognitive system, the cognitive system is a conscious and rational thinking system, while the experiential system tends to be heuristic, automatic and intuitive so that it is more susceptible to cognitive biases, such as *loss-aversion*, *priming* and *focalism* (Dimara et al. 2020). These cognitive biases experienced by the audience are what the framing perpetrator takes advantage of.

Loss-aversion bias or fear of loss makes a person have an incomparable sensitivity between gains and losses at the same quantity. Priming bias is the triggering of a memory when faced with an identical word, symbol, image, or phenomenon that an individual has faced before. Focalism occurs when the individual is too focused on an event so as to overestimate the probability of the event and rule out the possibility of other events occurring that actually have a higher probability of occurring.

The success of the framing can be seen from the responses submitted by the account "*Merpati Nusantara Official, Nur Yana, Budab Laut Kidul, and Kiki Harahap*". Comments by *Merpati Nusantara Official* accounts, *Nur Yana* and *Budab Laut Kidul* seem to be caught in focalism bias, while *Kiki Harahap's* account is stuck in priming bias.

### **Framing and Threats to Diversity**

The above findings are certainly very detrimental to various parties, Ustadz Abdul Somad as the party who is found guilty in the content is certainly very disadvantaged. Even Gus Baha's own talk as the underdog party in this content became a very narrow message in context, not to mention the repercussions that arose from the debate of the audience unaware of the mode of framing, all resulting in increased polarization and further distancing the nation from unity. Even indirectly content like this instead of benefiting and educating the public, but on the contrary can damage the image of Islam itself (Daniel, 2011.).

The findings reinforce those explored by Heidi A. Campbell. Heidi examines how religious practices adapt and transform in the context of digital media. This phenomenon is closely linked to religious polarization, as online platforms can amplify divergent beliefs and foster echo chambers. Campbell argues that digital platforms allow for new forms of religious authority, where traditional hierarchies are challenged by grassroots movements and individual expressions, as individuals gravitate towards communities that reinforce their beliefs, often at the expense of interfaith dialogue (H. D. Campbell 1994).

Apart from several cases of rejection by some regions of the proselytizing of Ustadz Abdul Somad, the framing carried out in this content cannot be justified for any reason (Rosadi 2019). Commodification of religious sentiments will still be in demand along with the existence of the use of the SARA issue. Moreover, figures such as Ustadz Abdul Somad who had intersected in the world of politics in the 2019 presidential election and the presence of Gus Baha' who became a new viral figure in the world of Islamic proselytizing (Rosadi 2019). Social media, like a double-edged knife, can be an extraordinary medium for the development of hoaxes, slander, and the politicization of SARA. Framing on social media is not changed like framing done by the mainstream mass media, they give protrusion to certain realities and cover up other realities for the sake of certain interests (Ukk and Bui 2019). Some mass media such as Kompas, Republika, and Media Indonesia display different realities in reporting on religious issues (Yani 2002).

Awareness of framing techniques and an understanding of why individuals are easily influenced by such methods are essential for navigating the challenges of the information age. Society must recognize the importance of verifying information, particularly on social media, where misinformation and manipulation are prevalent. While it is natural to admire

religious figures, it is crucial to avoid slipping into fanaticism or emotional biases that can lead to unnecessary divisions and conflicts. At its core, religion is meant to foster peace and promote unity, serving as a force for harmony rather than discord.

## Conclusion

This research can be concluded that the YouTube content titled *"Politik Terkini! Gemetaran! Tak Terima Gus Miftah 'Dikafirkan', Gus Baha Turun Tangan Ceramahi UAS!"* which has been uploaded by the account "Nafas Pembaharu" selectively highlights certain aspects of reality while obscuring others. This deliberate framing creates a constructed narrative designed to maximize viewer engagement, successfully attracting 3.9 million views. Using Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki's framing analysis tools, the study reveals that the content relies heavily on the title and thumbnail as key elements of the syntactic structure to capture attention. Additionally, the framing emphasizes the thematic focus on contentious issues, leveraging the notability and prominence of well-known scholars to enhance the script, thematic, and rhetorical dimensions of the content.

The viewer's response seemed to be more dominant as viewers liked the content and reached 25 thousand accounts. Meanwhile, 19,215 comments were classified into comments that were affected by framing and comments that rejected framing. The large number of viewers who like and leave comments indicates a high level of audience interest. This condition is dangerous and can threaten diversity due to the large influence of religious sentiment framing in creating audience polarization.

Through this research, people need to increase critical power and always be careful in receiving various types of information, especially on social media, in addition to the government's efforts to provide digital literacy and media learning through various strategies. The public needs to realize that not every religious content can be directly consumed as a reliable source of information, it is necessary to check and recheck any dubious information.

The findings of this study have practical implications for efforts to raise public awareness of digital religious conditions. Digital religious behavior in Indonesia is still very vulnerable to clashes of sentiment. On the one hand, this phenomenon is worrying because it triggers division and hostility, but on the other hand, it is enjoyed by a handful of people to accumulate profits. Cleric and religious authorities need to seriously view this problem as

a potential conflict in the modern era that will continue to be destructive if a solution is not immediately sought. Compiling guidelines for religious ethics in the digital world may be one easy solution, in addition to making it a mandatory counseling material in various social institutions, both formal and non-formal.

Further research on the extent to which this religious framing phenomenon is addressed by authorities and policy makers, as well as how new modes of destructive commodification of religious content are developing in society, is very important to carry out, along with the great opportunities for using technology as a tool for good and development as well as evil and discord such as artificial intelligence.

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