FROM FRAMING TO FLAMING IN THE CROSS-THEOLOGICAL DEBATE: HOW ARE CHRISTIAN PRINCE'S COMMENTARIES REPRESENTED THE QUR'AN ON YOUTUBE?

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Abstract

Christian Prince's (henceforth, CP) presence on YouTube opened a new chapter in Christian opposition actors who act as cross-theological debaters between Muslims and Christians who, for the previous two decades, were only dominated by Muslims. Through the narratives on YouTube, this Christian apologist tries to convince the public that the Qur'an contains contradictory statements as the holy book for Muslims. In response to such an issue, this research aims to investigate the construction of CP's interpretation, which highlights the authenticity of the Qur'an. Qualitative content and thematic analyses and the framing approach developed by William A. Gamson were employed. Findings suggest that the representation of CP's understanding of the Qur'an verses uses a decontextualization approach. Also, the vast knowledge of the Arabic language and literary translations further strengthen the narratives to convince the public of the allegations. However, instead of considering the historical context in understanding the scientific meaning of the Qur'an, this Christian apologist uses literal meaning as a framing device. This phenomenon has shown that cross-theological debates only provoke persistent inter-religious hatred and resentment. Therefore, such debates are inclined to trigger the propaganda of religious extremists.

Keywords: *Christian Prince; Framing to Flaming; The Cross-theological Debate; The Qur'an;YouTube*

Abstrak

Kehadiran Christian Prince (CP) di YouTube membuka babak baru peran aktor oposisi Kristen atau sebagai debator lintas teologi antara Muslim dan Kristen yang selama dua dekade sebelumnya hanya didominasi oleh Muslim. Melalui narasi-narasinya di YouTube, apologis Kristen ini mencoba meyakinkan publik bahwa Al-

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Qur'an mengandung pernyataan-pernyataan yang kontradiktif sebagai kitab suci umat Islam. Menyikapi persoalan tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji konstruksi tafsir CP yang menonjolkan otentisitas al-Qur'an. Analisis konten berisifat kualitatif yang dikemas secara tematik serta pendekatan Framing yang dikembangkan oleh William A. Gamson digunakan sebagai pendekatan primer dalam penelitian ini. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa representasi pemahaman CP terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an diterapkannya menggunakan pendekatan dekontekstualisasi. Selain itu, pengetahuan yang luas tentang bahasa Arab dan terjemahan sastra semakin memperkuat narasinya untuk meyakinkan publik tentang tuduhan tersebut. Namun, alih-alih mempertimbangkan konteks historis dalam memahami makna signifikansi atau substansi teks Al-Qur'an, apologis Kristen ini menggunakan makna literal sebagai perangkat framing-nya. Fenomena ini menunjukkan bahwa perdebatan lintas-teologis hanya memprovokasi kebencian dan dendam antaragama yang tidak berkesudahan. Karena itu, pola perdebatan tersebut cenderung memicu propaganda ekstremis.

Kata kunci: Christian Prince; *Framing to Flaming*; Debat Lintas Teologi; Al-Qur'an; YouTube.

مستخلص

ان حضور كريستيان برينس على موقع يوتيوب يفتح فصلاً جديدًا في دور المعارضين المسيحيين الذين يمارسون المناظرات والجدل في العقائد الدينية بين المسلمين والمسيحيين لأن المناظرين في العقائد الدينية طيلة العقدين الماضيين أكثرهم من المسلمين. ويسعى كريستيان برينس من خلال مناظراته هذه إلى إقناع الجمهور بأن القرآن فيه تناقض. و جاءت هذه الدراسة كرد على كريستيان برينس الذي يستهدف اصالة القران الكريم من خلال تفاسير واهية. وتستخدم هذه الدراسة تحليل المحتوى النوعي بالمقاربة التشكيلية التي قدمها وليام أ. جامسون. وتشير نتائج البحث إلى أن فهم كريستيان برينس للايات القرآنية ليس فهما قاصرا بعيدا كل البعد عن السياقات. ويمكن عزو ذلك الى قلة معرفته باللغة العربية وأدائها. وهذا يؤكد للجمهور بأنه يقدم المعاني الحرفية في تفسير النصوص القرآنية ولا يهتم بالسياقات التاريخية في فهمها. هذا وان اظهار الجدل العقدي في وسائل الاعلام لا بد من أن يؤدي إلى الكراهية بين الأديان. واذا ما استمر هذا الجدل المقيت بالظهور في وسائل الاعلام فانه لا محالة سينشر التطرف في العالم الامر الذي يقودنا الى صراع الاديان.

الكلمات الرئيسيّة: كريستيان برينس؛ تأطير إلى المشتعل؛ جدل بين العقائد الدينية؛ القرآن؛ يوتيوب

A. INTRODUCTION

The cross-theological debate represented by missionaries was the forerunner of manufacturing terrorism, because the debate was only projected to corner and denigrate the theology of religions.[1] In fact, interfaith dialogue aims to exchange views on religious topics based on symmetrical exchanges of thought, creating mutual understanding between people of

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[1] Catherine Cornille, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, vol. 120 (Chichester: Wiley Online Library, 2013), pp. 20-33.

different religions and engaging in cooperation to achieve that goal.[2] Unfortunately, such religious phenomena are being displayed by missionaries on social media as if they had been satisfied if they could monopolise the truth and bring down other religious prestige. If the latter half of the 20th century was dominated by Muslim missionary actors such as Ahmad Deedat and Zakir Naik, then in the early 21st century, Christian missionary actors began using the anonymous identity of Christian Prince (CP). Through various social media services, mostly the YouTube platform. CP appears to show the public that not only Muslims can understand the Bible's weaknesses, but they can also show the weakness of the Qur'an as scripture.

The phenomenon of cross-theological debate has existed since the birth of religion itself,[3] especially between Muslims and Christians. History has recorded that since the meeting between Islam and Christianity, which began in the 15th century (7th century AD), the debate between the two religions continues to this day, both through oral and written interactions.[4] The involvement of orthodox groups in each religion tends to use cross-theological debate as a stage for theological, political, and economic domination.[5] Even though such debates revolve around classical themes, they still exist in the contemporary era.[6] Muslim missionaries challenged the divinity status of Jesus in the concept of monotheism, while Christian missionaries challenged the status of the Messiah in the Prophet Muhammad as the fulfillment of the message of the end of time.[7]

On internet social media, such debates are initiated by debaters from Muslim and Christian missionaries, mainly those spread through YouTube platform. It was revealed by Jasbeer Musthafa that inter-theological debate videos often use videos titled 'Muhammad in the Bible' and 'Jesus in the Qur'an' as the most produced and distributed content by debaters through online social media spaces, including through the YouTube platform. Videos with

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[2] El bieta Rydz et al., "Readiness to Engage in Interreligious Dialogue Test–Internal Structure, Reliability and Validity," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 22, no. 5 (2019): 1–19, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1586861.

[3] Simon Theobald, "Faith, Interfaith, and YouTube: Dialogue, or Derision?," *Literature & Aesthetics* 19, no. 2 (2011): 326–42.

[4] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islamic-Christian Dialogue: Problems and Obstacles to Be Pondered and Overcome," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 11, no. 2 (2000): 213–27.

[5] Theobald, "Faith, Interfaith, and YouTube: Dialogue, or Derision?"

[6] Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif: Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama* (Bandung: Mizan Publishing, 1999), p. 95.

[7] Henry Preserved Smith, "The Apologetic Interpretation of Scripture in Islam and in Christianity," *The Journal of Religion* 4, no. 4 (1924): 361–71. See, M. Darrol Bryant, "Can There Be Muslim-Christian Dialogue Concerning Jesus/Isa?," in *Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Promise and Problems*, ed. M. Darrol Bryant and S. A. Ali (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1998), 161–175. See, R. Landes, "What Happens When Jesus Doesn't Come: Jewish and Christian Relations in Apocalyptic Time," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. 1 (2002): 241–274. See, H. Suermann, "Muhammad in Christian and Jewish Apocalyptic Expectations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 5, no. 1 (1994): 15–12, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09596419408721018.

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such titles tend to negate the truth of the theological beliefs held by each debater.[8] Responding to this phenomenon, Md. Sayeed Al-Zaman revealed that the mediatization of religious discourse under the guise of inter-theological debate narratives often uses the format of framing narratives that lead to flaming attitudes.[9] The interests in religious conversion trigger the attitude of the debaters.[10] This condition causes the vulnerability of social conflict amid interfaith relations in the digital world.

The majority of studies show that the tendency of religious patterns presented by the internet community on social media leads to a crisis of tolerance. David Westerlund, Brian Larkin, Theobald, and Samadia Sadouni looked at Ahmed Deedat's role as the first Muslim theologian to debate directly with Christian theologians in public. However, his appearance has caused discord between religious communities, especially in Africa and Europe.[11] Likewise, Maziah Mustapha and Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak reveal in their critical notes that Zakir Naik's preaching style is too aggressive, which seems to denigrate the theologies of religions other than Islam.[12] None of these previous studies has attempted to link it as a precursor to inter-religious violent conflict. There is a proliferation of diverse, contradictory, and even starkly contrasting opinions about Islam on YouTube. Some people express the most outspoken stereotypes and prejudices about Muslims, while others criticise religion in a constructive and interesting way while promoting Islam.[13] This is why the discussion about the relationship between religion and social media does not only act as a publication medium but also as a medium for dogmatization.

Previous research has been limited to the study of conflicts arising from cross-theological debates. This article is more specific in looking at the framing construction of the

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[8] Jasbeer Musthafa, "Mediation and Muhammad's Message: Characteristics of Online Islamic Evangelism Consumed by Indian Youth," *Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia* 16, no. 1 (2014): 13–24.

[9] Md Sayeed Al-Zaman, "Social Mediatization of Religion: Islamic Videos on YouTube," *Heliyon* 8, no. 3 (2022): e09083.

[10] Budiawan Budiawan, "New Media and Religious Conversion Out of Islam Among Celebrities in Indonesia," *IKAT: The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3, no. 2 (2020): 189–99.

[11] David Westerlund, "Ahmed Deedat's Theology of Religion: Apologetics Through Polemics," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 3 (2003): 263–78. See, Brian Larkin, "Ahmed Deedat and the Form of Islamic Evangelism," *Social Text* 26, no. 3 (2008): 101–21. See, Theobald, "Faith, Interfaith, and YouTube: Dialogue, or Derision?" See, Samadia Sadouni, "Ahmed Deedat, Internationalisation, and Transformations of Islamic Polemic," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43, no. 1 (2013): 53–73.

[12] Maziah Mustapha and Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, "A Critical Appraisal of Zakir Naik's Islamic Evangelism," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 15, no. 1 (2019): 71–83.

[13] Lela Mosemghvdlishvili and Jeroen Jansz, "Framing and Praising Allah on YouTube: Exploring User-Created Videos about Islam and the Motivations for Producing Them," *New Media & Society* 15, no. 4 (2013): 482–500, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812457326. See, Amanda Jo Ratcliff, Josh McCarty, and Matt Ritter, "Religion and New Media: A Uses and Gratifications Approach," *Journal of Media and Religion* 16, no. 1 (2017): 15–26, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/15348423.2017.1274589.

Qur'an interpretation narratives carried out by Christian Prince on YouTube and its influence on interfaith social conflicts between Muslims and Christians on social media. Thus, this research aims to continue and, at the same time, complement previous studies with a focus on the formulation of problems that include, why is CP keen to criticize the teachings of Islam on YouTube Social Media? How does CP apply the framing strategy in highlighting the authenticity of the Qur'an through YouTube Social Media? How is the flaming effect of the framing interpretation produced by CP on YouTube social media?

The phenomenon of cross-theological debate as represented by Christian Prince through his narratives of interpretation of Qur'anic texts on YouTube is essential to be revealed to the public in order to know the impact of framing discourse that can have a flaming effect on the construction of CP narratives to convince its viewers that the interpretation of the Qur'an contains elements of contradiction. The study argues that CP is essentially motivated by hatred towards Muslims who often criticize other religions' theology, especially Christianity and Jews, through negative justification. The De-contextualization method became the primary capital for CP to convince its viewers of the premises of the justification narrative arguments are constructed. That is why the phenomenon explicitly demonstrates the impact of the theological debate practices of religions that cannot be relied upon as a contribution to achieving the goals of the teachings of religion itself. Its existence tends to encourage hateful propaganda in the name of religion, thus causing an ongoing extremism-violence movement.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Christian Prince (CP)

There is not much information that can be accessed regarding CP's identity. The name is simply an anonime (pseudonym) of a missionary or Christian apologia of Saudi Arabian nationality. Until now, his identity, educational background, and domicile were unknown. He hid his identity and used only a pseudonym in his various works, both in book form and on social media accounts, including his YouTube channel's name. So far, three papers or books have been produced by CP and published in digital format (Kindle Edition), including *The Qur'an and Science in Depth*, *The Deception of God*, and *Sex and Allah*. Some are written in several volumes. The three books have even been translated into several languages, including Indonesian, German, French, Swedish, Spanish, and Russian.

CP briefly reveals his dark childhood history on the https://www.patreon.com/ChristianPrince page and the foreword to his book (The Deception

of God). He revealed that his status as a minority (non-Muslim) was often the victim of bullying by his school teachers and friends in Saudi Arabia. Even his teacher refers to non-Muslims as "*najis*," or unclean, simply because they are not Muslims. Besides, they are also often labeled as "apes" and "pigs" using justifications from the text scriptures (Qur'an and Hadith). Because of these issues, CP has been motivated to study Islam. He doesn't want to become a Muslim, but he doesn't want to go through the pain of being excluded. He revealed that:

> "*When I was a child at school, I was told by my Muslim teachers during classroom that anyone who is not a Muslim, is dirty. The teacher had given me his own proof, taken straight from the Qur'an, that all Jews are either pigs or monkeys.*"[14]

CP explained that his efforts to get to that stage were not without due process. Instead, he went painstakingly through a serious learning process. On other occasions, CP also stated that his motivation was nothing but to prove to Muslims that the dogma they had long believed in to justify other religions nearly had a fierce polemic against them. Nevertheless, CP is more widely known through YouTube channels that actively spread its propaganda, and even its video recordings have been disseminated through various YouTube channels, especially in Indonesia.

2. The Cross-theological Debate on YouTube

The cross-theological debate sparked heated controversy in the early years of Islam, and the activity continues to this day.[15] In recorded world history, the tragic events that occurred because of theological contradictions are countless. The 9/11 attacks, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the conflict in the Middle East, the Muslim-Buddhist conflict in Thailand and Myanmar, and the Hindu-Muslim clashes in India and Bangladesh are real and current scenarios caused by theological conflicts between believers.[16] In fact, such contradictions are contrary to religious beliefs in general. Every concept of religious teaching teaches universal love and teaches sympathy for other humans, but in the name of religion, many heinous crimes result in clashes that end in the deaths of innocent people.[17]

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[14] Christian Prince, *The Deception of Allah Volume 1: A Book Muslim's Do Not Want You to Read*, Kindle Edi (Kindle, 2017).

[15] Theobald, "Faith, Interfaith, and YouTube: Dialogue, or Derision?"

[16] Mohammad Elius, Issa Khan, and Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, "Interreligious Dialogue: An Islamic Approach," *KATHA-The Official Journal of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue* 15, no. 1 (2019): 1–19.

[17] Ahmad Husni Haji Hasan, Kolej Islam Darul Ridzuan HEP, and Bukit Chandan, "An Islamic Perspective of the Interfaith Dialogue Amidst Current Inter-Religious Tensions Worldwide," *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 1, no. 1 (2011): 25–35.

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Although the dialogue strategy is **not** a new concept in overcoming the tension between religious adherents,[18] the fact is that inter-religious dialogue has never presented a truly neutral and objective dialogue but has always been coloured by polemics, apologetics, and egoism by each religious actor involved in the dialogue. in it. This is because their ultimate goal is the religious conversion of the participants.[19] Ideally, the purpose of dialogue and debate is to try to put aside differences and reach an understanding in order to avoid conflicts caused by ideological differences from the theological aspects of each religion's adherents.[20]

The cross-theological debate activities do not only take place in the real world (offline), but are also increasingly popularly discussed by netizens in cyberspace (online).[21] In Paolillo's research, it turns out that the most popular genre on social media after the music is a debate about religious theology, especially the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Its issue quickly spread and received enthusiastic responses from netizens on YouTube's social media.[22] Muslim and Christian missionaries tend to compete to monopolise each other's theological truths. Instead of the two finding an agreement to tolerate each other, it is not uncommon for verbal conflicts to end in cases of blasphemy.[23] Therefore, the issue of cross-theological debate is very likely to trigger the framing of information to gain sympathy from the public.

In general, framing is a conceptual or theoretical tool that can be used to view narrative production systems submitted by the producer and accepted for interpretation by consumers, in this case, netizens as viewers or YouTube social media users. Daniel A. Stout also revealed that religious issues are always related to framing methods. It is because religion is the most sensitive issue in the socio-cultural system. Framing of religious issues usually involves aspects of text and reality being made more prominent than the theological debate

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[18] Hilal Wani, Raihanah Abdullah, and Lee Wei Chang, "An Islamic Perspective in Managing Religious Diversity," *Religions* 6, no. 2 (2015): 642–56.

[19] Cornille, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*.

[20] Ruth Tsuria, "The Space Between Us: Considering Online Media for Interreligious Dialogue," *Religion* 50, no. 3 (2020): 437–54.

[21] Leonard Swidler, "Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking/Emotional-Intelligence/Competitive-Cooperation: The Most Authentic Way to Be Human," in *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 35–45.

[22] John C. Paolillo, "Structure and Network in the YouTube Core," in *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS 2008)* (Waikoloa: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE Xplore), (2008): 156–156.

[23] Sung-Min Kim, J. B. Banawiratma, and Dicky Sofjan, "Religious Pluralism Discourse in Public Sphere of Indonesia: A Critical Application of Communicative Action Theory to Inter-Religious Dialogue." Vol. 2. 2018.," *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 10, no. 2 (2020): 158–88.

communication system.[24] On the one hand, theological debate is used to show that one religion is true and the other isn't.[25] Therefore, it is appropriate to question the existence of the ability of inter-religious debate to realise a harmonious life among religious believers.

That framing action then tends to lead to flaming actions. Media experts have also categorized flaming behavior itself as part of "cyber-crime" or specifically included in the category of "cyber-bullying." That is why flaming here is not positioned as an approach or theory as much as framing; it is merely a synthesis of framing. Therefore, flaming is articulated as behavior that includes the use of narratives containing stereotypical elements, connotative labeling in the form of hate speech, insults, or threats posed by speakers to specific individuals or social groups (public audiences). However, although flaming belongs to the category of cyber-crime, it does not seem easy to prove that behavior because sometimes the producer's intent differs from the meaning that is understood by the recipient of the information, especially when the two are in different socio-cultural contexts.[26] Thus, this study does not justify the object being examined or establish its behavior as part of a criminal act but instead looks only at the narrative elements used to impact the vulnerability of inter-religious social relations.

3. Framing Analysis As A Socio-Linguistic Approach

In order to prove that the debate about the theology of religions can be stretched sideways by framing behavior, it is essential to reveal how the framing was applied to see the narrative construction performed by cp. The theological debate of religions involves not only observing the language system; it also involves social investigation. That is why this study chose a framing approach related to social studies. William A. Gamson constructed one framework of such framing approaches. The framing approach he took is very closely related to his expertise as a sociologist. That is why the theory of social movements heavily influences the framing approach he uses.[27] Gamson argues that at least three aspects link framing theory and social movements: first, aggregate frames, that is, framed issues, are constructed as social polemics that have a universal impact. The problems framed are not

[24] Daniel A. Stout and udith M. Buddenbaum, "Media, Religion, and Framing," *Journal of Media and Religion* 2, no. 1 (2003): 1–3, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1207/S15328415JMR0201_1.

[25] Robert M. Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (2007): 163–73, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x.

[26] Jiyeon Hwang et al., "Cyber Neutralisation and Flaming," *Behaviour & Information Technology* 35, no. 3 (2016): 210–24, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2015.1135191.

[27] Ariyanto Ariyanto, *Analisis Framing*, ed. Nurul Huda SA (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2002), p. 258.

partisan issues, but rather communal ones. Second, consensus frames, because the framed issues are directed at communal issues, then the resolution is collective; Third, "collective action frames," or ideal frames of identity and action that make it possible for people to work together to solve certain social problems or problems in any case.[28] This section contains three construction patterns, namely: injustice frames, or depictions of the existence of social inequality (injustice, inequality, etc.); agency frames, or construction of identity classification, who we are and who they are; and identity frames, or contrasting identity protrusions that distinguish between them and us.[29]

It is essential to know the orientation position of the framing approach initiated by Gamson. For Gamsong, the framing approach he adopted was not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing on an issue that became the research object. Instead, it was just a way to look into how an issue was put together through a framing process to see how the public's social relationships were affected.[30] The researcher's attitude towards putting his argument in the work of agreeing or disagreeing with the information presented by the object studied is a secondary issue. The researcher point of view is essential, but it is not necessary to put yourself in a certain place.[31] In essence, framing is simply an approach or a researcher's point of view to uncover the reasons for framing and its orientation in directing information presented to the public. That perspective is what Gamson termed a "package."[32]
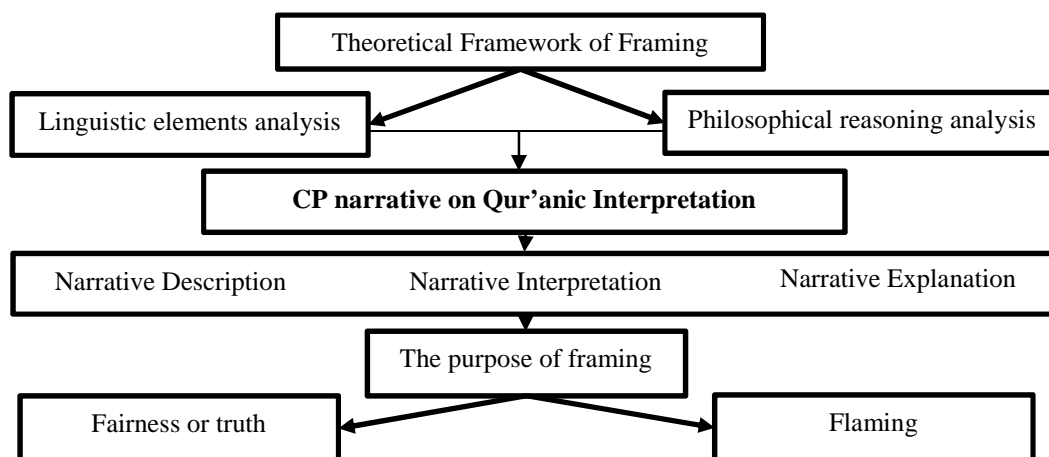
Figure 1. Gamson's Theoretical Framework of Framing

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[28] Charlotte Ryan and William A. Gamson, "Are Frames Enough?," in *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*, ed. Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, 3rd editio (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2015), 136–42.

[29] William A Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 10-8.

[30] William A Gamson, "News as Framing: Comments on Graber," *American Behavioral Scientist* 33, no. 2 (1989): 157–61, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764289033002006.

[31] Ariyanto, *Analisis Framing*.

[32] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 1 (1989): 1–37, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1086/229213.

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Gamson began applying the framing approach by first investigating the central idea or ideational meaning of a series of events that the narrative producer wanted to channel. Therefore, to make that happen, Gamson constructed two primary devices in framing analysis. The first is framing devices, which is a set of observations on the use of language or linguistic elements, either in a verbal or visual text composed of dictionaries, phrases, clauses, graphics, images, etc. Second, reasoning devices are philosophical reasoning to observe coherence between one language element and another. It aims to find the producer's strategy of constructing the framing of its narratives so that it appears that the arguments or premises it creates can reassure the public, as well as accept it as fairness or truth.[33] In this article, Gamson's theoretical framework of framing is used to understand the interpretation of Qur'an texts that follow the CP narrative.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed qualitative data based on content and thematic analysis approaches. The data were analyzed to find the framing process that CP takes when constructing its narratives to highlight the authenticity of the Qur'an's text.[34] The data used were CP videos that have been uploaded on the YouTube page. It was done by first investigating the number of videos available on YouTube. From the search results on September 12, 2020, the number of videos about CP was found to be no less than 20 million uploads, with various themes summarized in it. The findings were based on searches conducted using the help of the Tube Buddy v1.45.933 app through the keyword search "Christian prince":
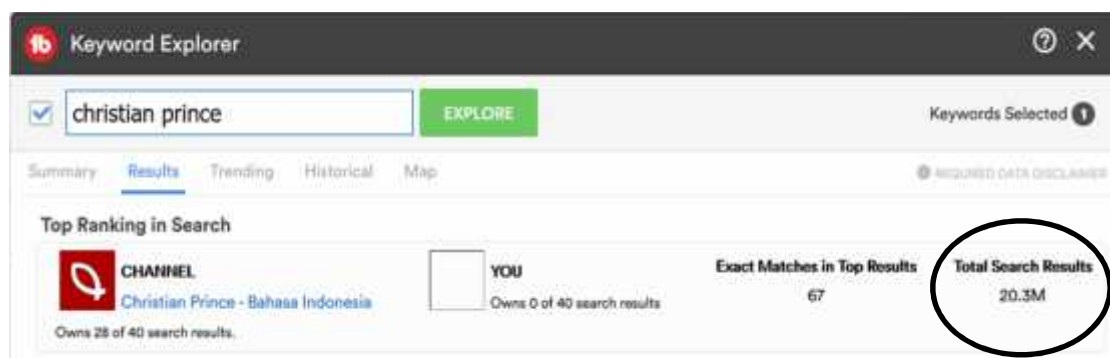
Figure 2: Number of uploading videos on CP

[33] William A Gamson, "Media Discourse as a Framing Resource," in *The Psychology of Political Communication*, ed. Ann N. Crigler (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 120–21.

[34] Norlidah Alias et al., "A Content Analysis in the Studies of YouTube in Selected Journals," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 103 (2013): 10–18.

Of the 20.3 million videos that have been uploaded, the study selected only the top two video themes from the search results using the keyword "Cristian Prince Al-Qur'an". The top two videos are titled *"Ayat-ayat Menyesatkan dalam Al-Qur'an",* (Misleading Verses in the Qur'an) and *"Al-Qur'an Kitab Sempurna atau Kontradiktif?"* (The Qur'an is Perfect or Contradictory?) The fundamental reason chosen is because the Qur'an is a holy book of Muslims that they claim is perfect, whereas, for CP, it contains contradictions. After downloading the video, the analysis was further analyzed using the framing approach framework initiated by Gamson. That approach is projected to find framing elements in it.[35] The framing elements can be seen in the following table;

Table 1: Elements of Framing from Gamson Perspective

Framing Devices	*Function*
Metaphors	Parables or supposition
Catchphrases	Interesting phrases, contrasts, stand out in one discourse, in the form of jargon or slogans
Exemplaar	Associate a frame with an example, a description/comparison that clarifies the frame
Depiction	Defocusing issues in the form of connotative, vocabulary, lexicon, labels
Reasoning Devices	
Roots	Case and effect of analysis
Appeals to principle	Basic premises and moral claims
Consequences	The effects or consequences obtained from the frame

In analyzing the data, any narrative that includes comments about CP's response to the Qur'an text description was represented, as it is to figure out what the main point of the narratives of the two videos is. Furthermore, those narratives were interpreted to see the framing element of devices. After discovering the elements, the narrative continues to be explored to find reasoning devices using philosophical reading analysis. Based on these three steps, it is used as a tool to conclude the findings. The findings were then discussed with various theoretical statements that had been expressed by previous researchers. It was done to ensure that the conclusions of this study as part of the scientific discursion process.

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[35] Gamson, "Media Discourse as a Framing Resource,".

D. DISCUSSION

1. Qur'an in CP Highlights

CP represents his critical narratives of the authenticity of the Qur'an through his YouTube channel (*The Arabian Prophet Channel*).[36] However, his study only used a live streaming service without storing video footage on his YouTube channel. Instead, the videos were distributed by various other YouTube channels that have recorded, even translated into Indonesian (*Christian Prince-Bahasa Indonesia Channel*).[37] That is why CP's identity is difficult to access because the presentation technique he presents does not display his face, but rather only his voice so that viewers can only watch the screen show of the Qur'an and its translation in English. CP explains the text and translations' contradictions through the screen view that he commented on using English. The visualization of the Qur'an's verse and its translation in English is displayed through access to the website-based digital Qur'an (https://www.quranwow.com). The translated version used on the website is a translation of the Qur'an of Muhammad Ali, although in some places, CP also sometimes criticizes the translation.

In addition to representing his criticism of the Qur'an through his descriptions, CP has also in several videos, openly challenged Muslims to participate in dialogue or argue with him. The challenge was certainly responded to by some Muslims who contacted him by phone, countering CP's argument. Others only respond via chat on the video comments page, but CP does not respond directly. He only offends them in other video exposures. The telephone debate took place without moderators, so it appeared as an unscientific debate. Some of the debates ended in mutual defame, while others ended with CP's success in influencing its debate. One of CP's capitals that is able to conquer his debate opponents is his ability to speak Arabic. In fact, it is not uncommon for his debate opponents to not mastering Arabic, so they were silent when CP began challenging them to speak Arabic. Of course, his ability was gained through his persistence in studying Islam seriously. However, when carefully observed from CP exposure, it is found that the focus of the study is critical of the text of the Qur'an, so it is rare to find an analysis that looks at the historical context. Here are three videos used in this study to find framing patterns used by CP in highlighting the authenticity of the Qur'an;

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[36] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOllN2W9yT4ZYaSgTkqzhhg (accesed, 02 February 2021).

[37] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqsZXftw_JQxas8XsMcnKwg (accesed, 02 February 2021).

2. CP Narrative on "The Qur'an Is a Perfect or Contradictory Book?"

2.1. Narrative Description

In the 31.00-minute video, CP claims that god himself who asserts the Qur'an has contradictions. It is based on Q. /4:82 "*A-fal yatadabbar n al-Qur' n wa-law k n min 'indi ghair All h, lawajad f h ikhtil fan kath ran*" (Do they not consider the Qur'an [with care]? Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy). According to CP, the verse is a rule that is subconsciously revealed by the Qur'an that there are contradictory verses. Furthermore, CP also explained that it is enough to find only one of the Qur'an's contradictory verses to claim the imperfection of the Qur'an. To prove his claim that the Qur'an is a series of contradictory editorials, CP proposed the term Islam in the Qur'an which is considered a religion for the whole universe. The investigation starts at Q. 13:37 "*Wa-ka lika anzaln h ukman 'arabiyan...*" (Thus have We revealed it to be a judgment of authority in Arabic...), Q. 12:2 "*Inn anzaln h Qur' nan 'arabiyan la'allakum ta'qil n*" (We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an, in order that ye may learn wisdom), Q. 20:113 "*Wa-kaz lika anzaln h Qur' nan 'arabiyan...*" (Thus have We sent this down - an arabic Qur'an...), Q. 6:92 "*Wa-h dh kit bun anzaln hu mu addiqun al-ladh baina yadayh wa-liyunzir umm al-Qur ' wa man aulah...*" (And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming [the revelations] which came before it: that thou mayest warn the mother of cities and all around her...). CP articulates the verses as legitimizing that the Qur'an applies only to Arabic-speaking communities. The verses according to CP contradict the verses in Q. 21:107 "*Wa-m arsaln ka ill ra matan li al-' lam n*" (We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.).

CP attempts to speculate that if the Qur'an is passed down to humankind universally, then why should it be restricted only to Arabic? In fact, of the many millions of Muslims who live in today's world, only a small number can understand and use Arabic well. In response to the argument, one Muslim responded to CP's statement on the video's comments page by stating, "Islam was sent to The Arabs first, that's way, but it's for everyone". In response to the comment, CP noted that "the argument seemed funny and stupid". CP then quoted Q. 6:92 to claim that the Qur'an was revealed as a warning to the people of Mecca and its surroundings only. CP explained that Mecca was just a small village, so how could Mecca be transformed into an international city. Maybe it's because Mecca has become "Las Vegas" or a business center for Muslims. Therefore, CP asserts that it makes no sense from the small town; it is then understood to have represented the entire region of the world universally. That description underlies CP's claim that the text of the Qur'an itself contradicts each other. In

one place, it limits the landscape of the Qur'an explicitly, but in another, it mentions that the teachings of Islam are for all nature. Here's CP's editorial excerpt;

> **Data 1**: "*...The funny hate the translated the middle of the cities Mecca is a city?, since when?, like now, yeah it's big because it's become "Las Vegas" for the muslims, but Mecca is a small town in the middle of nowhere. And what is around it? Let us see what is around Rome? Beijing? Tokyo? I mean, what is Mecca?*"

> **Data 2**: "*Let me show you something which muslims they will bite their tongue hoping they can take this verse from the Qur'an.*"

> **Data 3**: "*That is very funny because it didn't say here we send it to the Arab first and then forever, but you know it says we send it to the Arab and around it, that said this we send you as a warner for those and here, we see the first contradiction.*"

> **Data 4:** "*This is Qur'an, is it stupid? I agree because this is a clear contradiction.*"

> **Data Sources:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOllN2W9yT4ZYaSgTkqzhhg (06:13-09:46 Minute).

2.2. Narrative Interpretation

The element of metaphorical framing appears in that narrative in the clause section from Data 1 and Data 2. Both clauses also point to CP's satire on the notion that Mecca's city seems to be considered a global representation. According to him, how can it be understood that the Qur'an and its downed teachings are devoted to the people of Mecca and its surroundings, then claimed to be universal teachings? In that section, CP also uses exemplar framing by associating the city's context in the classical era with the town's context in the modern era. Based on that premise, CP claims that the verses are confusing, indicating an element of contradiction in them. Furthermore, CP assesses how it is possible to unite two narratives that, on the one hand, the Qur'an mentions the Prophet Muhammad sent for all nature, but on the other hand, the Qur'an claims its teachings to be applied to certain regional landscapes (Arabic). That's evident in the clause from Data 3. Thus, according to CP, it is difficult for logic to unite the two narratives. In the end, CP asserts by using the framing depiction element to refer to the Qur'an as a "stupid" book and assures that the Qur'an does contain contradictory narratives. It appears on data 4.

2.3. Narrative Explanation

CP attempts to relate to banging on two concepts of Qur'an verses, one is micro, and the other is macro. Q. 13:37, Q. 6:92 and Q. 12:2, basically in micro contests, while Q. 21:107 is in a macro context. When referring to the book of interpretation of the context of the decrease in Q. 13:37 and Q. 6:92, it is found that the verse responds to the issue of the transition of the *qibla* of Muslims from Bait al-Maqd s (Palestine) to masjid al-Haram

(Mecca). When the Jews in Medina questioned it, it was revealed that every religion has its *qibla* in the context of its existence. Hence, the *qibla* for Muslims in Mecca, because the Prophet sent is in the Arab territory. Therefore, Q. 13:37 is not in the macro context or teachings of Islam as a whole, but instead in the context of the issue of *qibla* alone.[38] So is Q. 12:2 is also in a micro context. The verse asserts that God chose Arabic as the language of the Qur'an; it was because the culture faced in those days was Arabic. That made it easier for them to understand its content.[39] Logically, of course, it is fair because the whole scripture that goes down is certainly by the language used by the early society it faced. When the question arises that claim, does the doctrine apply locally? The answer, of course, is no. A language is dynamic and can be learned by anyone and from any nations. The advantage of retaining one language (the original language) is that the context still refers to the tradition of the language used, so it is not confusing to track the historical context of the doctrine's origin. But if the language of a doctrine changes, then it can be that the root meaning of the doctrine can also change. It is this paradigm that seeks to be maintained in the text of the Qur'an.

It differs from Q. 21:107, which explains the macro context for placing the Prophet Muhammad's position as a mercy to all nature, both those who believe and those who disbelieve. For those who believe, there is a guarantee of salvation. While those who disbelieve are not afflicted by the world's punishment, as were the earlier generations.[40] The roots of CP's argument are due to its conclusion about contradictory verses of the Qur'an due to its observations being framed only as textual, regardless of historical context. The premises it constructs only display snippets of verses and associate them outside of the historical context that accompanies the text (Qur'an). The consequences of such construction seem to reveal contradictory relationships between verses of the Qur'an. Whereas historically, each has a different setting.

3. CP Narrative on "Misleading Verses in the Qur'an"

3.1. Narrative Description

CP began its review by arguing that Islamic teachings are a confusing tradition. It started when the Prophet Muhammad was asked about a matter, and then he forbade to ask about it. According to CP, such an answer is confusing because Muslims themselves are

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[38] Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Amrū b. Aḥmad Az-Zamakhsyarī, *Al-Kasysyāf 'an Ḥaqāiq Gawāmiḍ at-Tanzīl*, (Beirut: Dār Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1986), vol 2, p. 522.

[39] Muḥammad b. Jarīr a-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Ayi al-Qur'ān*, (Beirut: Mu'assasah ar-Risālah, 2000), vol. 15, p. 551.

[40] *Ibid,*, vol. 18, p. 552.

banned from asking anything from the Qur'an. In that position, CP claims that Muhammad did not know the answer, stating, "don't ask me anything, I don't know anything." CP showed his statement by displaying a snippet of verse from the Qur'an Q. 5:101, "O ye who believe! Ask not of things which...." Furthermore, CP also proved that Muhammad was the lead actor behind the production of verses of the Qur'an. That argument, he pointed to in the editorial that he articulated not all verses of the Qur'an can be known their meaning except that only God knows it. The verse he intended was Q. 3:7, "... none knows its interpretation except Allah...." CP uses these verses to prove that Islam's teachings are confusing indeed because perhaps Allah sends down his verses as guidance while God himself knows its meaning, and Muslims are forbidden to question it. According to him, that is concrete evidence that Muhammad only makes the Qur'an to protect his inability to answer Muslim questions about him. Here's an excerpt of his statement;

> **Data 5:** "You are making a lecturer, and then, you said a name whatever you know, and they said to you who is this guy? God told me that there are some verses in the Quran nobody knows what they mean except Allah; nobody knows what they mean except Allah".

> **Data 6:** "*This book a brother is full of many medicines nobody knows what they mean and the one who will use them is the one who has sick in his heart*."

> **Data Sources:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqsZXftw_JQxas8XsMcnKwg (00:51-03:05 Minute).

3.2. Narrative Interpretation

When carefully examined from the narrative excerpts, CP's use of metaphorical elements is found in framing the issue of the authenticity of the Qur'an. It can be seen in the clause from data (5). The parable shows how CP invites the audience to illustrate a *da'i* explaining the Qur'an as a clue. However, when he is asked the meaning of a verse, He only answers it, "only God knows its meaning." That narrative then becomes the climax of the message highlighted by CP to claim that the Qur'an contains confusing editorials. That narrative appears in the clause "the Qur'an says that Allah has sent verses in the Quran if you listen to them if you believe in them you are going to be misled". The narrative shows the catchphrases element of framing to represent the meaning of contrast. Such framing can also be part of the exemplar and depiction elements that CP may have intentionally performed. The verses he mentions are not displayed and discussed comprehensively or holistically but are only partially examined. Please note, that the verses of the Qur'an are not stand alone, but rather are interconnected with each other (*yufassir ba' uh bi-ba'*) or in the context of the

representation of the story (storyline). Q. 5:101, for example, which is explaining the context of the story of someone who asked the Prophet Muhammad about the purpose of God's commandment to sacrifice. That is the revelation of Allah, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise. In the later verses, the Qur'an shows that such questions have also occurred from previous (religious) peoples. But when they were cleared, they were reluctant to do so.

The same thing also happens when CP explains Q. 3:7. From the description, CP appears to reverse the paragraph's editorial by stating that data (6). Basically, the verse is explaining that the Qur'an contains two types of verses, *mu kam t* or Qur'an verses whose meaning can be clearly understood, and *mutasy bih t* or verses of the Qur'an that have a metaphorical meaning so that the verse can only be understood through the scientific reasoning process. In its entirety, the verse states, "...*Wa-m ya'lamu ta'w lahu ill All h, wa al-rasikh n fi al-'im yaq l n amann bi-m anzal All h ...*" (And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. But those firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All [of it] is from Allah." And no one will be reminded except those of understanding). Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the interpretation of this verse still reaps polemics. At the very least, most scholars agree that the mutas*y bih t* verses can be understood if excavated using scientific reasoning.

3.3. Narrative Explanation

CP, in no way, explains the historical context of the two verses of the Qur'an, which it uses as legitimacy to refer to the Qur'an as a "confusing" scripture. Every text, be it human-made text or the text of revelation, certainly has two sides. An easy-to-understand side is textual, and a side that requires scientific reasoning is closely related to the historical context of the emergence of a text.[41] CP does not consider the explanation of this at all, so it tends to justify verses of the Qur'an by referring to literal translations. That is where CP's use of roots or causal relationships is constructed. The basic premise built by CP is to string together two verses of the Qur'an as if they were two interconnected parts, whereas they represent different contexts. Q. 5:101 to respond to questions that, when answered, do not change one's faith. As for Q. 3:7 represents that some of the verses of the Qur'an can be polemical when only understood (textual-literal). Thus, understanding the verses of *mutasy bih t* requires scientific reasoning. God is all-knowing and all-knowing. People are simply trying to understand it based on the modality of the construction of knowledge they have. It is undoubtedly fair in

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[41] Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London & New York: Routledge Publishing, 2006), p. 3.

the discursus of interpretation,[42] because it is only the author of the text that best understands the ideal meaning of the book he created. As for the consequences of such a series of constructions used by CP, it does seem confusing, as it only strings together text regardless of the historical context of the Verses of the Qur'an it represents.

4. The Social Religious Impact on Cross-theological Debate on YouTube

Radically, Islam has prohibited the act of flaming, especially in the context of cross-theological debate discourse. This is as stated in Q. 6: 108 "*And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge....*" The cross-theological debate has not only taken place in the form of face-to-face but has also transformed in digital communication.[43] That appears to be from the cross-theological debate activities presented by CP via YouTube. The activity was not separated from the dominance of Ahmad Deedat and Zakir Naik, who has so far represented their criticism of Bibel. That motivation is why CP participated in the contest to display its criticism of the Qur'an. However, the religious debate that they showed did not change; it just matched each other between one concept of religious theology and another, so that it seemed to dominate each other instead of accommodating each other.

Pierre Charentenay revealed that one of the causes of the emergence of terrorism is the determination of religious identity through the conflict of ideology. Such a phenomenon is prone to triggering embryos of terrorism because it can provoke outrage for any religious adherent who is passionate about their religious theology.[44] Therefore, Charentenay offers that the most useful place to build peace for religions is interfaith dialogue at the local schools, cities, and churches. Global dialogue has no impact on the ground if there are no actions and relationships at the local level.[45] However, suppose the interfaith dialogue in question is focused only on theological aspects. In that case, it will not find a meeting point of interreligious understanding since each has its theological claim that only every believer understands.

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[42] Aṭ-ṭabar, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Ayi al-Qur'ān*, vol. 6, p. 170.

[43] Anna Neumaier, "The Big Friendly Counter-Space? Interreligious Encounter within Social Media," *Religion* 50, no. 3 (2020): 1–22, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2020.1754605.

[44] Mustapha and Razak, "A Critical Appraisal of Zakir Naik's Islamic Evangelism." See, Hartmut Behr and Lars Berger, "The Challenge of Talking about Terrorism: The EU and the Arab Debate on the Causes of Islamist Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 4 (2009): 539–557.

[45] Pierre Charentenay, "Religions, Terrorism and War," *Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Ślaska Opolskiego* 37, no. 2 (2017): 65–75.

Figure 3: The cross-theological debate produced terrorism opportunities

Fachin and Piovesan concluded that the concrete measures to tackle terrorism are respecting and developing human rights and religious freedom.[46] Terrorism can be dealt with if every religious person is committed to mutual respect for human rights. In fact, each religion's private (theological) rights are not to be reviewed as comparative material for other faiths. That can be prone to triggering framing practices because it is impossible for a person to claim the truth of religious theology other than his own religion subjectively. In fact, it sometimes leads to flaming practices (figure 3). This is also what CP shows in its description when assessing the authenticity of the Qur'an editorials. This is due to his ignorance of the technique or method of understanding the Qur'an, as has been constructed by the scholars *(mufassir)* of the Muslims. The Qur'an is understood by not only depending on the textual meaning but also understood using its historical context. This is as revealed by Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd in *Isykaliy t al-Qir 'ah wa liy t al-Ta'w l* which states that although every *mufassir* cannot release the subjectivity of his interpretation. However, the demand to understand the Qur'an using various scientific devices is an invitation in interpreting it.[47] Furthermore, in his other work *Mafh m an-Na : Dir sah f 'Ul m al-Qur' n*, Abu Zayd also revealed that to understand *na* or the text of the Qur'an, it is not enough to simply quote the opinions of scholars (taken for granted), but rather to need critical review using scientific devices, both systematic grammatical language and historical and sociological studies in it. This is because each verse of the Qur'an has its social context.[48]

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[46] Melina Girardi Fachin and Flávia Cristina Piovesan, "Human Rights, Religion and Terrorism," *Estudos Teológicos* 60, no. 1 (2020): 156–74, https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.22351/et.v60i1.3894.

[47] Na r mid Ab Zayd, *Isykaliy t al-Qir 'ah wa liy t at-Ta'w l* (Beirut: Al-Markaz a - aq f al-'Arab , D r al-Bai ', 2014), pp. 14-20.

[48] Na r mid Ab Zayd, *Mafh m an-Na : Dir sah fi 'Ul m al-Qur' n* (Beirut: Al-Markaz a - aq f al-'Arab , D r al-Bai ,' 2014), pp. 9-12.

FROM FRAMING TO FLAMING IN THE CROSS-THEOLOGICAL DEBATE: HOW ARE CHRISTIAN PRINCE'S COMMENTARIES REPRESENTED THE QUR'AN ON YOUTUBE?

E. CONCLUSION

Cross-theological debate on YouTube cannot solve the gap in interfaith relations. Instead, it can only stir up hatred that can lead to extremist propaganda ideologically and practically. That is what CP experienced, especially those born of her bitter experiences as a child. He lives under psychological distress, marginalized by Islamic dogma that claims other religions are problematic. Through these circumstances, CP is motivated to prove that the Qur'an, which Muslims have claimed to perfect, also contains various contradictions. The practice of framing by merely reducing the meaning of the Qur'an textually, regardless of the context, is very likely to cause flaming behavior. It is flaming to trigger an ongoing polemic of hatred and anger, making interfaith relations difficult to realize peace. Suppose it is allowed to continue to develop. In that case, it does not rule out the possibility that there will be another CP figure in the future, whether from Muslims, Christians, Jews, or other religions. Therefore, this research offers a solution to stop cross-theological debate in the theological realm because that is the root of the trigger for interreligious conflict.

This research is still limited to the state of theological debates among religions, so it has not yet come evidence of a real connection between discourse and the emerging terrorism movement. It is hoped that further research can accommodate this so that, in the future, the production of hateful narratives against religions can be compromised, especially in virtual communication.

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