

The Discourse of Writing Press History: Mochtar Lubis' Social Criticism and Editorials in *Harian Indonesia Raya* 1968–1974

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Abstract. This essay examines the language used in the editorials published by *Harian Indonesia Raya* between 1968 and 1974 to discuss Mochtar Lubis's social criticism in the context of writing press history. The conventional historical methodology was employed, in conjunction with discourse analysis of editorials from *Harian Indonesia Raya*. Rarely is the discourse of writing press history based on an editorial plan authored by an individual in a newspaper. Typically, the editorial plan is a compilation of thoughts from the editorial board regarding the main highlights of the newspaper. However, Mochtar Lubis's personal journalism in *Harian Indonesia Raya* is exceptionally influential. The editorials published by *Harian Indonesia Raya* were marked by the influence of Mochtar Lubis, a renowned critic of the Indonesian press.

Keywords: *discourse, mochtar lubis, social criticism, press history, Indonesian press.*

1. Introduction

There are various categories of editorials, including advocacy editorials, problem-solving editorials, reward editorials, brief editorials, cartoon editorials, and short editorial comments [21]. Editorials present legal perspectives and the viewpoints of journalistic media on current, noteworthy, and sometimes contentious societal matters. The editor's opinion serves as the authoritative voice that reflects the viewpoint and legal perspectives of the journalistic institution. The editorial voice represents the unified perspective of journalists and staff members inside the press organization, rather than the individual viewpoints of those on the editorial board or in the production and circulation department. The author's identity is omitted from the editorial as it serves as a representative voice of the press institution. In the evolution of the Indonesian press, Rosihan Anwar observes a shift from the earlier ideal of objective reporting. He identifies a phenomenon that emerged during his time as a response to significant events, specifically, the transfer of Dutch sovereignty to Indonesia at the Round Table Conference (RTC) on December 27, 1949. This marked the beginning of an era characterized by personalized journalism in Indonesia. Mochtar Lubis argues that personal journalism explicitly highlights the editor-in-chief's subjectivity in the media's journalistic output.

In the context of *Harian Indonesia Raya*, Mochtar Lubis was a prominent figure in the realm of personal journalism, as he authored nearly all forms of editorials, save for cartoon editorials. Mochtar Lubis single-handedly authored two-thirds of the thematic editorials for *Harian Indonesia Raya* between 1968 and 1974, as a result of this. [4] records indicate that Mochtar Lubis consistently appended three asterisks to the conclusion of his editorials, facilitating the process of retracing the origin of each editorial. Occasionally, he appended his name to specific editorials, thereby indicating his personal viewpoint more prominently than in other editorials [4]. The author is intrigued by the relationship between Mochtar Lubis and *Harian Indonesia*, specifically how Lubis' personal journalism influenced the editorial orientation of the newspaper. Lubis used his editorials as a form of social criticism to address the prevailing issues of the time.

The influence of personal journalism undoubtedly shapes the demeanor and disposition of the press in editorials and other journalistic outputs. Conversely, there exists an ideal framework for understanding the nature and disposition of the press, which is contingent upon its level of quality. For instance, the esteemed quality press or top-tier publications possess certain distinguishing traits. These include a consistent exercise of caution, adherence to established norms, a tendency towards conservatism, and a deliberate avoidance of direct criticism when crafting headlines. When formulating editorial strategies for prominent media outlets, political factors take precedence over sociological factors. In contrast, the middle press, sometimes known as the popular press, adopts a more direct and bold approach in crafting its headlines. If the upper echelon of the press gives priority to political considerations, then the middle or even lower tiers of the press opt to examine sociological issues while crafting editorials. This occurs due to the fact that the interests involved are significantly more intricate than those of the leading media outlets. The top press tends to be conservative and accommodating in reporting policies and expressing ideas and attitudes through official editorial channels due to their inclination towards more intricate interests. The press sector carries the risk of being financially supported by investors [21].

The press's stance in this theory, in comparison to *Harian Indonesia Raya*, is highly pertinent. This is evident from the circulation data and the manner in which it presents popular news elements that address social criticism across several domains. When analyzing the data, it is evident that *Harian Indonesia Raya* holds a prominent position as a popular press. This is evident from the circulation figures, which started at 20,000 copies per day when it was first published and increased to an average of over 22,000 copies per day in 1969. In the subsequent year, the circulation reached its highest point, ranging from 31,000 to 43,000. In 1970, *Indonesia Raya*, a national daily in Jakarta, attained a circulation of approximately 80,000 copies, ranking it sixth among all newspapers in terms of readership. According to circulation data from the administration of newspapers in the capital, the number of copies printed in June 1970 were as follows: *Merdeka* daily printed 82,000 copies, *Yudha* Sunday printed 80,000 copies, *Kompas* daily printed 75,000 copies, *Berita Yudha* daily printed 75,000 copies, *Sinar Harapan* daily printed 65,000 copies, *Indonesia Raya* printed 40,000 copies, *Angkatan Bersenjata* daily printed 35,000 copies, *Pedoman* daily printed 25,000 copies, and *Suluh Marhaen* and *Abadi* daily printed 20,000 copies each [21]

Subsequently, *Indonesia Raya* had a decrease in circulation, reaching an average of 26,000 copies per day in 1971, 23,000 copies in 1972, and 20,000 copies from January to May 1973. In 1972, *Indonesia Raya* had a circulation of 430,000 copies per day, which ranked it around seventh among the roughly 20 daily newspapers published in Jakarta. *Kompas* had a higher

circulation than the Chinese-language *Harian Indonesia*, *Pos Kota*, *Suara Karya*, and *Sinar Harapan*, which all had the same circulation. *Berita Buana* had a lower circulation than the aforementioned newspapers, and *Merdeka* had the lowest circulation among them all. However, the aforementioned newspapers include *Djakarta Times*, *Abadi*, *Harian Kami*, *Pedoman*, and *Nusantara*. The transition to offset printing resulted in a consistent growth, with the newspaper's daily circulation reaching 41,000 copies before its closure in January 1974 [21]. The circulation sales of *Harian Indonesia*, under the leadership of Mochtar Lubis, were notably intriguing. Lubis' incisive and substantial social critique, presented in his editorials and news items, resonated with readers, contributing to the popularity of *Harian Indonesia Raya*. The discussion of Mochtar Lubis and the *Indonesia Raya* daily is intriguing. During that period, the *Indonesia Raya* daily newspaper was highly regarded in the press industry, both in terms of news coverage and sales. However, it did not conform to the conventional notion of a top-tier press outlet, which often relies on financial backers. As a result, the newspaper had to exercise caution when reporting, particularly when it came to social criticism.

Mochtar Lubis' arrows of social critique in his study are not solely aimed at the government, but also at all national institutions engaged in social criticism, including Lubis himself. Naturally, this prompts the inquiry as to the necessity of Mochtar Lubis' social critique conveyed through the headlines of *Indonesia Raya Daily*. Politically, it can be seen as an early iteration of the New Order, as it sought to establish a new governmental structure that was sometimes referred to as a complete overhaul of the previous Old Order regime. Furthermore, in terms of academia, the individuals involved in the comprehensive rectification endeavors were anticipated to consist of technocrats from the academic sphere, as well as students and professionals specialized in their respective professions. Additionally, the impetus was expressed through the press, which was fulfilling its role as a means of social control over the system and engaging in social critique. Taufik Abdulah asserts that Mochtar Lubis' editorial serves as a genuine testament to the intellectual fervor of that era, concluding the academic discourse. Within the author's investigation, multiple papers have been identified as pertinent to the proposed subject matter. The objective of this research is to examine the ideas conveyed in journalistic texts, specifically editorials, which are the author's critical reflections on the prevailing circumstances and conditions that shape the zeitgeist of their time.

2. Literature Review

[13] book, titled "Journalism and Politics in Indonesia: A Critical Biography of Mochtar Lubis (1922–2004) as an Editor and Author", is the first mentioned. Furthermore, the book authored by Ignatius Haryanto in 2006 *Indonesia Raya Dibredel*, third, is the title of Aditia Muara Padiatra's history thesis from 2016. An analysis of corruption cases depicted in editorial cartoons is conducted, focusing on the period of 1968-1974 in the *Indonesia Raya Daily* during the early New Order era. Furthermore, Paulus Sulasdi conducted a political science thesis in 2001 at the University of Indonesia. The thesis focused on analyzing the development of *Kompas'* ideology toward reform, as reflected in its editorials under the presidency of Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie from May 1998 to October 1999.

[13] provides an account of the life of Mochtar Lubis, a journalist who played a significant role in shaping the understanding of Indonesia's history after gaining independence. This book analyzes the progression of the secular modernizing tradition in Indonesian media and journalism practice from 1945 onwards. It does so by critically evaluating the life of one of its most prominent and contentious figures. The initial section of the book focuses on the

personal experiences of Mochtar Lubis, starting with his upbringing as the offspring of a government employee to his transformation into a nationalist thinker throughout his early years. The latter sections of the book go into Mochtar Lubis' notable contributions as a prominent press and cultural personality during both the Old and New Order eras, solidifying his legendary status. The final segment examines his role as editor-in-chief.

Hill's approach draws inspiration from Thomas Couser's biography that focuses on the concept of the "vulnerable subject". Hill characterizes Mochtar Lubis, an editor-in-chief who experienced two significant regimes, as being primarily known for his opposition rather than his support. During the 1950s, he emerged as a vehement adversary of communism, radical nationalism, the prevailing party structure, and primarily, the escalating authority of President Sukarno. Undoubtedly, Sukarno emerged as the primary subject of his criticism, since he represented nearly all the qualities he deemed inferior. Mochtar viewed Soekarno as someone who sought to enhance his own importance, engaged in multiple sexual relationships, pursued physical pleasure, seized opportunities for power, lacked self-control, and displayed hypocrisy. Mochtar also believed that these personal flaws were closely linked to what he perceived as Soekarno's flawed political perspectives, which he considered to be feudal, irrational, irresponsible agitation, and pro-communist.

Ignatius Haryanto's book "Indonesia Raya Dibredel" employs a historical scientific approach in its writing methodology, supplemented by the author's expertise in political science, and further supported by the analysis of other scientific approaches. Ignatius Haryanto examines the relationship between the press and the government during the early New Order period, specifically from the start to the mid-1970s. The study focuses on the daily newspaper Indonesia Raya as a case study until understand this interaction. Ignatius Haryanto's multidimensional approach emphasizes the interplay between the press, power, and the specific objective under consideration. Ignatius Haryanto stated that understanding the role of the Indonesian press requires considering the broader context, including political power struggles and the influence of political-economic conditions. By examining these factors, one can better understand how internal dynamics within the press shape its unique characteristics within this framework. Without comprehending the circumstances that gave rise to them, the texts or writings generated by a newspaper become devoid of significance.

In Chapter 2, Ignatius composed a methodical essay examining the historical significance of the connection between the press and the government. This relationship originated with the advent of the press phenomenon in the Dutch East Indies, accompanied by certain rules that were implemented during that period. Chapter 4 examines the macroscope during the early 1970s, specifically focusing on the state of the Indonesian economy, various perspectives on Indonesia's economic progress, and the political tensions among the elite at that period. The events that transpired on January 15, 1974, hold significance in this context as they brought the life of Indonesia Raya to a halt. Chapter 5 elucidates the consequences of the events that occurred on January 15, 1974, on the Indonesian press, particularly the destiny of Indonesia Raya newspaper. Chapter 6 will contain both theoretical discourse and introspection.

Thesis Title: [2] The article "Visualization of Corruption Cases in Editorial Cartoons: Case Study of Indonesia Raya Daily in the Early New Order 1968-1974" explores the depiction of corruption cases using editorial cartoons. Aditia Muara Padiatra asserts that editorial cartoons played a crucial role as a means of socio-political oversight during the early New Order era. Specifically, they served as a platform for introspection when instances of misconduct, particularly corruption, were prevalent during that time. As visual editorials. Editorial cartoons

inherently mirror the policies and political stances of the media outlets in which they are published. Employing historical research methodologies augmented by the principles of communication semiotics.

The study examined the evolution of editorial cartoons in Indonesia Raya daily newspaper, focusing on their portrayal of corruption cases during the early period of the New Order regime until the 1974 Malari Event, which ultimately led to the newspaper's demise. The author explores the interconnections between many aspects involved in documenting the history of the daily Indonesia Raya via the lens of editorial cartoons. The elements influencing the perception of corruption in the newspaper Indonesia Raya include the editorial cartoons published, the attitude of the New Order government during that period, and the Malari incident.

Paulus Sulasdi conducted a political science thesis in 2001 at the University of Indonesia. The research focused on analyzing the development of Kompas' perspectives on reform during President Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie's administration, namely from May 1998 to October 1999. This study analyzes Kompas' perspectives on reform, as presented in the editorials of the national plan issued during President BJ Habibie's administration. The research undertaken employs qualitative research methods to provide a descriptive-explanatory analysis. The research is based on Kompas' vision of the transition phase, which is most clearly articulated in the editorial of the May 30, 1998 edition of this daily newspaper, namely on page 4. This study interprets the editorial as a reaction and portrayal of Kompas' "ideology" towards the transformations or fluctuations that took place during President BJ Habibie's rule, specifically in the political hierarchy of the country, society, and the national press community. Kompas defined reformasi as a swift yet incremental transformation, in line with well-defined objectives. Reform is conducted through peaceful and secure means, rather than as a gradual process or a revolution that upends all principles and dismantles all institutional frameworks. Kompas adopts reformism, which entails a strategy of incremental political, social, and economic transformation, rather than revolution.

3. Method

The research methodology employed in this study adheres to the historical research protocols outlined by Louis Gottschalk in his book *Mengerti Sejarah*, as translated by Nugroho Notosusanto. The initial step is to choose the subject of study, which is the discourse of writing press history. The subsequent step involves gathering data, specifically through heuristics, by collecting primary data in the form of headlines from the Indonesia Raya Daily between 1968 and 1974, as well as newspaper articles published during that period in the Indonesia Raya Daily and other contemporary dailies. During the process of gathering secondary material, the author extracted information from books and pertinent research reports pertaining to Mochtar Lubis and *Harian Indonesia*, as indicated in the bibliography. The third step involves conducting source criticism on primary and secondary data to assess its suitability as valid research material. This process, as described by Gottschalk, entails evaluating the source to establish its authenticity. The fourth phase involves analyzing the data and extracting the essential information relevant to this research. According to Gottschalk, this process entails selecting parts from sources that have been verified as authentic. The last stage entails composing the interpretation within the context of a press history article, or, as Gottschalk puts it, a synthesis of the sources we have scrutinized.

4. Findings and Discussion

Mochtar Lubis And The Indonesia Raya Daily

As stated by [5] Mochtar Lubis, the General Editor and Editor-in-Chief of Indonesia Raya newspaper, did not consistently need to isolate himself in his home or office in order to concentrate on the subject of his editorial. Frequently, he would compose the editorials while seated amidst the editors and reporters in the spacious, unenclosed newsroom with minimal separation. Occasionally, he utilizes a typewriter positioned atop a tall cabinet, measuring one meter in height, which houses the paperwork of the editorial secretariat. He composes his editorials in a standing position. The chamber beneath the sweltering tin roof on Jalan Suprpto, Cempaka Putih, Central Jakarta resounds with the rhythmic pounding of typewriters as writers strive to meet their deadlines. The tapping sound contrasts with the sound of intellectuals, who are unfurling long sheets of paper holding global news.

The publication of *Harian Indonesia Raya* occurred throughout two distinct periods: from 1949 to 1958 and from 1968 to 1974. The journal was established on December 29, 1949, just two days after the Dutch officially recognized the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Following a series of five short-term prohibitions in the Old Order era, the sixth ban resulted in the cessation of the daily publication on September 10, 1958. *Indonesia Raya* was revived under the New Order era on October 30, 1968, following a hiatus of over a decade. The initial location for the editorial and administrative offices was within the premises of the Sastra Kentjana printing company building, situated at Jalan Medan Merdeka Utara number 11, in close proximity to the Merdeka Palace. Subsequently, the newspaper acquired its own premises and printing facility in the Cempaka Putih region, commencing in early December 1970. However, the administrative department decided to lease an office space at Jalan Veteran I, namely at number 28, which is located a short distance to the east of Sastra Kentjana. This strategic location allows them to maintain proximity to the key hubs of company operations.

Mochtar Lubis, a co-founder of *Indonesia Raya* in 1949, assumed the role of editor-in-chief of the journal from its inception. Upon reestablishing the newspaper in 1968, he assumed the roles of both editor-in-chief and general manager. In the past, personal journalism was a customary practice in Indonesia. During this time, it was typical for the editor-in-chief to serve as the primary author of the editorial. This tradition can be traced back to Mochtar Lubis' contemporaries, such as Rosihan Anwar at *Harian Pedoman* and B. M Diah from *Harian Merdeka*. However, it is undeniable that Mochtar Lubis was widely regarded as the primary author of the headlines in *Harian Indonesia*. Atmakusumah, in the introduction to the book "*Mochtar Lubis' Headlines in Harian Indonesia Volume 1 & 2*," revealed that Mochtar Lubis himself wrote two-thirds of the total number of headlines published in *Harian Indonesia Raya*. The remaining one-third was written by the *Harian Indonesia Raya* team when Mochtar Lubis was absent or abroad. Atmakusumah suggests that the origin of this can be identified by examining the asterisk marks found beneath the headlines in the *Indonesia Raya* daily. However, it remains unclear how much of the total content was actually written by Rosihan Anwar and B.M. Diah, who are believed to be the main authors of the headlines in their respective dailies.

Mochtar Lubis, a renowned novelist and journalist, has meticulously documented numerous significant and captivating occurrences during the formative stages of the New Order's political, economic, social, and cultural advancement. During the second era of its publication,

he incorporated his contemplations and perspectives into the majority of the editorials of the daily Indonesia Raya, along with other written works. Mochtar Lubis's editorials were typically concise, and right from the outset, he directly addressed the topic at hand. During the period when Indonesia Raya was still being published, a member of the cabinet expressed to journalists that he had a preference for concise editorials, such as the ones featured in this newspaper, as they required less time to read.

According to [5], [6], & [9] Mochtar Lubis wrote two-thirds of the editorials in written form, while the remaining third consisted of graphic editorials produced by the media crew of Harian Indonesia Raya. Atmakusumah compiled and revised the editorials authored by Mochtar Lubis in Harian Indonesia Raya, organizing them into three separate series of published volumes. The themes were categorized into distinct sections within each of the three books. The initial installment covering internal politics and national matters spans a total of 439 pages. The second series consisted of 574 pages, covering a range of diverse themes. The first section delved into corruption and economic issues, spanning 344 pages. The second section focused on education and the younger generation, occupying 101 pages. The third section addressed legal problems, spanning 59 pages. Lastly, the fourth section explored the Indonesian Armed Forces, covering 37 pages. The third series consists of 636 pages. The first section, which focuses on cultural and social issues, spans 146 pages. The second section, dedicated to Jakarta Raya, covers 73 pages. The third section, dealing with international issues, extends to 173 pages. The fourth section, exploring mass media and Indonesia Raya, occupies 109 pages. The final section delves into the dispute between Indonesia Raya Daily and Merdeka Daily, spanning 28 pages. This is followed by a concise history of Indonesia Raya Daily from 1968 to 1973, which spans 30 pages. The book concludes with a personal profile of Mochtar Lubis and David T. Hill's perspectives on Mochtar Lubis.

An Analysis Of The Historical Development Of Press Writing

The author's proposed discourse aims to scrutinize the ideas conveyed through journalistic writing, specifically focusing on press headlines. Journalism is more than just news writing; it also includes the creation of headlines, opinions, and essays. These forms of expression allow authors to provide critical analysis of the circumstances, scenarios, and conditions that shape the current zeitgeist. The ideas conveyed in journalistic publications serve as primary sources that depict the conditions of a certain era, encompassing various aspects such as social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions. One of the most renowned phrases in history that encapsulates this notion is "let history be the judge". These headlines are reflective narratives in the form of social criticism by Mochtar Lubis. They represent an analytical reaction to current events and propose a problem formulation. The author conveys social criticism through his typical headlines in Harian Indonesia.

Harian Indonesia Raya is a national daily newspaper. This research focuses on the spatial aspect of where Harian Indonesia Raya is published (nationwide) and the temporal aspect of when headlines related to campus and students in Harian Indonesia Raya were written by Mochtar Lubis during the early New Order Era, specifically from 1968 to 1974. The New Order era commenced in 1968 with the appointment of Soeharto as president and concluded in 1974 with the occurrence of the Malari incident. In the beginning of 1968, Mochtar Lubis's headlines primarily concerned the reception of the recently established government. However, in 1974, Mochtar Lubis's headlines shifted their focus towards political events, culminating in the 1974 Malari incident, which ultimately led to the demise of the Indonesia Raya Daily

under Mochtar Lubis's leadership. The timeline features social criticism news specifically pertaining to campus and students, which were documented between 1969 and 1973. In the realm of methodology and writing theory, the historical science methodology is employed to incorporate communication science theory in the analysis of editorials, resulting in a comprehensive academic writing style known as the historiography of Indonesian press history.

The objective of this research is to analyze the ideas expressed in journalistic writing, specifically editorials by Mochtar Lubis, which serve as social criticism. The aim is to uncover the underlying meaning of these editorials and reconstruct historical events based on press headlines, aligning with the author's desired discourse on writing press history. An academic advantage of this research is the examination of historical events through press headlines, a practice that has been seldom undertaken in Indonesia. Essentially, it examines how the editorial provides readers with context and initial perspectives on the events of the time it was written, as well as how it is interpreted in the historical analysis of the series of events that took place between 1968 and 1974.

5. Conclusion

The majority of contemporary academic literature primarily examines Mochtar Lubis' personal life, his various roles in professions such as journalism, writing, and cultural studies, as well as the stance of *Harian Indonesia Raya* on political and corruption issues. However, the author suggests a novel research perspective that focuses on Mochtar Lubis' social criticism conveyed through the headlines, which served as a platform for expressing his academic, professional, and political viewpoints. Therefore, I suggest conducting academic research on the topic of writing press history, specifically focusing on the social criticism of Mochtar Lubis during the early New Order period. This research will analyze the headlines in *Harian Indonesia Raya* from 1968 to 1974. The author's proposal in this study revolves around addressing the underlying issues in writing and introducing a novel approach. The novelty lies in the author's exploration of themes that have not been extensively researched before. Additionally, the author suggests a theoretical framework for analyzing this research, encompassing communication and language science, as well as historical science. The author also employs a suitable historical science methodology to dissect and analyze the proposed research theme, including the use of historical explanation as part of the methodology.

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