

Media framing by kompas.id and republikan.id on the One-Piece flag controversy during Indonesia's 80th Independence Day celebration and the 2025 anti-government protest

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Abstract

This study analyzes how Kompas.id and Republika.id frame the controversy over the One-Piece flag raised during Indonesia's 80th Independence Day in 2025. The controversy sparked public debate between freedom of expression and respect for national symbols. Using a qualitative framing analysis model by Gamson and Modigliani, this research examines ten articles from Kompas.id and four from Republika.id to identify ideological tendencies in news construction. The results show that Kompas.id frames the issue as social expression and cultural creativity among the younger generation, while Republika.id interprets it as a moral and nationalistic violation. These differences reveal how each media's ideological orientation influences framing and how popular culture becomes a negotiation arena between modernity and moral values. This study contributes to media and cultural studies by highlighting how Indonesian media construct meaning around global popular culture within local moral and political contexts.

Keywords

Framing analysis, Media ideology, Popular culture, One-piece controversy, Nationalism

Introduction

Popular culture increasingly transcends its entertainment function and enters the realm of social and political discourse [1]. Produced and consumed by broad audiences, popular culture not only reflects social, political, and economic dynamics but also shapes public perceptions of contemporary issues. From the perspective of cultural studies, popular culture is characterized by its cross-border circulation, commercial nature, and diverse forms of representation that circulate globally [2]. In Indonesia, the controversy surrounding the raising of the One-Piece pirate flag during the 80th Independence Day commemoration in 2025 illustrates how fictional symbols can trigger national debate. What initially emerged as an expression of fandom evolved into a public issue involving

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questions of national identity, freedom of expression, and respect for state symbols. This phenomenon aligns with the view that popular culture functions not only as a medium of entertainment but also shapes public attitudes and behaviors regarding broader social issues [3]. The controversy began when a group of young people hoisted the Jolly Roger, an iconic symbol from Eiichiro Oda's One-Piece manga and anime, during the Independence Day ceremony. A video of the act circulated widely on social media and was interpreted in various ways. Some viewed it as humor, others as social critique, while others considered it an act of disrespect toward national symbols. The government's response, stating that the action violated ceremonial regulations, further intensified the public debate. This incident demonstrates how symbols of Japanese popular culture can become politicized, sparking broader discussions on nationalism, generational identity, and the relationship between citizens and the state.

The media play a highly central role in shaping public understanding of events [4]. They are not merely channels of information, but also actors that select, interpret, and organize facts into a coherent narrative. The media can set the public agenda by determining which issues are considered newsworthy and how they are framed, thereby influencing what the public perceives as necessary by emphasizing particular topics [5]. Within this framework, framing studies become crucial for understanding how social realities are constructed through news reporting. Framing serves not only as an analytical device but also as a conceptual foundation that highlights the power of the media to define issue boundaries, shape orientations of public attitudes, and direct the dynamics of public discourse in the digital era [6]. According to W. Gamson and A. Modigliani, framing operates through interpretive packages that contain devices for defining the causes, consequences, and moral evaluations of an issue [7]. Thus, the way Kompas.id and Republika.id reported the One-Piece flag controversy reflects not only editorial decisions but also the ideological orientations embedded within each newsroom.

Previous studies have demonstrated the influence of ideology on media framing. Efendi et al. found that Kompas.id framed the Palestine–Israel conflict by emphasizing aspects of international diplomacy, whereas Republika.id highlighted religious solidarity [8]. Rahayu showed that Indonesian media framed the May 22, 2019, mass protest using divergent narratives, ranging from allegations of treason and anarchism to religious radicalism, depending on the outlet reporting the event [9]. Meanwhile, Murti and Dadiono examined the One Piece flag phenomenon through the lens of popular culture and “alternative nationalism,” illustrating how Generation Z reinterpret national symbols [10]. However, these studies have not specifically examined how Indonesian media frame controversies surrounding Japanese popular culture within the context of national politics.

This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the framing used by Kompas.id and Republika.id, two mainstream media outlets with differing ideological orientations, in reporting the One-Piece flag controversy. Kompas.id, with its orientation toward

nationalism and humanism, tends to emphasize rational and sociological aspects. In contrast, *Republika.id*, grounded in Islamic values, places greater emphasis on moral and religious dimensions. This comparison is expected to demonstrate how symbols of popular culture are represented differently and how these representations shape public opinion. The purpose of this study is to examine the framing strategies employed by *Kompas.id* and *Republika.id* in their coverage of the One-Piece flag controversy. Theoretically, this research contributes to communication studies by expanding the understanding of media framing within the context of popular culture. In practice, this study aims to promote media literacy so that the public can become more critical in interpreting news about cultural controversies.

Method

Research design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm, which views news not as an objective reality but as a social construction shaped through language, interaction, and ideology [11]. This social construction serves as a framework through which individuals understand and interpret reality, while also influencing behavior and social practices [12]. The framing analysis model developed by Gamson and Modigliani is used to examine how Indonesian online media construct meaning in the context of the One-Piece flag controversy.

Data collection

Data were collected using documentary techniques. The primary sources consist of online news articles from *Kompas.id* and *Republika.id*, published in August 2025, that discuss the One-Piece flag controversy during Indonesia's 80th Anniversary of Independence Day. Articles were retrieved using the keywords "One Piece flag," "Independence Day," "Jolly Roger," and "August 17." Secondary data including books, journal articles, and other academic references. They were also used to strengthen the theoretical framework and contextual analysis.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using Gamson and Modigliani's framing model. The analysis focused on two key components: (1) framing devices, including metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, descriptions, and visuals; and (2) reasoning devices, which encompass causes, consequences, and moral evaluations [13]. These devices were identified and categorized to uncover how *Kompas.id* and *Republika.id* constructed different frames for the same event.

Validity

To maintain data validity, triangulation was employed by comparing findings across multiple sources [14]. This triangulation process helps reduce bias and enhances the

reliability of interpretations, ensuring that the results more accurately reflect the social reality being studied [15].

Results and discussion

Result

1. Framing of Kompas.id

a. Raising the One-Piece flag as an expression of youth popular culture

In Kompas.id's articles, "The 'One Piece' Flag Flying on Rooftops and Social Media Status" [16] and "The 'One Piece' Flag Phenomenon: A Response to Public Disappointment?" [17], the media emphasized the creativity and spontaneity of young people. Kompas.id used phrases like "social phenomenon" and the metaphor "new color in Independence Day celebrations" to portray the act as an extension of cultural identity and freedom of expression, rather than a form of political provocation.

Coverage such as "The 'One Piece' Flag Goes Viral: Between Humor, Criticism, and Accusations of Treason" [18] reinforced this framing by highlighting humorous online reactions and symbolic interpretations. Meanwhile, "What's Hidden Behind the 'One Piece' Flag Hype?" [19] placed the phenomenon within the broader context of youth engagement in digital culture. From a reasoning perspective, the root of the problem lies in expressive impulses shaped by social conditions. At the same time, the consequences open up public discussion about the meaning of independence and symbolic actions. Moral evaluation emphasizes that such expressions enrich contemporary conversations about nationalism in the digital age.

b. Government response and the tension between creativity and regulation

Kompas.id frames the government's response as an effort to maintain national unity while still acknowledging freedom of expression. In "Regarding Government Ban on the 'One Piece' Flag, Minister of Human Rights: Efforts to Maintain Unity" [20] and "Criticism Behind the One Piece Flag, Minister of State Secretary: Better to Find Solutions Together" [21], the outlet uses diction such as "joint solution" and "efforts to maintain unity" to depict the government as rational and communicative. Reasoning devices identify the roots of the issue in miscommunication between citizens and authorities over national symbols, with consequences that call for intergenerational dialogue. The moral evaluation highlights balance framing the problem not as a conflict but as a shared learning process in which public creativity coexists with regulatory concerns.

c. Criticism of the ban and support for public dialogue

Kompas.id frames the government's prohibition in academic and human rights perspectives. Reports such as "Komnas HAM Regrets Government's Excessive Response to 'One Piece'" [22] and "UGM Researcher: Banning the 'One Piece' Flag Only Makes It More Viral" [23] argue that strict regulation often intensifies viral circulation instead of diminishing it. Using terms such as "excessive" and "increasingly viral," the outlet questions the proportionality of state responses to pop-culture symbols. Researchers and Komnas HAM appear as balancing voices promoting open dialogue and adaptive policymaking. Reasoning devices identify the roots in the state's limited readiness to engage with fast-changing digital cultural dynamics. The consequences involve rising public sympathy and escalating online debate. The moral evaluation emphasizes inclusivity, democratic participation, and policy adaptability.

d. Two public viewpoints: Between expression and ethical concerns

Kompas.id identifies two dominant public perspectives: the One-Piece flag as a cultural expression and as inappropriate within national symbolism. This contrast is evident in "Two Tones in the One Piece Flag Controversy" [24] and "When the Jolly Roger Flag Causes Anxiety Among Authorities" [25], which use expressions such as "two tones," "public unease," and "commotion" to illustrate a natural spectrum of public views. Framing devices balance both perspectives without amplifying conflict. Reasoning devices locate the roots in differing interpretations of national symbols, while the consequences involve deeper reflection on the boundaries of civic expression. The moral evaluation highlights the need for tolerance and meaningful dialogue to bridge diverging viewpoints. Kompas.id positions itself as a media actor promoting understanding rather than polarization.

2. Framing of Republika.id

a. The One-Piece flag as a challenge to public order

In the news report "Government Efforts to Suppress the Flying of the One Piece Flag" [26], Republika.id frames the flag-raising incident as a potential disruption to public order.

Terms such as "contain," "monitoring," and "enforcement" construct the issue as a violation of social norms. Government officials and law enforcement serve as the primary exemplars of authoritative and corrective measures. From the reasoning devices, the root cause is framed as a lack of public awareness regarding the sanctity of national symbols, while the consequences emphasize the risk of social unrest. The moral evaluation stresses the necessity of respecting national symbols to preserve unity.

b. The state as guardian of morality and social stability

Two reports from *Republika.id* highlight how the state acts as a watchdog, maintaining public order through law enforcement and social oversight. The article "Minister of State Secretary Speaks About Possible Sanctions for Those Raising the One Piece Flag" [27] emphasizes government authority through discourse on sanctions and rule enforcement. Terms such as "sanctions" and "rule enforcement" create a framework that affirms the state's moral authority, reinforced by images of officials in formal contexts. Meanwhile, the report "Police in Various Regions Monitor 'One Piece'" [28] portrays the authorities as proactive actors maintaining social stability through strict oversight. The use of the terms "monitoring" and "strict oversight," along with images of uniformed officers, constructs a narrative of state vigilance and preparedness in the face of potential public unrest. The articles share a common rationale: the core issue is framed as a breach of norms, and the growing impact of foreign popular culture is considered incompatible with national values. The consequences highlighted include the need for legal action and social oversight to maintain order. Morally, the message emphasizes the state's role as a guardian of values and the importance of consistent social control to keep society's identity and stability.

c. The dilemma of nationalism and popular culture in the modern era

In the news article "Red-and-White and Jolly Roger: The Dilemma of Nationalism in the Era of Pop Culture" [29], *Republika.id* offers a more reflective discussion. The paper recognizes generational disparities in the expression of nationalism while underscoring the need to honor national symbols. Phrases such as "nationalism dilemma" and "pop culture era" highlight tensions between traditional values and modern cultural expression. Visuals juxtaposing the Red-and-White flag with the Jolly Roger reinforce this symbolic contrast. The reasoning devices place the root cause in the clash between global cultural influences and local values, producing consequences reflected in ongoing public debates about the meaning of nationalism. The moral evaluation stresses the need to balance cultural openness with respect for national symbols.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal significant differences in how *Kompas.id* and *Republika.id* frame the controversy surrounding the One-Piece flag-raising during Indonesia's 80th Independence Day celebration. These differences are reflected not only in the choice of diction but also in narrative focus, the actors highlighted, and the moral values emphasized by each outlet. Overall, *Kompas.id* approaches the phenomenon as an expression of youth culture and a form of social reflection in the

digital era. In contrast, Republika.id interprets it as a moral deviation and a potential threat to national values.

Through framing elements, Kompas.id constructs a humanistic, reflective narrative that features citizens, netizens, and academics as actors offering diverse perspectives. In contrast, Republika.id foregrounds state apparatus, government officials, and moral authorities, reinforcing a normative stance and an emphasis on social order. This comparison indicates that the media do not merely report facts; they also reproduce ideological positions through moral language, narrative orientation, and the selection of authoritative voices.

This interpretation aligns with previous studies demonstrating that media ideology shapes the framing of political and social issues [8][9]. However, the present study extends the discussion by showing that popular culture particularly Japanese popular culture can also serve as a site of national identity contestation, as suggested by studies of transnational cultural representation [10]. Thus, the findings not only reaffirm the relevance of framing theory but also illustrate how Indonesian media negotiate the boundaries between cultural globalization, nationalism, and public morality.

Furthermore, the contrasting frames identified in this study suggest that symbols of popular culture can now trigger debates over political identity, especially when they intersect with public spaces laden with historical and national significance. This opens new interpretative possibilities for understanding popular culture as a medium of generational expression and resistance, and, at the same time, as an object of moral regulation by the state and societal institutions. Taken together, these insights contribute to a broader understanding of how media construct, question, and negotiate national meaning in the digital era.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Kompas.id and Republika.id frame the One-Piece flag-raising controversy in line with their respective ideological orientations. Kompas.id highlights the event as a form of social expression and youth popular culture, while Republika.id frames it as a moral issue intertwined with national values. These differences underscore the media's active role in shaping meanings and drawing boundaries between freedom of expression, public morality, and national identity in Indonesia. The main contribution of this study lies in extending framing analysis into the realm of Japanese popular culture as a site of negotiation between global and local values. The findings strengthen the understanding that popular culture can serve as a field for articulating political identity and reproducing ideology through media representations. Future research may expand this topic by conducting cross-platform comparisons or analyzing different temporal contexts to capture shifts in discourse and the influence of evolving media technologies on the framing of popular culture and nationalism.

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