Televising Rural Muslim Culture:
Hybrid Muslim Identities on TV Series
Upside-Down World

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Abstract: this article aims to contribute to the current under–standing of how the religious-based TV drama *Upside-Down World (Dunia Terbalik)* depicts the identity of rural-based Muslim society in the contemporary Indonesia. Utilizing a formal method of film criticism, it reveals that the soap opera *Dunia Terbalik* simulates 'a hybrid new *Santri* identity' as well as it blurs the existing identities like Geertz' classifica–tion of *santri*. Further, the reculturization occurs within TV drama narrative, through which hybrid new *Santri* identity constructed, is likely intended to convey the notion that Indonesian Islam (*Santri*) should be globalized, and the glo–bal should be *Santrinisized*".

Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas bagaimana sinetron religi *Dunia Terbalik* menggambarkan identitas masyarakat Mus–lim pedesaan di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan metode formal kritik film, artikel ini menyatakan bahwa sinetron *Dunia Terbalik* merepresentasikan 'identitas hibrid *santri baru*', yang sekaligus juga mengaburkan klasifikasi Geertz tentang identitas santri modernis dan tradisionalis. Identitas santri baru ini dikonstruk melalui proses rekulturisasi, di–mana pengembangan narasi dan karakter sinetron meng–alami negosiasi terhadap unsur-unsur spesifik dan universal budaya yang ada. Proses rekulturisasi tersebut, selain me–nunjukkan bagaimana identitas santri hibrid itu terbentuk, juga menyampaikan gagasan tentang globalisasi Islam Indo–nesia, dan santrinisasi dunia global.

Keywords: hybrid identity, new *santri*, religious television series, genre convention, reculturization

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Introduction

It is widely known that in current Indonesia's post-reform era the type of Islamic pop culture products is comparatively different and the way Indonesian people consume Islamic popular products changes, in particular regarding to Islamic films (Heryanto, 2011; Hariyadi, 2013), TV series or soap operas (Ida, 2009; Schmidt, 2014), Islamic books (Muzakki, 2011), and Islamic costumes such as trendy veil (Saluz, 2007).

Various kinds of television programs that convey Islamic teachings have been produced ranging from news, public sermons, horror TV series, teen drama, to comedy and family soap opera. For instance, *Berita Islami Masa Kini (Current Islamic News)* and *Khazanah (Treasury)* screened by TransTV and Trans7. Horror TV series *Jodoh Wasiat Bapak (Father's Testament Mate)* broadcasted by ANTV, teen melodrama *Anak Langit (Canopy Son)* screen by SCTV, family soap opera *Dunia Terbalik (Inverted World)* screen by RCTI, and so forth. Meanwhile, the Islamic moving pictures are represented by *Ayat-ayat Cinta (Verses of Love)* 1 &2, *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan 1 & 2 (Unforgettable Paradise)*, *Assalamu'alaikum Beijing*, and so on.

Basically, researches in the field of Islamic-themed films in Indonesia did not appear until the mid-2000s. In the context of religious melodrama (*sinetron*), Ali Amin's (2007) *Agama dalam film horor Indonesia 2000-2006 (Religion in Indonesian horror films from 2000 to2006),* Noviani's (2007) *Matikan TV-mu: Agama Vs Media? (Turn off your TV: Religion Vs Media)*, Nazaruddin's study (2008) about *Islam representation in religious electronic cinemas in Indonesia*, and Rachma Ida's (2009) *critique of representations of women in Ramadan soap operas* have made significant contribution of the field. With regard to highly insightful studies on Islamic films in the big screen are Erick Sasono's, (2008, 2010) *Pertemuan baru Islam dan cinta (A new meeting of Islam and love), Islamic-themed films in contemporary Indonesia: Commodified religion or Islamization,* and Ariel Heryanto's (2011) *Upgraded piety and pleasure; The new middle class and Islam in Indonesian*

popular culture and *The Cinematic Contest of Popular Post-Islamism.*

Many studies have illustrated that Islamic films or melodramas are generally associated with Muslim everyday life, cultural life long Muslims, and Islamic teachings (Dyer, 2006; Hoesterey and Clack, 2012; Sasono, 2010; Hartono, 2015). Such characteristics have been derived mostly from film genre convention such as set in Middle East or Arab world (Dyer, 2006) and *pesantren* (Hakim, 2012); using Islamic style of fashion and Arabic terminology (Sukowati, 2016); portraying Islamic clerics and veiled Muslim women (Nazaruddin, 2008) as well as articulate piety as core theme (Sasono, 2010, Heryanto, 2011).

Within Indonesia, a wide range of Islamic films has been consciously produced in various themes and narratives, and it has been changing over Indonesia's three different political systems, well-known as Old Order era, New Older era, and Post-Reform era. The constantly changing in the development of the films from one period to the next is generally understood as movies constitute a cultural practice (Kolker, 2016) or cultural experience (Ida, 2006), which reflect prevailing concerns, attitudes, and beliefs (Lule, 2010). In this sense, Islamic films or soap operas could be considered as Indonesia's storytellers. Not only do Islamic-themed movies represent certain commonly held attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be Indonesian Moslem, but they also depict contemporary trends and issues, such as terrorism, corruption, and so forth.

During Old Order era, Islamic moving pictures mostly dealt with issues of Islamic reformation, patriotism, and nationalism based on Islam, and sometimes of the women's emancipation movement (Huda, 2012). Whereas in New Order era Islamic films were "overwhelming by the discourse of development" which depict Muslims related to social and political matters (Sasono, 2010), and are also concerned with biographies of Muslim saints and Islamic *dakwah* films (Huda, 2012). In the post-reform Indonesia, Islamic films are much more urbanized, compared to Islamic films in the last three decades that represented rural folk. The film convention change in particular, re–garding to the film characterization, including popularizing of veiled

female characters (Heryanto, 2011), the way understanding religion (Amin, 2007), and the depiction of male and female modern identities (Schmidt, 2014).

In Indonesia's Old Order era context, the production of popular culture was not massive as in the next two regimes of polity. This is because the Old Order led by Soekarno had restricted the expansion of western popular culture to Indonesia, and had prioritized on the building of the nationalism through what Kleden (1987) called "the nationalization of culture". In this sense, national culture was used by the Old Order regime to unify local cultures in order to prevent Western culture influence and penetration (Hariadi, 2010). Regarding to this, it seems that Old Order's political concern aligns with Islamic film themes were developed at that time which mostly portrayed the issues of Islamic reformation, patriotism, and nationalism based on Islam (Huda, 2012).

In contrast, under New Order regime, popular culture started burgeoning. As sustained industrialization became the main concern of the New Order, the pop culture industry also began to flourish, including Islamic film productions, which also started impacting in a significant way upon the lives of most Indonesians (Budiman, 2002). In the name of a sustained programs of development, New Order led by Soeharto legated explicit ideology and demonstrative politics to the margins of public life with a concomitant emphasis on unity, uniformity and conformity. (Cribb 2010). A de-politicization of Islam was conducted with the integration of Islamic organization into the developmental programs of the state. In addition, to build New Order legitimacy, it incorporated three different major forces that shaped Indonesia from its inception as well as had helped the regime come to power, namely Islamic, liberal Western consumerist-indulgent, and mystical (Heryanto, 2008, 2011). In line with this, the depiction of Islamic films in New Order is "overwhelming by the discourse of development" (Sasono, 2010) with a strong relationship to Javanese cultural orientation to what Geertz (1973) classifies as *Abangan, Santri,* and *Priyayi*, particularly in a mixture of *Santri* and *Abangan* religious variants (Hakim, 2011).

Whilst in Indonesia's post-authoritarian era context, Islamic screen has undergone rapid growth resulted from the rise of new Muslim middle class in public terrain to celebrate their freedom and confirm their identity after collapse of New Order's centralist state management as well as to "extend and further consolidate their politico-economic positions" (Heryanto, 2011, p. 62). Therefore the portrayal of Islamic films has reflected to urban life style characterized by "citizen who is at ease with the world of classical Islamic texts as well as a Western-dominated global life-style and consumption style, and well educated Muslims" (Heryanto, 2011, p. 71). Additionally, it also coincides with 'the second wave of Islamism' in Southeast Asia. (Schmidt, 2014).

Nevertheless, little is known about how the current Islamic soap operas or TV series, which work on the basis of codes and convention, express both rural and urban Muslim culture. In regard to this, this article attempts to discuss how Indonesian Muslim identity reflected in the TV series *Dunia Terbalik (Upside Down World).*

Generic Conventions of Faith-Based Films & TV Series

The mushrooming of Islamic-themed films and television series since the mid-2000s in Indonesia has generated many debates amongst scholars about the kind of criteria they will consciously use to justify an Islamic film genre or not. Some people are of the opinion that Islamic films or TV series should be starred by Muslims, whilst others believe that film producers can involve people with various religious background. For example, the film *the Message* (1976) and *the Lion of Desert* (1981). Although both are directed by a Syrian Muslim, Mustafa Akkad, but starred by a non-Muslim actor such as Anthony Quinn as Hamza bin Abdul-Mutallib in the former film. It is similar with the film *Ayat-ayat Cinta (The Verses of Love)* (2008) directed by Hanung Bramantyo. People who involve in the film production are diverse.

However, it is very rare to find insightful studies which have contributed the necessity of the background of the cast in considering whether or not religious-based films should be played by Muslims or

Christians. Indeed, Brown (2013) has stated that it is unusual to consider the cast as key in faith-based films. Hence, how to quickly recognize a particular TV show or moving picture belongs to religious genre?

According to O'Shaugnessy & Stadler (2005, p. 113) we can quickly know any film or program as belonging to a particular genre by recognizing its familiar codes and conventions, that is, the distinctive pattern or what distinguishes them from each other. In this regard, dialogue, musical figures or styles, and patterns of *mise-en-scene* are repeated from film to film within a genre, become established as conventions. in other words, genre convention of the film is likely to identify through the types of characters, setting, iconography, narrative, theme and style usually (Lacey, 2000).

Similarly, Wright (2007) has said that many religious films represent religious ideas, rituals, and communities. Some are relying almost entirely on religion for the development of narrative and character as well as portraying implicit ideologies and themes relating to religion, such as life style, hospitality, forgiveness, redemption, sacrifice or tradition. For example, a film such as *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) is based on a Hindu epic (the *Mahabharata*) and associates with the Temple, religious ritual and values.

Some more examples are *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005), *What Dreams May Come (1998), The Passion of Christ (2004)*, and *The DaVinci Code* (2006), all of which clearly rely on religion in theme, iconography, and the development of narrative and character (Wright, 2000). The film *What Dreams May Come (1998)* visualises heaven based on the Christian Bible and depicts reward and punishment from a religious perspective. The film *The Passion of Christ (2004)*, directed by Mel Gibson, tells the story of the last 12 hours in the life of Jesus and clearly develops the narrative, characters, iconography and themes based on the Catholic religion. Whereas, *Jesus*, *The Spirit of God* which won an award in a 2007 religious film festival in Italy, is based on Islamic teaching.

Turning to contemporary TV series drama, the genre conventions is almost the same. For example both TV serial dramas *Dunia Terbalik*

(Upside Down World) and *Anak Langit* (*Children of the Sky),* have frequently depicted religious values, symbols, and iconography on screen through the words, songs, characterization, costumes, sacred places or events. One of Islamic iconographic features is veil *(hijab).* Most female characters in the soap opera *Dunia Terbalik*, for instance, wear veil and full cloak (*jubah*) or a loose tunic (*baju kurung*). A young female character, Tuti Hartuti (Entut) often screened with a moderate use of body coverage which consists of a simple street veil (*hijab gaul*) worn with pants, such as blue jeans, and a tight long-sleeved T-shirt. Whereas married female characters like Esih and Ikko are usually depicted wearing a more body-covering type of Islamic fashion, which mainly consists of a full cloak or a loose tunic with long skirt and a large veil, well knows as *hijab syar'i.* It is also frequently seen the depiction of male Muslim wear the *koko* style, *sarong,* and black *songkok.*

Alongside dresses worn by female and male characters, iconographic features are able to be identified through film sound – sound effect, music, dialogue, and words. For example, sound of *Azan* (Muslim call to prayer), recitation of al-Qur'an with a tune and in a melodious voice, the depiction of the mosque as central religious activities, Arabic calligraphy, and the Muslim cleric.

Turning to theme and characterization, although the themes delivered by TV soap opera sinetron *Dunia Terbalik* in every episode does not always present those dealing with transcendence and mystery, it is mostly rendering of Quranic themes such as honesty both in nature and attitudes, trustworthy, piety, gratitude, humble attitude, and so forth. Akum, who is starred by Agus Kuncoro, depicted as an honest person and humble. Likewise Idoy, he has a character that is very respectful of others and obedient, especially to cleric; *Ustadz* Kemed. In contrast, Dadang is portrayed as insensitive and arrogant. Another prominent feature in this TV drama is friendly and helpful characters of Ciraos people which are taught in Islam.

With regard to TV Drama *Anak Langit,* the portrayal of female characters using veil or headscarf is not dominantly televised. It is only Nyak Ida, a mother of orphanage, and Emon, a young girl racer, who

wear *hijab* all the time. The rest of them wear veil occasionally when there are celebrating Islamic festival, doing *shalat* (prayers), and attending Islamic sermons (*pengajian*). This melodrama also often portrays Muslim cleric conveying Islamic teachings in the Islamic sermon group or giving advice to someone who has problems. Although, the recitation of *al-Qur'an* and good words *(kalimah thayyibah)* often heard on the screen, however, the back-ground music or soundtrack of TV drama *Anak Langit,* namely *100% Rock n Roll* popularized by Indonesian rock band, *Powerslaves,* tends to signify youth culture and "characterized by the use of symbols of "anti-structure" as a vehicle for an age-specific social solidarity" (Martin 1979, p. 1).

Hybrid "New *Santri*" Identity: A Tale of Soap Opera *Dunia Terbalik*

Soap opera *Dunia Terbalik* is the Islamic comedy drama aired in January 2017 on RCTI. Over an eleven-month period, since which this TV series screened the rating has remained stable at top 10 (Berita Ane, 2018). The story concerns Akum (Agus Kuncoro), Aceng (Sutan Simatupang), Idoy (Bengbeng), Dadang (Indira Birowo), and the other househusbands, living in a small rural village in West Java, called Ciraos. Their primary responsibility is homemaking which traditio–nally constitutes feminine tasks such as cooking, cleaning, doing the laundry, and attending to children's needs, as their wives are working as female overseas laborers (TKW).

Ciraos citizens live in a very simple way and with dreams of an idealistic rustic life based on social solidarity values and Islamic teachings. They are very respectful of others and obedient of Muslim clerics. One always greets fellow Ciraos citizens when meeting or passing each other by using Islamic greeting *"Assalamu'alaikum"*. However, at times livelihood problems, education, and romance give rise to controversial issues and conflicts amongst villagers in Ciraos. In regard to this, the figure of *kyai*, *Ustadz* Kemed (Idrus Mardani), played a central role in resolving religious and social problems and maintaining the harmony in society.

Nevertheless, *Ustadz* Kemed has been never depicted in the domain of 'mystique' and 'superstitious', to fight against soothsayer, to dispel ghosts and to pray in funeral procession. Hence, *Ustadz* Kemed's depiction, in a certain degree, has a sufficiently different form and style compared to other religious films or TV series[2]. He is depicted as both *kyai/ulama* (Islamic scholar) and *umara* (rulers); as both *Ustadz* and the chairman of community unit (RW). He is not only an expert in religious teachings, but is also responsible towards social, political, security, livelihood problems occur in the village of Ciraos

The development of narrative, characters, sounds, and costumes in the successful TV drama *Dunia Terbalik* storyline reveals interesting common features may explain hybridization of contemporary Indone–sian Muslim culture and identity, that is, firstly the convergence between Muslim modernist and traditionalist; secondly between global western culture, local culture, and Muslim identity, which opens up what is called as "hybrid new *santri* identity".

According to Machmudi (2008), the convergence of traditionalist and modernist *santri* sub-cultures, is new Muslim identity called "moderate *santri*" or *convergent santri*. This *neo-santri* variant "empha–sis on only one side of the convergence phenomenon, that is, the intellectual convergence between the traditionalist NU and the modernist Muhammadiyah, which has lessened the differences bet–ween them" (p.81). This new *santri* identity has abandoned Geertz's characteristics of traditionalist *santri* and modernist *santri,* those who always compete for a single goal, that is, to claim to be the truest Muslim and the most orthodox Islam. Indeed true, although they have differences, to a certain degree, in religious ritual practices, they have

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[2] Muzayyin's study (2008, p.28) about *'Islam Representation in Religious Electronic Cinemas in Indonesia* has revealed that "the role of *ustadz* on the small screen soap operas shows some tendency of public depiction of *ustadz* role in religious electronic cinemas. Broader, if we pay attention to various religious electronic cinema, there are some characterization of *ustadz* role usually emerge. Firstly, *kyai* shares to pray corpse which is being tortured when funeral process, so that Allah has the pleasure to revoke the torture, second, *kyai* shares to fight against soothsayer and also specter bothering society or someone. Third, *kyai* shares to advise someone which repents. Fourth, *kyai* shares to prevent society want to do anarchist to criminal".

similar concerns to preserve Pancasila as ideology of Indonesia as well as to maintain tolerant, inclusive, and moderate Islam as Indonesia's distinctive Islamic identity[3], which is so-called *Islam Berkemaujuan* (Islam with Progress) by Muhammadiyah and *Islam Nusantara* (Islam of the Archipelago) by NU.[4]

In the political-sociology perspective, the convergence of traditio–nalist Muslim and modernist Muslim identity has emerged since the Reformation period began when new wave of fundamentalist Islam and transnational Islam, which mostly promote a *shari'a-based khilafah* (caliphate) state and adopt Islam as ideology replacing Pancasila, has taken an advantage of public sphere liberty and the relative absence of

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[3] The late KH Hasyim Muzadi pointed out that the transnational movement is entirely Arabic whose cultural thought and social background is not the same with Indonesia. In other words, transnational ideology is not derived from the source of Indonesia's national personality (Helfi, 2007). Likewise, the former Muhammadiyah chairman as well as the founder of Maarif Instituteis, Ahmad Syafii Maarif is also arguing for countering radicalism and transnationalism Islam in Indonesia. According to him, the presence of transnational religious movements over the last few decades should have received serious national attention from the government and security officers, because its goal is clearly to change the ideology of Pancasila with Islam and to form a new country in Indonesia (Ari, at. all, 2016).

[4] Many experts have figured out the common ground between *Islam Nusantara* and *Islam Berkemajuan* in scientific journal articles and books. Eliraz (2017, para.7) coins that *Islam Nusantara* has "a multifaceted message of a tolerant, moderate, peaceful Islam curbing terror and extremism" that will be promoted globally, in particular to the Middle East. Whilst, Chairman of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nasir in his speech at Monash University and Australian Catholic University, Australia stated that the *Islam Berkemajuan* (progressive Islam), sowing the seeds of truth, goodness, peace, justice, prosperity, and dynamic life for all mankind, including commitments to anti-war, anti-terrorism, non-violence, anti-oppression, and anti-backwardness (Adam, 2018). Further, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Republic of Indonesia consider *Islam Nusantara* and *Islam Berkemaajuan* as the representation of the ideal model for religious practice in Indonesia which promote a moderate and tolerant Islam based on a synthesis of Islamic values and a variety of indigenous worldview. Both of them have been inspiring government regulations made for various aspects of life that should be applied in Indonesia well. (Nurroni & Sasongko, 2015; Masdar, 2015).

the state control of public life and religion.[5] The widespread growth of fundamentalist Islam and hardline Muslim groups in the Post-Reform era has serious responses by Indonesia's two major Muslim organiza–tions, *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*. Indeed, the book "The Illusion of an Islamic State" published by the Wahid Institute and Maarif Institute, clearly conveys NU and Muhammadiyah activists' anger towards the rise of radical Islamic schools in Indonesia, which also infiltrated into these two organizations (Wahid, 2011).

Figure 1 'US Ambassador to Indonesia Joseph R. Donovan and *Ustadz* have a discussion about Muslim activities in USA and Ciraos during Ramadhan'.

In the *Sinetron Dunia Terbaik*, the hybrid new *santri* identity is accurately represented on the scene, when the US Ambassador to

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[5] Even though, political and fundamentalist Islam, basically, had existed in Indonesia since the presence of *Salafism* stream in 20th century, political freedom after long oppression during the New Order regime helped conservative Muslims and fundamentalist creating social and political consolidation and building their political identity as the rise of religious fundamentalism. Tibi has stated that the rise of religious fundamentalism a global phenomenon in response to open societies as well as open Islam (Tibi cited in Hooker 2003, 231). This phenomenon has been marked by the proliferation of Muslim groups considered by many as radicals such as *Laskar Jihad* (Jihad Troops), *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI, or Islamic Defender Front), *Hizb al-Tahrir* (Party of Liberation), *Angkatan Mujahidin Indonesia* (the Jihad Fighter Group of Indonesia), *Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* (Action Committee of Indonesian Muslim Students/KAMMI), and Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT).

Indonesia, Joseph R. Donovan is visiting Ciaros Village and discussing about Muslim activities in America and Indonesia during Ramadan. The idea of 'moderate *santri*' is clearly illustrated through dialogue in the scene. Through his spokesman, Donovan has stated that there are millions of Muslims in America who practice fasting there freely. United State of America and Indonesia both appreciate freedom of religion and respect tolerance and religiosity. In the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims in the USA have gathered with friends and family to break their fast.

The notion of religious tolerance and freedom is remarkable feature of those who are identified as "new santri'. It is attributed to the intellectual convergence between the traditionalist NU and the modernist Muhammadiyah which continually socialized through an innovative Islamic thought embedded within *Islam Nusantara* and *Islam Berkemajuan.*

Another element that is important to explore regarding the '*convergent santri*" is female character costumes and gender notion. This is because the way women dress represents their social, cultural background (Wright 2006, p. 3: Stowasser, 1994, p. 127), and is integral to religious identity (Arthur, 2000, 3). In other words, the costume is a social construction and expression that consolidates the individual's place within a wider religious framework.

The TV show *Dunai Terbalik* employs 70 % of adult female characters wears *hijab* and the rest do not cover up, but they dress up in a way which is considered polite in Indonesian culture. The heads–carves worn by women characters in this religious electronic cinema varied according to the age cohort. For older generation women such as *Mak Suhah*, *Mak Eros*, and *Wak Irah* frequently wear traditional gowns worn with a shawl and a veil that partly covered her hair. Whilst, for mostly both teenage and middle-aged female characters wearing *hijab* cover the hair and chest. The difference is for middle-aged moms like Esih (Denaya Bintang Azmi) Eem (Della Puspita), Lilis (Allia Rosa), Atem (Happi Salama) and Ikoh (Tike Priyatna) are usually depicted with a moderate use of body coverage wearing veil and full cloak (*jubah*), a loose tunic (*baju kurung*). At times they wear a

body-covering style of Muslimah *syar'i* dress, which mainly consists of a full cloak or a loose tunic with long skirt and a large veil, well knows as *hijab syar'i*. Whilst for a teen girl character wearing *hijab* like Entut Tuti Hartuti (Felicya Angelista) tends to dress in trendy-teenage Muslim wears. She is often screened wearing a simple street veil (*hijab gaul*) or a colorful motif *hijab* matched with pants and a tight long-sleeved T-shirt.

Figure 2 'Various styles of head coverings worn by female characters at different age cohorts on TV show *Dunia Terbalik*'

Sociologically speaking, such *Muslimah* (Muslim female) dresses are commonly worn among Muslim women in Indonesia, *santriwati* (female students at Islamic boarding schools) and old generation in Java in particular. Indeed, some female Muslim scholar activists who are rooted from traditionalist and modernist Islam such as Sinta Nuriyah Abdurrahman Wahid, Yenny Wahid, Novalinda Kusnasriyati Sri Rahayu and Hanum Rais usually wear traditional gowns worn with a head scarves/shawl that partly covered her hair *(kerudung)* or a mode–rate *jilbab* covering the hair and neck, but leave their face and hand uncovered. According to this Islamic tradition, veiling body is a reli–gious obligation and modesty, but trendy veils, shawls or head scarves is fine.

In terms of gender relations, as witnessed in storyline of this TV drama which concerning on househusband doing homemaking and paid women as female overseas workers, it seems that this soap opera reflects the ideas of liberalist or neo-Modernist Islamic thought. This is because according to this religious group's perspective women are allowed to be involved in activities in the public sphere (Hooker 2003, p. 134; Abdurrahman 2002, p. 110). Unlike the fundamentalist Isla–mic notion, that restricts Muslim women to go to work place or public sphere without a *Muhrim* companion (Husband or family) (Shehadehm, 2003, p. 39).

Another thing worth noting is the way how religion, local tradition, global issues or western cultural products are interacted and negotiated in the "visual world" of Ciraos villagers. This is because, as witnessed in *Dunia Terbalik* scenes, the cultural products and values are varied ranging from Western symbols to Eastern culture; from Indonesian cultural to global cultural products. For instance, guitar, Islamic based clothes and symbols, *Batik* clothes, and so forth.

Indeed true, it is frequently depicted on the scene that, on the one hand *Ustadz* Kemed wears *sarong, peci hitam* (black cap), *baju koko, tasbih* (misbaha), and turban while playing guitar or touching tablet computer to search Islamic sources, and is also screened US Ambassy officers wearing *Batik* while visiting *Ustadz* Kemed's house on the other hand. Likewise, it is also worth pointing out the way Ciraos villagers naming their children using Western names which neither originnate back to Arabic nor Sundanese language, such as Edward, Jennifer, Debby, Febri, and Claudia on the one hand, and the portrayal of US Embassy speaking Indonesian while he admits very happy to visit Ciraos, *"tentu saya sangat senang datang ke Ciraos'* on the other hand.

Theoretically speaking, in the notion of hybridity, Ciraos Muslim villagers on the TV show *Dunia Terbalik* have undergone recultu–ralization process which involves simultaneous replacement of cultural elements through a combination between specificity and universality. In this regard, the global cultural specific elements are added to Ciraos Muslim culture such as the usage of Western names for all children in

Ciraos, the portrayal *Ustadz* Kemed playing Guitars and using computer tablet, the dialogue between US Embassy and *Ustadz* Kemed using English language while discussing about Muslim activities in USA as well as the usage of CIA symbols for the security staffs on the screen. Conversely, the global cultural specific elements are blurred by cultural local elements, such as the depiction of US Embassy using Indonesia language and wearing *Batik* while acknowledging Muslim activities in USA.
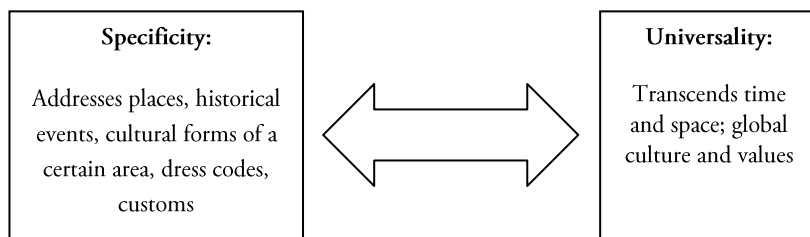
Figure 3 'The cultural cline between specificity and universality' (adapted from Yoneoka, 2008)

Through the mixture between Muslim *santri* culture and Western global culture and the combination between local culture and global Islamic culture, then, the hybrid new *santri* identity constructed, in what Babba (cited in Yoneoka 2008, 30) calls 'the third space'. Hence, it is crystal clear that the reculturization occurs within TV drama narrative contributes to construct hybrid new *Santri* identity. More–over, this reculturalization process conveys the notion that Indonesian Islam (*Santri*) should be globalized, and the global should be *Santrinized* " as the idea of reculturalization in relation to globaliza–tion issues is to globalize the local on the one hand, and to localize the global on the other hand (Wang & Yeh, 2005).

However, full disclosure compels me to add that although "new santri identity" on the TV drama *Dunia Terbalik* has undergone trans–culturation and reculturization, it does not signify middle-class Muslim Indonesian's identity as represented in many faith-based films and TV dramas in the contemporary Indonesia, such as the film *Ayat-ayat Cinta*, *Assalamu'aikum Beijing*, *Bulan Terbelah di Langit Amerika,* and

Sinetron Anak Langit. Furthermore, the soap opera *sinetron Dunia Terbalik* is merely reifying the new *santri* identity who are tolerant and easy going and who embraced the Indonesia's distinctive Islamic identity. Indeed, through religious humor embedded within the cha–racter of *Ustadz Kemed*, it is conveying the fighting toward the rigidity of religious practices, reifying what people see as good in society—the family, compassion, critical engagement with conservative social issues that are stalling the country's progress--, and emphasizing the flaws of those who think differently since "humor moves toward a laughter that accepts others in spite of their differences" (Feltmate, 2013, p. 226).

Conclusion

The discourse of religion and identity politics has found its turning point since the Indonesia's post-reform has begun, that is, when the public sphere has belonged to all and for all. The involvement of fundamentalist Islamist groups, those who margina–lized during the New Order, for addressing religious and political issues through public space, which coincides with the rise of the Muslim middle class, has obscured the existing Muslim identity.

TV show *Dunia Terbalik,* that constitutes encoded text of realities, has blurred the existing identities, like Geertz's classification of traditionalist and modernist *Santri,* in doing so it has simulated what is called as 'a hybrid new *Santri* identity'. This new identity re–presents the current face of Islam that maintains the harmony of 'Indonesianess' and the 'Islamness' as well as global worldviews. It is likely attributed to traditionalist, modernist, or liberalist (neo-Modernist) groups, which are blended because of the desire to narrow down the spheres of conflict, particularly in the areas of *al-ahkam al-furu'iyah*, and to focus more on the shared vision, that is, "to globalize the Indonesian Islam (*Santri*), and to *Santrinisize/Indonesianize* the global (Western and Middle East) Islam ".

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the hybrid new *Santri* identity depicted on the TV series *Dunia Terbalik* may not completely reflect the real single characteristics which are embedded within traditionalist, modernist, or neo modernist Islam, but it is merely

simulated reality of rural Muslim cultural identity reproduced by Isla–mic television series in the contemporary Indonesia.

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