

Social Media and the Making of Religious Harmony in the Post-Truth Era

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ABSTRACT

The current use of social media in society of today's post truth era, is omnipresent. With social media, people interact and communicate, as well as disseminate information and so forth. On the contrary, the irresponsible use of social media can disrupt religious harmony. Because of this, this article focuses on the discussion of how social media in the post-truth era plays a role in keeping and maintaining harmony both internally and among different religions. This research belongs to the category of library research, which relies on an in-depth analysis of primary and secondary sources. The results of this study indicate that the development of digital literacy becomes an urgent matter so that people become more careful in receiving or forwarding news in order to strengthen the building of internal and inter-religious harmony.

Keywords: *Digital literacy, post-truth, religious harmony, social media*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, it can be said that everyone definitely use social media in the form of Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, Instagram, Twitter and so on. All of these social media are useful tools for humans, because they can be used more effectively for communication, interactions, forming communities, entertainment, commerce and others. Using social media, one can build relationships virtually with anyone everywhere, including far places that is difficult to reach in daily basis. In addition, social media may also be used as a business media such as culinary, clothing, and so forth.

Using social media, it is possible for humans to get news immediately. What phenomenon happens in one part of the world can be lively accessed by other people in other parts of the world. In addition, social media also presents a variety of scientific content that easily accessed by someone through the Internet. In short with the use of social media, human life has become more practical and easier. The influence of these media tendencies has increased the number, type, and extent of coverage, speed of circulation, and the increasingly high penetration of information on a national and international scale. [1][2]

On the other hand, an irresponsible use of social media can damage the mindset of people, and even divide the lives of humanity. That is due to the fact that information disseminated on social media is so fast that it can be known by someone everywhere. If someone is not smart enough in responding to any information received, then social media in this context will instead contribute to the emergence of human problems generally.

Moreover, at this time, many people tend to exclusively believe the 'truth' of their own group rather than that of the other groups, even though it is very possible that the truth lies with other groups. This era is lately called the post-truth era, where people look for more justification rather than the truth itself. It can even be said that one of the factors that catalyzed the development of post-truth is the presence of information technology that has implications for the improper use of social media. At this level, digital technology has been able to create its own reality, in accordance with the agenda setting of interest groups or borrowing the terms in the science of semiotics, this situation has an impact on the separation of the signifier and the signified. [3]

Currently, humans live in the modern era, which is an era where humans live online not manually. Modernization in the field of communication (social media) will certainly have a positive impact on the lives of humanity, including that social media can be used as a medium for building harmony both internally and between religions.

Therefore, this research is important because it aims to find out the implications of the use of social media in keeping and maintaining a harmony between different religions.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research relies on a library research, as it is based on library data sources, especially the primary book about the main object of this study, and other reference books such as scientific articles, and journals related to the theme of this research. It uses a descriptive method to explain the research materials, by connecting various data, so that a

clear, accurate and factual picture is obtained in accordance with the focus of the study.

The data sources of this study are divided into primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources are sources that provide basic and original material as raw evidence for researchers, in this case are sources related to the main theme in this paper. While secondary sources are copying, interpreting, and evaluating material contained in primary sources, or in other words secondary sources are texts or articles which can indirectly enrich the discussion according to the theme.

The next step is to analyze the data, which are a series of studies, groupings, systematization, interpretation and verification of data obtained from the reading of primary and secondary sources so that they can be abstracted. Data analysis is done by organizing, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, arranging into patterns, choosing what is important and what will be studied, and making conclusions which can be shared with others.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA IN TE POST-TRUTH ERA

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Before discussing the correlation between social media and post-truth era, it will first be described the notion of social media. Social media is an online media that can be used as a means of social interaction online via the Internet. The internet has connected the world to become a global village (global village) as cyberspace. This means that the world is united through electronic channels where each individual does not need to move from his home to be able to visit various information and entertainment far from where he lives. [[1] h. 387]

Using social media, users can communicate with each other, interact, stay in touch, share, build networks, and do various activities. Social media uses website-based technology or applications that can transform a communication into an interactive dialog. As for some social media that are widely used by the public today include You Tube, Facebook, Blogs, Whats App, Twitter, and others.

Indeed, the use of social media will have an impact on changing the meaning of the large world in a narrow direction, which means that it is so easy for humans to interact with individuals or other groups even though they have never met face to face or know each other before. It must be honestly acknowledged that the use of existing social media - it seems - is impossible in the previous era,

where humans at that time needed quite a long time in communication and interaction.

The development of the digital era is marked by the increasingly massive penetration of social media in various aspects of economic, political, cultural and security defense. This phenomenon is a consequence of changes in communication patterns, from conventional methods and media to digitalization of communication using a variety of contemporary social media channels.

According to Eddy Cahyono, as a Deputy Expert in the Presidential Staff Office, the development of the digital era with the massive use of the internet has the consequence of shifting the character of the public into an audience, the audience is no longer a passive object but can act as a producer of information (Prosumer). Society as an audience is no longer in the position of objects that are determined by the mainstream mass media but can play a further role in producing news and shaping public opinion via social media platforms. Furthermore, Cahyono added, through social media it allows users to interact, share and communicate which form virtual social ties in a networking society marked by the emergence of citizen journalism. This phenomenon places social media as the front line in terms of new communication models and at the same time has a role in forming opinions in the community. [3]

The use of social media in an irresponsible manner, if not anticipated, will potentially sharpen polarization in society which is characterized by increasingly viral tendentious news which can take the form of religious, racial, ethnic, and interest group sentiments and of course can become a challenges and obstacles in running the process of internal and interfaith relations.

Not to mention if it is associated with the post-truth era as it is today. Humans seem to lose control and guidelines, so that whatever (information) they receive through social media seems to become the only truth and must be true. In the post-truth era, [4] humans have lost their critical power, weakened reasoning and even become a figure who has a blunt thought power, it is due to the defense of opinions and narratives that exist in his group blindly.

According to the BBC, the Oxford dictionary stipulates that the word post-truth as an international word of the year in 2016 during which the political intensity was high. Oxford Dictionary President Casper Grathwohl even added that Post-Truth would still be the word of the year for the next few years. This is because in that year, the world conversation was dominated by political discourse and discourse which was triggered by the increasing significance of social media as a news source and coupled with the growing distrust of facts and data presented by related institutions and mass media. [4]

Post-truth shows a situation where objective facts have little or no influence in shaping public opinion when compared to personal emotions and beliefs which are naturally very subjective. In the post-truth era, it can be considered when social media-specific shift as the mainstream (mainstream media) as the only opinion maker that is considered the most authentic. Thus, competition is born between reality and hoaxes, where when previously

the mainstream media where people trusted the content and studies reported by them but now that trust is decreasing and people trusting more information that comes from - or even favors - on his own group. This phenomenon, if using terminology in Islam, can be correlated with the term *taqlid* (blind obedience), which is an attitude of following an opinion without criticizing and analyzing the opinion, and even tends to believe that the opinion has the truth. Whereas in the Qur'an, Allah always commands people to use their reason and mind that they have been given so that humans become people who do not easily believe what they receive, then in every event or phenomenon that arises must walk through internalizing, in-depth analyzing and comprehensively using reason for further use in making good and right decisions. This fact also makes weaker and thinner boundary between truth and lies, between honesty with fraud, and also between fiction and non-fiction.

This shows that in this post-truth era, if an individual or group does not have (read: weakening) belief in the existence of objective truth, and loses its critical power in thinking and analyzing every event and phenomena that arise, then what happens is the emergence of a generation with a paradigm of thinking that always prioritizes subjectivity and alignment-or may also benefit-for certain groups, and is far from seeking truth in a generally accepted (universal) sense.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY

It must be acknowledged that at this time humans cannot escape from the use of social media. Where and whenever, humans are convincingly and certainly highly depends on social media users. This is due to the current human life has experienced a very terrible change that has shifted from a manual to a 'matic' life, social media has made it easy for humanity in various aspects of life. On the other hand, the advancement of human experience especially in the field of communication technology, become a vehicle for the emergence of destructive reasons because social media is widely used to commit crime, [5] and also the dissemination of false information / hoaxes and as a medium of Religious Hate Speech (RHS) [6] that can threaten internal harmony and between religious communities. Moreover, lately expressions of hatred which based on religious background or which use religious foundations are increasingly happen in the community both before the election and post-election of state leaders.

Some of the media which can be used in actions with a Religious Hate Speech tendency are television, radio, internet, smart phones and other social networks. Therefore, RHS must be resisted in a structured-massive manner involving all parties and of course the commitment of all religious communities by countering news that has been spread so it will not impact an emergence of mutual suspicion among religious people.

In some cases, such behavior often makes people confused, where on the one hand religion teaches positive behavior, both towards other human beings without discrimination. Whereas on the other hand, it is as if religion becomes a justification for the actions carried out by some groups of certain religions, where in practice this group is not hesitate and reluctant to spread hate speech. As a result of this behavior, the building of harmony that has been difficult to build faces its own problems so that a sense of mutual suspicion arises among children of the nation.

Expressions of hate using religious labels in religious (Islamic) language can be matched by the category of *hasud* terminology. *Hasud* can be interpreted as a provocation of others to hate their enemies. Whereas in Islam -as well as other religions- *hasud* is categorized as a despicable act. In this context, Islam commands that people should be protected from acts of *hasud*, as found in the Qur'an of Chapter al-Falaq (113: 5), which reads, "And from the evil of the seducer if he hasd".

It is not exaggerated if some say that in this age, religion experience kind of dysfunctionality because one side of religion actually brings moral messages for the benefit of humanity, but in the presence of individuals or groups seeking "justification" (read: not the truth), then religion seems to be something that drives the message to spread hatred. On the other hand, religion becomes powerless to "straighten" such deviant behavior.

In this context, Ahmad Mujahidin emphasized that the enemy of the current state is not in the form of military strength and the power of war but rather through effective and efficient means of using information technology. The cost of annexing a country is too expensive. Physical warfare is also very expensive so they learn by mastering information technology. Therefore, to strengthen defense and security, absolute mastery of information technology is required. [7] This phenomenon, if used in the analogy by Chris Loveman, is that the so-called Proxy War era, [8] which is war with hatred, agitation, slander, torture, character assassination and so on and all this is done through information technology is a major threat to the Indonesian right now.

As a plural country, Indonesia has a variety of diversity and potential, from it ethnic, language, race, culture or religion, which if its not managed properly with the spirit of kinship and togetherness then all the potential can be a "disaster" for the survival of humankind. On the other hand, if the potentials referred to are allowed to grow and develop naturally and even be nurtured, fostered, and maintained then a beautiful view will be born and beneficial to people's lives. In the name of diversity, Indonesia is in fact an extraordinarily beautiful park, so its resident will not feeling tired or bored. Indonesia is a very promising place for all to visit and appreciate one another, and above all, this country is like a home for all to share with giving. All that is needed is to find a way to make diversity valuable and beneficial for all. [9]

According to M. Nur Kholis Setiawan, plurality is not a negative thing, but rather a situation that provides space for everyone to make a positive contribution optimally.

Thus plurality is a positive one, given its existence is legitimized by the holy book which functions as a glue and social cohesion. Specifically in the Indonesian context, plurality is the basis for building social cohesion in the framework of working together based on a national framework. [10] [11]

Therefore, what is needed now is the mainstreaming of wisdom and kind in using social media by selecting every news and information received, so that people are not easily provoked by the news received, therefore, in turn an ingenious community in social media is born and can contribute significantly in building and maintaining internal and inter-religious harmony.

Harmony between religions means the state of relations between religions based on tolerance, mutual understanding, respect for equality in the practice of their religious teachings and cooperation in the life of society, nation and state. [12] Harmony is a condition and the process of creating and maintaining diverse patterns of interaction among autonomous units (elements / sub-systems). Harmony is a reflection of reciprocity which is characterized by mutual acceptance, mutual trust, mutual appreciation, respect, and mutual understanding. [13][14]

On the other hand, harmony between religions is not something that happens automatically (taken for granted), but something that needs to be sought jointly and continuously. With a joint commitment to uphold harmony, then of course harmony between religious communities will be realized and can be felt by all people.

Based on this explanation, it is increasingly clear that there is a correlation between social media and a harmonious atmosphere in the community. That is because humans are now very interested in using social media with various applications so that it can be used as a communication medium, but also as a vehicle for promotion, community building, business media, information dissemination (various kinds of knowledge) and so on, which in practice it is very possible that social media is used for good or vice versa.

In relation to the focus of this manuscript study, which is about social media with harmony between religions, at least it can be correlated with the theory introduced by Talcott Parsons, namely Adaptation, Goal Attention, Integration, and Latent-pattern-maintenance (AGIL). According to Parsons, if people want to continue to exist, they must have four foundations. Adaptation refers to the ability of the system to guarantee what it needs from the environment and to distribute these resources throughout the system. The goal attainment refers to the fulfillment of system goals and setting priorities among those goals. Furthermore, integration is the coordination and suitability of the parts of the system so that all become functional. While latent pattern-maintenance refers to the problem of how to ensure the continuity of actions in the system according to some rules or norms. [15][16][17]

The above quotation especially about latent pattern-maintenance is the ability of the community to maintain cultural behavior that has been ingrained and rooted in the soul and heart of the community. The cultural behavior in question is like mutual cooperation, helping behavior,

deliberation, tolerance and mutual respect. These cultural behaviors must not be changed into inappropriate cultural behaviors or contrary to the original cultural behavior. [18]

5. DIGITAL LITERACY MOVEMENT

Behavior and actions that occur in the midst of the community in terms of social interaction or communication, especially behavior that is counter-productive for the development of harmony among religious communities, then concrete and strategic steps should be taken so as not to impact more broadly so that it impacts the comfort of community relations. Therefore we need a movement to develop digital literacy, a movement that grows on the basis of shared awareness of the urgency of mastery and understanding of online media used for acts of kindness or benefit to humans.

Among the ways that can be done in order to support these steps is starting from ourselves by using social media wisely. The term "wise" here means of course universal meaning in the sense that the use of social media is to establish friendship, spread goodness and compassion, as well as a means to strengthen national integration, not to be used as a tool for acts of sin, transgression, and conflict (disintegration) between people. After that, encourage families, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, relations, to the wider community, so that they will be able to participate and take part in the movement of digital literacy wisely. In other words, the development of digital literacy must be carried out in a structured, systematic and massive manner, because it is a shared responsibility of all elements of society. This task-when quoting the term used by Alim Roswanto - is not a seasonal task but a task of all time. [19]

If all elements of society have the same awareness about using and utilizing social media responsibly, then of course the utterance of hatred, the spread of issues (hoaxes) that growing and strengthening the suspicion become maximized can be eliminated. If all this can be done, then what is built up is mutual trust and a harmonious atmosphere between existing religious communities, or in other words with this process, the community will be more spacious in dealing with various differences, even more likely to be able to accept input or even advice from others, so as to strengthen the fabric of nationality that has existed so far. [20]

6. CONCLUSION

The use of social media is become a common phenomenon in today's society, as a channel for their interaction and communication. However, the problems is when social media is used as a tool for provocation and slandering, resulting in confusion, chaos, and disintegration among the community. That is because, in reality, the majority of people seem to believe more with what they receive (information) through social media than with the verbally

explained news. This phenomenon is called the post-truth era.

The attitude of the people who are more inclined to seek justification than the truth, especially those related to social media, will certainly have fatal consequences for the unity of the nation because such attitudes tend to be exclusive and closed so that the truth seems to exist only in their group. This attitude is certainly not supportive for the future of religious harmony. Therefore, education in society about digital literacy becomes very urgent, so that people become more careful and selective in receiving or forwarding any news or information available. With this selective attitude, it is hoped that the community can be honest and objective, so that there is no longer an exclusivism for truth claims in society, but one that is inclusive. As such will in turn give rise to individual and collective figures of the community who are able to appreciate difference, hence the strengthening of the joints of internal and inter-religious harmony.

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