



Social Media, Politics and Islam

Digital Indonesia in Electoral Years

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Abstract. This paper tries to understand politics and Islam in Indonesia during the electoral years (2014–2019). Within the five years, the relay of politics contestation has birthed phenomena such as identity politics and Islamic populism. The elaboration of political and Islamic issues will always be anchored in the configuration of social media, the Internet, and the 4.0 technology paradigm. This kind of reading is important especially in the current Indonesian context, where social media platform and the Internet is very inherent in everyday life. In fact, the processes that occur in the realm of politics or Islam rely heavily on the power held by social media. For example, the thickening and ‘freezing’ of identity in politics are more or less influenced by the internal mechanism of social media algorithms. In the explanation, there will be mentioned the earlier developments regarding the media, politics, and Islam. The averse investigation, or tracking the history, is still absolutely needed considering what happens right now is not happening abruptly. For example, regarding the contemporary Islamic populism, which tends to swing towards conservatism, cannot be separated from the Islamization process in the previous period which strongly affirmed the development of the media.

Keywords: Social Media · Identity Politics · Islamic Populism · Post-Islamism

1 Introduction

From the seven billion of the world population, more than half of them are internet users [1]¹. If we take a closer look, the internet usage trend on a global scale always increases each year. Similar to the Indonesian context, the January 2019 data shows that there are 150 billion people have connected to the internet [2]. In the affirmation of the 4.0 industrial revolution, especially on social media platform and internet, Indonesia can be considered as accomplished. From its growth until the time spent on the Internet or social media, Indonesia is ranked top five in the world [2]. Moreover, in 2012, Jakarta became a part of “the world’s most active Twitter city” [3].

¹ The data from Internetworldstats.com shows that the number of the world population is 7.716.223.209 people, while the number of Internet users in 31 March 2019 is 4.383.810.342 people.

The migration to the digital world mostly can be seen from social media activities. People start to put everything on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and other social media. In fact, for Indonesian people, social media, in this case, Facebook, is the front gate that put them into the online universe. In other words, the Indonesian public understands Facebook as the internet and the internet as Facebook [4].

There are many studies regarding social media phenomena. On one side, there are studies that enthusiastically welcome the power of social media as the carrier of changes in society [5, 6]. On the other side, social media is understood negatively and pessimistically. Daniel Trottier's study [7] shows the media as something that is not more than surveillance practices. According to Trottier, when using social media, there are at least four surveillances that secretly working: interpersonal surveillance, institutional surveillance, market surveillance, and government surveillance. Similar to Trottier's study, in his work *Digitized Lives: Culture, Power, and Social Change in the Internet Era*, T.V. Reed [8] said that it was hard for him to find a positive impact of digital technology, including social media if connected with privacy rights.

The opportunity and challenges also haunt social media life in Indonesia. Several scholars show the positive impact on civil society activism. Nugroho's research [9] saw that there are collaboration pattern and process of Indonesian civil society group in promoting participatory democracy and the freedom of information through social media and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) device. Priyono's research [10] also shows that social media is an effective tool to get public participation in the political process or to influence the elected government's agenda in Jakarta. Tapsell [11] revealed the emancipatory ability of social media to highlight important issues, in this case, also to indicate the power of social media to solve the conglomeration of mainstream media. Gazali [12] encouraged the activists to keep working in the unique reality of social media so that Indonesia can reach, what he called, the democracy of social media.

One of the dark dimensions that become the challenge for the future of social media in Indonesia was pointed by Usman Hamid [13]. In his study, social media is also used to fight democracy principles. The monitoring of ICT Watch in 2014 also showed that there is an increase of persecution case over Indonesian citizens for expressing offensive opinions online. Merlyna Lim [14] who did research of Regional Election of DKI Jakarta in 2017 concluded that both who are pro-Ahok and anti-Ahok contributed in the post-truth politics.

Opportunities and challenges will always be in every process, including in social media. However, if we look at every event that happened in the last five years (2014–2019), having a high-quality experience when using social media will be a difficult challenge. In those five years, there are many political moments in Indonesia, such as Regional Election, Governor Election, Legislative Election, and Presidential Election. In the end, the electoral process that looks like a relay created sharp polarization and segregation in the public realm. That polarization and segregation peaked at the solidification of identity between the supporters of the two presidential candidates, Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto.

The distinction of identity is not only on the presidential candidate choices, but also on is political, ideological, economic, social, and cultural sentiments. It is apparent on

the words that are used to mock, bully, disrespect even defames one another. The pro-Jokowi group called the supporters of Prabowo with words such as *kampret*, *bani onta*, *kaum bumi datar*, *kaum sumbu pendek*, Wahabi, etc. On the other hand, the pro-Prabowo group called the supporters of Jokowi with *cebong*, *antek aseng*, *kafir*, etc. Then, at the end of the campaign, all the naming and labelling are crystallized into Pancasila versus the Caliphate or the Communist versus Pancasila. At least, that is what they deliberately reveal outside of their groups. A political strategy that uses such an identity.

This paper will try to re-understand politics and Islam in the electoral years by always anchoring themselves to the configuration of social media, the internet, digital technology, and the era of the 4.0 paradigm. Various events have occurred starting from the production of hoaxes, persecution, volumes of action (*Aksi Bela Islam/Ulama/Al Qur'an*, etc.), and the most recent one, the people power who rejects the election results. Two very prominent variables in these events are politics and Islam. Related to that, many studies discuss concepts, such as identity politics and Islamic populism to understand what is happening in contemporary Indonesia. However, many of these studies do not relate to the constellation brought about by the latest information and communication technology. This paper harbors an assumption that the development of media, both digital and non-digital, is involved in the process of strengthening Islam in the public and political spheres.

In the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution, it is very naïve to talk about something, whatever it is, and separate it from the conditions of the internet and social media. Of course, this is not an affirmation of technological determinism because fundamentally, the essence of technology is not technological [15] and cannot be understood independently from its social context [16]. On this occasion, the Internet and social media practices will only be used as entry points to understand the broader phenomenon, politics, and Islam.

2 Social Media and Politics

The use of social media in the national political arena has been acknowledged since the 2012 Regional Election in DKI Jakarta [4]. The JASMEV phenomenon (Jokowi-Ahok Social Media Volunteers) marks this. In the study conducted by Tapsell, social media as a new media has no less influential than the mainstream media, which is mostly dominated by oligarchs. Evidently, Google Trends Indonesia in 2012 put Jokowi's name at the top of the list of characters that are most often typed in the search engine. This indicates that the Jokowi phenomenon is not just a "media darling" but also the "people darling". And of course, this achievement cannot be separated from the role of JASMEV as Jokowi-Ahok's social media volunteer platform.

The application of the Internet and social media as the strategy of Jokowi-Ahok's campaign is inseparable from Obama's inspiration in the 2008 American presidential election. At that time, Obama used Facebook to mobilize his supporters and volunteers. Three years later, in 2011, Obama again broke into the general convention by using YouTube to announce his candidacy to return as a future presidential candidate. The use of the online world by politicians is indeed mostly carried out by politicians in the United States, even long before Obama. Several previous studies have shown political campaigns on the Internet, especially through websites [17–20].

The presence of JASMEV in the 2012 Regional Election in DKI Jakarta, in a study conducted by Nyarwi Ahmad and Ioan-Lucian Popa [21], indicated that there is a new understanding of the importance of the internet and social media as a marketing tool and professionalization of campaign actors and political organizations. Since then, most of the parties and candidates who are running in national and local political contestations begin to use the new media platform to manage positive impressions, frame images, or to deliver political advertisements to all voter groups.

The politicization of social media continues from year to year. Even more intense, massive, and “hot” in 2014, 2017 and 2019 electoral years. All sides maximize cyber channels and social media. Not only to disseminate positive information but also the negative one. This is where terms like hoaxes, misinformation, disinformation, etc. gain popularity.

The numbers of hoaxes that are produced in the era of digital politics cannot be counted anymore. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology’s 2017 data has indicated that around 800,000 sites in Indonesia are spreading false information [22]. A year later, 900,000 sites with negative contents and hoaxes were successfully blocked by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. Based on this information, we can see that there are many hoaxes circulated in cyberspace and even very visible indications of an increase every year.

If a hoax in a certain definition is associated with a negative campaign or black campaign, the phenomenon that occurs today cannot be called a new phenomenon given that even during offline electoral politics it also happened. However, the aspect of novelty can be seen in terms of quantity. It is very hard to imagine if the hoaxes that spread to millions are not intervened by the 4.0 media industry revolution. Through online channels such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and others, hoaxes multiply and spread everywhere.

The DailySocial survey on hoax distribution [23] shows many respondents received hoaxes through Facebook (81.25%). In the second and third places, hoaxes were received via WhatsApp (56.55%) and Instagram (29.48%). Line and Twitter occupy the fourth and fifth places with each getting respondents (Line: 11.37%, Twitter: 10.38%). This survey involved 2032 smartphone users throughout Indonesia [23]. Similar with the findings of the DailySocial survey, the 2019 Indonesian Telematics Society (Mastel) data also found that social media was in the first rank related to the hoax distribution channels, which followed in rank by messaging applications and the website [24].

The abundance of hoaxes on social media channels is inseparable from the behavior of most Indonesian people who generally use the internet for chatting, messaging, and social networking purposes. The explanation for why Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular channel for hoaxes is because these two social media are most often used by Indonesian netizens [25].

Hoax content is very diverse ranging from things that are very trivial like jokes to important and serious themes such as health, natural disasters, government, politics, SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations) etc. In both surveys, in 2017 and 2019, the Data on the Indonesian Telematics Society (Mastel) found that the hoax outbreaks received by respondents are dominated by socio-political issues (2017: 91.80%, 2019: 93.20%) and SARA (2017: 88.60%, 2019: 76.20%) The hoax regarding

the government is also quite high in the third place with 61.70%. As for other hoax contents such as health, food, and disaster, the number does not reach 50%. The 2017 survey involved 1,116 respondents, while in 2019 there were 941 respondents.

The thing that needs to be highlighted in hoax content is the possibility of mixing or overlapping between issues. This means that SARA hoaxes can be linked to political issues and political hoaxes can contain SARA issues. Both of these hoax contents, social politics, and SARA, generally contain incitement or in Cherian George's term, hate spin. The University of Hong Kong media studies professor defines hate spinning as a political technique of conflict that plays provocation and incitement, insults, and strategic offense [26]. Thus, the hate spinning is done intentionally by the hatred blazers to manipulate a hatred that does not exist.

Ironically, Cherian George shows that hate spin is often used as a political strategy in countries that adhere to democratic systems such as the United States, India, and Indonesia. Therefore, Cherian George explicitly called his resistance to hate spin since hate spinning will only foster intolerant and anti-democratic values. In fact, there is a possibility of hate spin being used only as a function of consolidation in such a way as to create resources for collective actions which aimed at killing the democracy itself.

So far, the relationship between social media and politics seems very pejorative, just a type of social media politicization for the purposes of electability without paying attention to democratic values. The data released by the Social Progress Index confirms this, the tolerance and inclusion score in Indonesia deteriorates in the political years. The peak is in 2014 and 2016, which is the period of legislative elections, presidential elections, and regional elections. The poor index number of democracies is certainly also very closely related to hoaxes, hate spin, misinformation, etc. as previously explained.

Another research also shows that Jakarta in 2017, at the moment of the Regional Elections, became the most intolerant city [27] even though two years ago, 2015, the state capital was not listed in the list of the 10 most intolerant cities in Indonesia [28]. The deterioration of tolerance in Jakarta was also confirmed by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). In its survey related to the Indonesian Democracy Index (IDI), in 2016, DKI Jakarta had the score of 70.85 compared to the previous score, in 2015, which was scored 85.32 [29].

3 Social Media and Identity Politics

On the electoral dynamics, the issue of SARA is always tempting to be played. In order to gain mass support and increase electability, politics often plays with SARA's sentiments. Indonesia has many experiences related to that, especially in the issue of religion or more specifically, Islam. In fact, we can still see it in the past five years. Islamic issues are processed in such a way to mobilize the masses. *Aksi Bela Islam*, *Aksi Bela Qur'an*, *Aksi Bela Ulama*, *Aksi Bela Tauhid*, and so forth are the concrete examples of the religious domain use for political purposes. Although the actors of these actions refused to admit that the timing and the targets say different things.

The 212 Action or the third volume of *Aksi Bela Islam* the most monumental action. Not only because it succeeded in gathering hundreds of thousands of Islamic masses² [30], but also succeeded in urging the government to prosecute Ahok who was later imprisoned. Basuki Tjahja Purnama, or known as Ahok, is the governor of DKI Jakarta who was running for the second time in the 2017 election. However, he was accused of defiling and harassing Islam in his speech in the Kepulauan Seribu. The basis of the blasphemy accusation of Ahok was the video uploaded by Buni Yani on his personal Facebook account, which later became viral. Since then, Islamic organizations have reported Ahok and were eager in taking action after action. In May 2017, after going through dozens of trials, Ahok was finally sentenced to two years in prison. Two years later, in 2019, Buni Yani was also sent to prison for being proven to edit the video of Ahok's speech on the island.

The issue of SARA has always been the main attraction for politics. By playing with the issue, emotions and anger can be quickly ignited. This happens because by speaking of SARA, we also speak of identity. Almost every election observer in Indonesia sees this kind of use of identity politics (especially religion and ethnicity) in the Regional Elections, Legislative Elections, and Presidential Elections. Identity is a legitimate source of value to use in making political choices. However, it will indeed be dangerous if overly used. Excessive affirmation of identity, especially in a political context, is vulnerable to be exposed to the viruses of conservatism, xenophobes, racism and so on.

The identity politics that currently plague Indonesia and various countries around the world [31] were first popular in the mid-1960s in the United States. At that time, the term political identity was associated with the influence of black communities in the political institutions in the country [32]. Based on several studies, identity politics is strongly influenced by factors, such as moderation and industrialization [33], local and historical contexts in certain regions [32], dominant group hegemony process [34], and global or international political situations and conditions [35]. Thus, identity politics is a response, reaction, or more precisely, resistance to the four types of constellations mentioned above.

The important matter to be further studied in identity politics is related to the identity itself. If we see the discourse of contemporary humanity, usually, there is an understanding that the whole identity is a construction. However, the most important thing according to Castells is how, from what, by whom, and for what the identity constructed [34]. For this reason, it is very important to construct the identity of social context issues. As for the current global context, the mediascape is very unlikely to be ignored [36]. The media is not just a medium [37] since it greatly influences how we see the world and ourselves.

In identity politics, the thickening and 'freezing' of identity is a process that must be presented, and social media provides that service. It happens because all the things contained in social media and the Internet are obedient to the algorithms, which are the basic structure of reasoning or intelligence. Through this internal logic, social media

² There are different opinions on the number of masses who participated in the 212 Action. Gerakan Nasional Pengawal Fatwa MUI (GNPF-MUI) as the organizing committee claimed that the number of masses who participated is 7.5 million people. However, some observers, based on the extensive analysis of the action area, predict hundreds of thousands of people are present.

reads the trends of each user account. When using social media, everyone voluntarily submits their personal data, spilling all kinds of psychological thoughts and conditions and sharing various daily activities, and all that is neatly stored in digital memory. Based on the data, the information options are filtered back to the user account.

In the Indonesian electoral context, if someone is a Prabowo supporter who often accessing content and having a network of friends who are also Pro-Prabowo, social media will automatically present various kinds of information related to Prabowo and vice versa for the supporter of Jokowi. Therefore, a person will be continuously served and unconsciously “forced to eat” a variety of information that is very similar. Algorithm filters present information based on readable preferences so there is no chance to see other worlds. The people on social media live in their own world bubbles. Eli Pariser introduced the term filter bubble to explain the mechanism of how a unique and personal universe of information is created.

The Merlyna Lim’s study [14] on the 2017 DKI Jakarta Regional Elections further explains how social media plays a role in identity construction. According to Lim, through filter bubbles, an “algorithmic enclave” is formed. With this term, Lim tries to show the process of forming a group that seeks to create a shared identity online. Intense and continuous interactions driven by algorithms enable mutual understanding, thoughts, and imagination. In the context of politics, the presence of groups with the same identity is very important. It is not just a potential vote calculation, but also to keep and maintain the beliefs that are believed.

The algorithmic enclaves that allow the construction of shared identities then have an impact on the creation of polarization and segregation in the digital world. This is evident in social media conversations ranging from the personal chat, WhatsApp group, to the open discussions on Facebook or Twitter. The discourse in public space becomes increasingly aggressive if it relates to hoax phenomena produced by “buzzers”, “online soldiers”, “cyber armies” etc. In the context of polarization and segregation on the 2017 DKI Jakarta Governor Election, Merlyna Lim called the discourse that developed on social media at that time a demonstration of the “freedom to hate”.

Therefore, social media has a great role in identity politics. Through the mechanism of algorithms, the process of thickening and ‘freezing’ of identity can be quickly realized. Regarding the polarization and segregation, it must be understood that it does not only occur in the cyberspace but also in the real world. There are many lists of events that represent this. For example, the cases of bullying and persecution that happened to several people; a mother in the Car Free Day area [38], a journalist that covers the volumes of action, and so on.

4 Social Media and Islam (Part I)

As previously shown, in the current Indonesian context, identity politics peaked in Islam. As the major religion, any political power will always be tempted to merge with Islamic interests in order to be called populist³. Without populism, political parties will lack votes [39]. Various terms, vocabulary, agenda, utopia, and action after action in the name of Islam filled the public space. The DKI Jakarta Regional Elections in 2017 is the moment that must be underlined. Many observers argue that the victory of the pair Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno (Anies-Sandi) that defeated the incumbent pairs, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and Djarot Saiful Hidayat (Ahok-Djarot), as a sign of the strengthening of Islamic populism.

In the theoretical realm, Islamic populism has a long history that can be traced back to the colonial period and the Cold War. One of the differences between the old and the new populism of Islam today is related to the class that represents the ummah. Islamic Populism uses the word “*ummah*” as a proxy for the term “people”. In the old model of Islamic populism, the interests of petty bourgeoisie are considered to represent the problem of the *ummah* while in the new populism the *ummah* is composed of various alliances. The new Islamic populism combines a variety of cross-sectional interests and cross-social classes aspirations, especially the urban poor’s, the new urban’s and the marginalized elites/bourgeoisie’s [40].

It is not easy to define the concept of populism. It is an elusive term since it can be associated with various kinds of Left or Right, progressive, and conservative tendencies [40]. In the Indonesian context, the populism pendulum moves to the right. The markers are the various kinds of populism actions commanded by Islamic organizations such as FPI and similar ones. Islamic organizations which were established at the beginning of this reformation have many intolerant and radical track records in terms of both the actions and the thoughts. This model of Islamic Populism is very sensitive to the formal and symbolic dimensions of Islam. The political language that is often used is also loaded with moral content based on a very rigid interpretation of doctrine.

The phenomenon of Islamic populism cannot be separated from the process of strengthening Islamic identity. The discussion about the process of strengthening Islamic identity in Indonesia cannot be separated from the events that took place in the last days of the New Order. A decade before its collapse, Suharto’s political strategy turned around by actively inviting Islamic groups from various orientations to join the government circle. In fact, in the early years of power, after succeeding in crippling communist forces, the eyes of the New Order power were very highlighting and wary of the power of Islam. With the “extremist right” rhetoric, in the 1970s and 1980s, many Muslim political activists were criminalized and even became the largest percentage of political prisoners at that time. Various policies were also produced to control and limit Islamic movements. In the formal political realm, for example, there is a fusion of Islamic political parties while in the cultural level, one of them was issued a policy related to the standardization

³ It can be seen from the support of Sharia Regional Regulations, a regulation that can be categorized as populist. Michael Buehler’s finding shows that religious-based regulation is supported by secular-nationalist parties rather than supported by Islamic-based parties. It means that everything can be compromised for electability.

of the use of school uniforms was issued nationally in which had an impact on the ban on headscarves in the state schools.

The 1990s was a period of the intimacy between the New Order's power and Islam. Many of the Muslim figures join the circle of power. Robert W. Hefner used the metaphor of Senayan greening for this phenomenon, in which 'green' connotes Islam [41]. Soeharto also rewarded Muslims with a variety of policies such as the Compilation of Islamic Law, amended the regulations on school uniforms, in this case the use of headscarves, the joint decisions at ministerial level about *amil zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadakah*, the government approval of the birth of Bank Muamalah, and the ICMI establishment. Therefore, in the final period of Soeharto's, Islamization met its glory and even occurred in the villages.

The government's partisanship through various kinds of development programs then helps the emergence of the Muslim middle class. The existence of this class is very central in the process of subsequent Islamization. In the theoretical realm, the significance of the middle class in social transformation has been greatly discussed. In the Indonesian context, the studies of the middle class have been recorded in many places [42–44]. One of the themes that has never been left behind is related to identity. The middle class is not a member of the elite/bourgeois group, nor it is a new proletariat or lower class [45, 46]. The middle position that they occupy brings tension which then triggers the search of an identity to redefine their identity.

One way to explain the Muslim middle class' identity is by using the concept of post-Islamism. This concept was introduced by Asef Bayat in 1995 when he wrote a short essay *The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society* [47]. As Bayat said, the essay articulates dominant social trends, political perspectives, and religious thoughts in Iran during the post-Khomeini. However, since then, the terminology has spread in various studies, especially the ones that refer to the shift in strategy and the attitudes of militant Islamic groups.

In short, post-Islamism is a negation of half (not total) of the Islamism paradigm and the modern country (which is characterized by democracy and secularism). Those rejected from Islamism are theocratic utopias or the establishment of an Islamic state. For this reason, post-Islamism prioritizes the adaptation to democracy and secularism. However, post-Islamism is not entirely secular, even allergic to various kinds of secularist expressions. Post-Islamism offers the presence of Islam in the public sphere one more time without having to be trapped in a rigid Islamic political ideology. Thus, the post-Islamism movement tends to be realistic and willing to compromise with political realities that are not entirely ideal or in accordance with the purely ideological scheme imagined because the most important thing is not to form an Islamic state but rather to guarantee how Islam is openly practiced by its people. Some political movements associated with post-Islamism include the "middle" parties, such as PKS in Indonesia, AKP in Turkey, Ennahda in Tunisia, the Justice and Development Party in Morocco, and the Central Party (Hizb al-Wasat) in Egypt.

The post-Islamism paradigm is not only used to understand political identity as mentioned above. The cultural, religious, and Islamic domains can also be explained through this concept. Post-Islamism provides a type of understanding breakthrough where between modernity and religion must not always be contested. Classical conception asserts that modernization will automatically erode the role of religion. Therefore,

being modern means being non-religious and vice versa. However, Bayat reminds that modernity and religion do not have to kill each other; “A major preoccupation of the nineteenth century is that the social theorists were to dispel the distinction between the religious and the non-religious. Now, after over a century of modernization, they are trying to differentiate between the religious and the more religious” [47]. Thus, in the modern era, the choice is not to be non-religious or religious, but to be religious or more religious (maybe even hyper-religious).

The Muslim middle class has a similar paradigm, post-Islamism. A Muslim does not have to depart entirely from the ideals recommended by the old Islamic authorities, but they also remain cautious in accepting the newness offered by modernity. Middle-class Muslims that mostly live in cities can fluently (not left behind) consume modern commodities, utilize new technology, and even follow a popular lifestyle. These things are taboo for Muslims in the past who saw that religious observance (which is sacred) and affirmation of modernity (profane, playful, and entertaining) were very incompatible and contradictory.

The rise of Islam in the realm of popular culture as happened in Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, and other “Muslim” countries in the 2000s can also be understood through the concept of post-Islamism [43, 47]. Bayat observed the phenomenon of televangelist stars in Egypt, Amr Khalid by calling it “post-Islamist piety”. This phenomenon also occurred in Indonesia with the emergence of names such as AA Gym, Jeffry Al Buchori, Muhammad Arifin Ilham, Ustadz Yusuf Mansur, etc. [43]. Bayat clearly described the characteristics of the new preacher as follows; “In 1999 (Khalid) delivered about 21 lessons per week in respected family homes, and the peak was up to 99 lessons in the month of Ramadan. Khalid delivered his preaching not only through face-to-face meetings, but also by using various types of media including satellite TV channels, the Internet with his sophisticated personal website, and audio & video-media tapes that specifically could reach the middle class and the more prosperous class” [47].

The main capital of the new preachers is the communication skills/public speaking and the use of various types of media. The Islamic scientific maturity that was obtained through a long process of education is no longer important. It is very different from the concept of old preaching that understands a preacher, *da'i*, or *ustadz* as someone who has a history of formal Islamic education, for example through studying with kyai, ulama or in *pesantren* for many years. Another thing that needs to be underlined is the affirmation of the media used for the purposes of *da'wah*, especially in the current media which is the consumption of the new Muslim middle class.

Before the internet and social media were booming as they are today, SMS (Short Message Service) was once a medium used by the *ustadz* of post-Islamism to popularize religious messages to the urban middle-class Muslim. During the glory of SMS, in 2006, there were around 500,000 subscribers of religious “premium SMS” services. Some *ustadz* who have successfully used the SMS media in their preaching include Jeffry Al Buchory/Uje (*premium SMS: Obat Hati*), Abdullah Gymnastiar/Aa Gym (*premium SMS: Al Qur'an Selular*) and Yusuf Mansur (*premium SMS: Kun Fayakun*) [48].

The indications of affirmation over the media can also be seen through the proliferation of Islamic media, both printed and electronic mass media. The effectiveness of the media in disseminating messages and religious values makes the passion of Islam

rediscover its momentum. Various popular cultural Islamic-infused products were selling well in the market. One phenomenal example is the *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* movie that became very popular. The movie, which is an adaptation from a novel, is praised as the “first” or “true” Islamic movie of that time [43].

The affirmation of the media by the new Muslim middle class, as explained before, is very instrumental in the process of strengthening Islamic identity. What is interesting is that the Islamization process is not many or not related to the Indonesian mainstream group, such as NU and Muhammadiyah groups. This means that the process of Islamization that occurred after Soeharto was more driven by a group of Muslims who comes from outside of those two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. This “Part I” is an attempt to narrate the first wave of Islamic interaction with post-reform social media as shown in the phenomenon of premium SMS from the popular television *ustadz*. The use of social media in the Islamization process at that time had not fully utilized new communication channels, such as the Internet and its various applications. However, this chapter needs to be presented since it forms the basis for media affirmations in the following years.

5 Social Media and Islam (Part II)

It does not take long for Indonesian Muslims to immediately affirm new media brought by the development of information technology and digital communication. Similar to the previous experience, the new media is used not only for the sake of communication and entertainment but also for the sake of Islamic *syiar*. Using smartphones, every godly expression and religious practice are very likely to be digitized.

There are many examples of social and digital media usage for religious purposes. In terms of the applications available in the Google Play Store alone, we can conclude how varied digitalization of religious practices is. This will not only help the worshipping easier but also reflects the strengthening of Islamic values in the lives of the Indonesian citizen.

In his study, Martin Slama [49] traced the digitalization of Islamic practices in the realm of *majelis taklim*, reading the Qur’an (the ODOJ/One Day One Juz phenomenon), and sending messages/status updates that had Islamic nuances (Slama called it “posting Islam”). The important thing to understand from Slama’s research is that digitalization also brings new forms and meanings related to these religious practices. For example, because of social media, the relationship between the congregation (*jamaah*) and the preacher became stronger, thus, the congregation was not hesitated to discuss their personal matters. Social media also teaches new ways of reading and reciting the Qur’an as programmed by ODOJ. Through posting activities, social media has made anyone able to be actively involved in da’wah activities.

In the previous section, the phenomenon of the television star (televangelist) whose existence is closely related to pre-Internet media has been discussed. In this era of new media, popular *da’i* or *ustadz* are emerging. Most of them become famous not because they often appear on television, but more because of the viral lectures on social media. These second-generation *ustadz* are very active on social media and have many followers. Several popular *ustadz* names on social media include; Ustadz Abdul Somad

(Facebook: 1.5 million followers, YouTube: 1.5 million subscribers, Instagram: 9.6 million followers), Ustadz Khalid Basamalah (Facebook: 500 thousand followers, YouTube: 900 thousand subscribers, Instagram: 1.4 million followers), Ustadz Adi Hidayat (Facebook: 296 thousand followers, YouTube: 362 thousand subscribers, Instagram: 2 million followers), Ustadz Hanan Attaki (YouTube: 440 thousand subscribers, Instagram: 7.1 million followers), and Ustadz Felix Siauw (Facebook: 4.4 million followers, Twitter: 3 million followers, YouTube: 299 thousand subscribers, Instagram: 3.8 million followers)⁴. This number does not include the viewer of each video uploaded on social media, for example, a video on YouTube, which can be watched by millions of netizens. In addition to the names above, there are other religious teachers who are quite popular on social media.

The use of social media signifies the rise of Islamic preaching media in Indonesia. Some of the old generation *ustadz/da'i* follow the trend of the changing media of *da'wah*. For example, AA Gym, Ustadz Yusuf Mansur, Ustadz Arifin Ilham, and so on. Even in terms of the number of followers on certain social media, the old generation *ustadz* also have a competitive number of followers compared to the new generation of *ustadz* (AA Gym: Facebook 6.8 million followers, Twitter 3 million followers, Instagram 4.4 million followers; Yusuf Mansur: Facebook 6.9 million followers, Twitter 3 million followers, Instagram 2.4 million followers; Ustadz Arifin Ilham: Facebook 7.4 million followers, Instagram 1.3 million followers). Of course, there are many explanations on why the popularity of old *ustadz/da'i* declined, ranging from age/health, the scandal involved (the case of AA Gym's polygamy), less attention given to the video content, to the scientific level issues. If observed, the new *ustadz* of the social media are mostly graduated from Middle Eastern Islamic education, (Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Khalid Basamalah and Ustadz Adi Hidayat for example), which is very likely to be the main attraction for Indonesian Muslim worshippers.

In the political years, the existence of popular social media *ustadz* was not spared from being included in electoral calculations especially when the political constellation that developed greatly emphasizes Islamic symbols. It was proven when one of the rising social media *ustadz*, Ustadz Abdul Somad, was included in the vice-presidential exchange of Prabowo's companion. Even the incumbent presidential candidate, Jokowi, also follows the same logic, which believes that the vice president must be from among the Islamic clerics. In this sense, the 2019 Presidential Election can also be categorized as the polarization of Indonesian Muslims.

Talking about Indonesian Muslims is very impossible if it does not mention the two of the largest Islamic mass organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah. However, since the beginning, the flow of Islamization in the post-New Order was more driven by the post-Islamist forces. Even in its affirmation of the media, both old and new, it is very rare to hear the *da'il ustadz* that become popular or viral are affiliated with both Islamic organizations. Perhaps as an exception is Kyai NU Mustofa Bisri or Gus Mus who is quite active on social media, especially on Twitter, by gaining 2.1 million followers. Martin Slama also reported that the same thing that the piety of Indonesian contemporary Muslim was relatively independent of established Islamic organizations.

⁴ Based on the authors' research on June, 2019.

Of course, this does not mean that the color of Islam in the online world is not at all diverse. Both in the digital and non-digital domains, online and offline, the face of Islam in Indonesia is no single. NU, Muhammadiyah, and other Indonesian Islamic organizations do not close their eyes to the use of social media and other Internet platforms. The difference is only a matter of the degree of affirmation. However, it is possible that the established Islamic organizations failed to read how important and powerful the media, both old and new, in the process of Islamization. This allows other Islamic groups, especially those who were pioneering to build new bases, to freely use the area that has not yet been occupied.

The affirmations of social media by Islamic forces, which in fact are still new, are the most possible and very strategic steps. It would be very difficult if the Islamic-powered newcomers have to preach openly in the offline spaces in which have been influenced by NU, Muhammadiyah, and so on. There is no exception for the post-Islamism power represented by the *tarbiyah* congregation and PKS. The post-Islamism itself is the direction of moderate Islam. Even in the survey, the PKS⁵ is not the most Islamic political party [50]. However, indeed, in his journey, post-Soeharto Islamization moved towards conservatism. Martin van Bruinessen termed the shift or transition of Indonesian Islamic style to a conservative direction with a conservative turn [51]. The phenomenon of Islamic populism which continues to be rolled out in the electoral years confirms the reversal/change of face of Islam from the friendly, smiling, moderate, and progressive Islam to the intolerant, conservative and radical Islam.

6 Radicalization Through Social Media

The presence of sensitive, irritable, and easily angered Islam has begun for several years before the Reformation⁶. After the change in Soeharto's political attitude, as explained earlier, the schedule of trials in court related to cases of citizens accused of insulting or defaming Islam began to re-emerge [52, 53]. Cases of blasphemy in a certain sense can be a sign of not only of the strengthening of Islamic identity in the public sphere but also the increasing the tension of conservatism and radicalism. If we take a closer look, cases of religion blasphemy often start from citizens who are using their right to express, give an opinion, to have a belief, or to practice a religion. However, since it is expressed differently or deemed to be deviant and so forth, the citizens are entangled with the Article 156A of the Criminal Code based on Presidential Decree No.1/PNPS/1965 of Prevention of Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion.

Post-reform trends in the cases of religion blasphemy continued to increase, especially in 2003 as reported by Setara Institute, Amnesty International, and Tirta in their studies [54]. From the results of the Setara Institute's study, there were 97 cases of blasphemy throughout the years 1965–2017 [55]. As for 2017–2018, Amnesty International found that there were 17 cases of blasphemy, which were spread throughout Indonesia [56]. The religion that often "feels" humiliated or tainted is Islam.

⁵ The research measured the scale or the degree of Pancasilaist/Islamic parties in Indonesia found that the most Islamic party is PPP. On the other hand, the most Pancasilaist party is PDI-P.

⁶ The religious blasphemy case is not a new phenomenon. It can be found as early as the pre-Independence era. The law basis on this case is also the product of Soekarno's Old Order.

The strengthening of Islamic conservatism and radicalism can also be seen from the emergence of Islamic defense militias, many of which are documented doing intolerant and violent actions in the name of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*, in the name of Islam. Many of the victims of this group are minorities who have a different understanding of Islam, activists in democracy, human rights, and multiculturalism. In the more terrifying currents, one by one begins to present themselves to the radical Islamic organizations affiliated with terrorism. Several acts of terror and suicide bombings series have polluted Indonesia in the post-Reformation. Terrorism is the most extreme strategy of radical Islamic groups. Another strategy that these groups use includes using party channels and forming Islamic organizations that fight for Islamic law through cultural channels: Islamic da'wah and demonstrations, both to the parliament and to the state palace [57].

Islamic radicalization also occurs in the online domain. As previously discussed, the affirmation of media is one of the key factors to strengthen the joints of the Islamic movement. Long before the social media as popular as it is today, radical groups had already set their foot on the cyberland. Even the presence of radical sites in Indonesia can be tracked before the formation of the government institution that is concerned with counterterrorism (BNPT). Radical online media such as *arrahmah.com* and *voa-Islam* have been operating since 2009 while the new Presidential Regulation on the establishment of BNPT was signed in 2010. Whereas if we refer to the monitoring of RSIS (Rajaratnam School of International Studies) Singapore there have been around 5,500 to 6,000 radical-terrorist sites throughout the world in 2010, and from the thousands 192 of them are in Southeast Asia with most of them using Bahasa Indonesia [59]. Based on the author's tracking on Google, the reporting of the radical Islamic sites can also be considered late. The discourse and the government's concrete steps towards the blocking of radical sites were buzzing in 2011 and later. This means that the affirmations of new media have only recently become part of radical Islamic groups strategy.

The presence of social media further facilitates the promotion and dissemination of radical thoughts. Through the share link mechanism, anyone can be directed to the sites that offer Islamic contents that are full of hatred and hostility. In fact, those radical Islamic online media are very popular among Indonesian Internet users (PSPB & PPIM 2017) [60]. The online media constellation in 2019 is not much different. Despite the repeated attempts by censorship and blocking by the government, 80 percent of the sites with Islamic content is still dominated by radical disseminators [61].

The millennials are the most vulnerable to the exposure of radicalism in the virtual universe given this generation is the most dominant users of the Internet and social media in the country [22]. Several studies confirm this; the research results of the UIN Sunan Kalijaga survey show the intolerant tendencies of the younger generation who are active in social media compare to those who are not [61]. In fact, this research recorded that 10% of the younger generation agreed to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state and allow the use of violence in defending religion [61]. The IDN Research Institute survey involving 1,400 millennials also shows a similar result with 19.5% of the millennials stated that Indonesia is more ideal to become a *khilafah* country [25].

The increasingly intense and massive use of social media has also affected the increase in cases of religious blasphemy especially in 2011. In the case of Sandy Hartono, religion blasphemy was not only entangled by Article 156 (a) and Article 157 of the

Criminal Code but also Law No. 11 of 2008 in conjunction with Law No. 19 of 2016 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE). Through his Facebook account, Sandy Hartono posted a statement that is considered to intentionally insult Islam, and for this, he was entangled with Article 28 (2) of the ITE Law. A year later, in 2012, Sebastian Joe was sanctioned to layered sanctions (blasphemy laws and ITE Law) because similar to Sandy, Joe was considered insulting Islam on Facebook. In addition to social media factors, the many cases of blasphemy cannot be separated from the constellation of time, such as the election period. Through the play of this article, political opponents are likely to be silenced. The 2017 DKI Jakarta Regional Elections can be a real example of how these two laws can be powerful weapons in political contestation⁷. Not surprisingly, in the 2019 Presidential Election, this strategy was also played by the two sides who both reported each other on the basis of the two laws.

7 Conclusion

After the KPU announcement related to the 2019 Presidential Election winner, riots broke out for two consecutive days (21/22 May 2019) at several areas in Jakarta. One of the government's steps to overcome the protests that led to the clash was to block Whatsapp's access and several other social media. This step was taken to prevent the spread of hoaxes related to riots and maintaining state security. Apart from the pros and cons of the steps taken by the government, this signifies how vital social media is in the current Indonesian context. Therefore, in order to understand the current life of the nation and the state seems to have become a mandatory requirement to be associated with the configuration of social media, the Internet, and other technology features that are similar.

The 21/22 May riots were the culmination point of the electoral political process (Regional Elections, Governor Election, Legislative Election, and President Election) which seemed like a relay for the past five years (2014–2019). The same contestant in the 2014 presidential election (Jokowi-Prabowo) returned to fight for the country's throne in 2019. This is probably one of the factors related to high tension and sharp segregation. The Indonesian public life was polarized in such a dichotomous way through various types of political maneuvers that played identity, especially Islam, and the conditions of contemporary media. The politicization of social media stimulates the production of hoaxes, disinformation, hate spin and all of their derivatives on a massive scale. SARA is the most used material in the fabrication of slander, false news, or information. In the end, the one who is confronted in electoral contestation is not a program between candidate programs but the identity. Given the primordial home of identity is a religion [34], the politics of religious identity (Islam) surfaced. Political dictionaries that contain religion such as Allah's party vs. Satanic party, Islam vs. Kafir, Badar War, etc. even filled the public space.

Islamic identity politics became the keyword in the last political years. The process of thickening and 'freezing' also helped by social media algorithms. Through a variety of strategies, both online and offline, finally, the power of Islam which is always plural in

⁷ Ahok was initially charged with these two laws. But eventually he was only charged by article 156 (a) of KUHP.

the Indonesian context has been successfully integrated. The success of the unification of Islamic forces in one umbrella as seen in the mass mobilization of volumes of action was also understood by many as the phenomenon of the rise of Islamic populism. Another thing to understand in the Islamic populism is the tendency to strengthen Islamic conservatism. Based on the explanations in this paper, we know that the strengthening of conservatism, even radicalism, of Islam today cannot be separated from the processes of Islamization after the New Order. The emergence of a new Muslim middle class with a paradigm that is more adaptive to the development of the modern world or what scholars call post-Islamism is an initial part that must be understood in relation to the strengthening of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia. Post-Islamism itself is a moderate direction, but in its development, as Bayat warns, there will be a tendency to become more religious (even hyper) in modern times. Modernity is not about being secular or religious but being religious or more religious. Thus, the journey of post-Islamism in Indonesia is also overshadowed by more radical Islamic directions. The current phenomenon of Islamic populism seems to confirm the existence of a moderate relationship between post-Islamism and the tendency of conservative and radical Islamic movements.

Another important thing that cannot be ignored is the affirmation of the media as a medium of da'wah in the of post-Soeharto Islamization wave, which is dominated by new groups, that are Non-NU or Non-Muhammadiyah, such as post-Islamist groups. Various kinds of mass media, both electronic and printed, digital or non-digital, have been successfully utilized in such a way as to promote Islam. Many papers have discussed the emergence of *ustadz* whose popularity is closely related to the existence of digital communication media, such as television, cellular phones, and smartphones. The latest trend found that the emergence of social media *ustadz* which defeated the popularity of television *ustadz* (televangelist). This change is not merely about the increasing number of smartphone users or other Internet technology devices, but also about increasing the effectiveness of Islamic da'wah in the public sphere.

The explanation about the existence of these social media *ustadz* is important to be presented because in its journey it will be taken into account in the political calculations. In the political years, even the *ustadz* cannot avoid polarization. Moreover, the constellation of identity politics and Islamic populism have encouraged some parties to propose the name of the popular social media *ustadz* to support one of the presidential candidates who will contest the 2019 Presidential Election.

The Islamic populism that swings towards conservatism and radicalism can be traced through the conditions that develop in the online domain. For example, in the early days of the Internet, before the era of social media, there were sites that contained radical content not only in the digital channels, but radical notions also that become the contents of sites like voa-islam.com and arrahmah.com are very popular for Indonesian Internet users. The presence of social media further adds to the ease of promotion and dissemination of radical notions. Until now, even though the government has carried out several censorships and blocking, the dominance of Islamic sites with radical ideals is still unavoidable.

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