TRANSMISSION OF ANTIPLURALISM IN THE MILLENNIAL DIGITAL MEDIA SPACE

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Abstract

Excessive religious attitudes have shown an increasing trend among young people in some research results. This research intends to examine the transmission of anti-pluralism in the digital media space of millennial youth. For this purpose, researchers used a qualitative case study method by collecting data through site observations used by millennials, searching for documents on digital media, and interviews with several youths, some of whom had been influenced by the doctrine of anti-pluralism. The results of this study indicated that adherents of anti-pluralism had transmitted this understanding in the digital space of millennials through hyperlinks between sites. These links are used to transform understandings, among others: anti-difference, sole ruler of truth, thaghut, anti-Pancasila, and revolution. This transmission was an effort to carry out clandestine regeneration with the young millennial generation who are the primary users of this media.

Keywords: Religious Understanding Transmission, Antipluralism, Millennials, and Digital Media.

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Abstrak


Kata Kunci: Transmisi Paham Keagamaan, Antipluralisme, Kaum Milenial, dan Media Digital

INTRODUCTION

Several research results have confirmed the spread of a hardline Islamic religious ideology among the nation’s younger generations.1 This condition was inseparable from the incessant efforts to transform non-mainstream understandings and ideologies through various media. Millennials need to be aware of this, especially for young teenagers. They are in an unstable transitional position, making them vulnerable to the indoctrination of non-mainstream religious ideas. Various means of information and communication for the millennial generation currently provide provocative content from the extreme right. This content can be accessed easily by anyone, including children who do not have a strong self-filter.2 This factor causes the growth of the seeds of non-mainstream Islamic understanding among this nation’s millennials, developing into religious-based movements with a violent approach.


Various means of information and communication have been used to transmit various non-mainstream Islamic understandings and ideologies. Digital media is currently the most strategic means to spread the religious understanding that has a particular ideology, because it can be accessed easily by various groups, especially the millennial generation. Digital information technology facilities have developed into a lifestyle and, at the same time, become a means of transmitting religious understanding. Husnatul Mahmudah and Magdalena have researched the transmission of non-mainstream Islamic ideology. The two researchers have revealed the spread of Islamic fundamentalism through education. Maulidatur Rohman has also revealed the spread of Islamism ideology in the academic community through his dissertation entitled “Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Islamisme di Perguruan Tinggi: Studi Kasus Transmisi Gerakan Islam di Universitas Negeri Surabaya.” Meanwhile, Kim Knott and Benjamin J. Lee’s research has succeeded in unraveling the connection between the transmission of ideology, extreme beliefs, and violent behavior.

Some of the studies above have succeeded in dissecting non-mainstream Islamic ideology transmission through education, but none has yet revealed its spread through digital media. This research is needed to help this nation recognize various ideological threats that can undermine the nation’s integrity and the Unitary Republic of Indonesia, which is Unity in Diversity.

This research would reveal how and why anti-pluralism transmission occurs in the millennial generation’s digital media space. For this purpose, data collection was carried out using observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and document tracking. Observations were made on several millennial sites to see the potential for penetrating certain ideologies and ideologies into...
millennials’s digital media spaces. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were conducted with adolescents who had been influenced by the doctrine of anti-pluralism and teenagers who actively studied religion through digital media. It was done to deepen the penetration of the understanding or ideology that is found. The document search is carried out through digital and conventional (printed) documents to gather evidence and theoretical support for research findings. The researchers adapted Miles, Huberman, and Saldana’s data analysis techniques, consisting of data condensation, data displays, and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Anti Pluralism Seeds

Anti-pluralism means an attitude against pluralism.\(^\text{10}\) Pluralism itself is understood as a positive-optimistic view of diversity to accept it as reality (sunnatullah) and try to do the best possible in responding to that reality.\(^\text{11}\) In the context of religious life, this attitude is implemented through an attitude of respecting the religions and beliefs of others while still adhering to one’s religion and beliefs.\(^\text{12}\) Based on this understanding, anti-pluralism can be interpreted as an attitude of rejecting diversity, including refusing to respect others’ religions and beliefs. This attitude is undoubtedly a problem in itself when applied in an environment with a plural socio-cultural structure.

A plural socio-cultural environment requires multicultural awareness to be able to knit a harmonious life amidst various differences.\(^\text{13}\) The difference is sunnatullah, which should be addressed positively, wisely, and wisely by all nation elements. However, not all social elements can be positive in responding to differences, including followers of Salafism.\(^\text{14}\) Salafis themselves have historical roots with the early generation of Muslims known as “al-Salaf”.\(^\text{15}\) This generation consists of the first three generations of Muslims: the shahabat, tabi’in, and tabi’it tabi’in. As-Salaf itself can be understood as people who walk on the manhaj (method) that has been exemplified by the first three generations of Muslims. In other words, Salafi

\(^{10}\) Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, “Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI).” Jakarta: Gramedia, 2008.


followers try to adopt the method (manhaj) used by the previous three generations (al-Salaf al-Salih) in practicing their religious practice. The implementation of the manhaj is carried out in the realm of acceptance of knowledge (talaqqi), taking argument (istidlal), faith, law (syari'ah), and exemplifying the morals of the three generations. Another name for Manhaj is Manhaj Ahl al-Hadith, which requires puritanization, also known as Salafism. Meanwhile, the term “Salafiyah” appears to be used to refer to teachings or doctrines developed through the Salaf method.

Salafi groups consider that Islamic teachings have been contaminated by cultural elements, customs, and foreign beliefs that are not following Islamic teachings so that they deviate far from the original law of God. This then sparked the enthusiasm of the Salafis to continue to maintain the originality of God's Revelation and keep it away from the bid'ah, khurafat, and superstitions. They believe that Islam must be returned to a pure understanding and practice (purification) as practiced by the Prophet and al-Salaf al-Salih's generation. It will close the new ijtihad spaces to respond to the development of humankind's culture and civilization and force itself to survive with a single culture built by its predecessors. Teachings and doctrines like this will narrow Islam, which should be present as a religion that always gives rahmad to all nature in every living space that always flows and gives birth to new cultures and civilizations.

Salafists build fortresses of protection to maintain the purity of Islam with several teachings, namely: (1) Hajar al-Mubtadi which teaches that any behavior that is not exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad is considered an bid'ah, people who do it must be isolated, shunned, even considered kafir (takfiri); (2) teaches that politics is an illegal act because it is done with all the cunning and lies; (3) prohibits democracy, because it is considered a kufr system and does not have theological and ideological links to Islam; (4) it prohibits organizing because it is considered that it never existed at the time of the Prophet; and 5) return to the Koran and Sunnah purely according to the method of understanding al-Salaf al-Salih, because they believe that this generation best understands the contents of the Koran and Sunnah.
Salafi ideology has spread and developed among people in various corners of Indonesia and has 3 variants: purist, haraki, and “jihadi”. These three variants share the same views on the three fundamental teachings of Salafism, namely monotheism, following the sunnah and rejecting heresy, and emphasizing loyalty to people of the faith, and spreading anti-loyalty towards people who are considered infidels/enemies of Islam (al-wala wa al-barâ). On the other hand, they have different views regarding attitudes towards government. Salafist “purists” emphasize unconditional loyalty to the government, while Salafi “haraki” and “jihadi” groups reject absolute loyalty to the ruler. More than that, the salafi jihadi variant is a dangerous ideological variant because it tends to use violence in fighting for their beliefs/understanding.

The understanding that can be captured from the Salafi teachings is that the three variants tend to limit themselves to other groups with the concept of bi’âh and takfîr. This tendency then forms a belief in the truth of a single manhaj (method) in religion. It can lead to the formation of anti-pluralism, which can trigger religious life problems in Indonesian society, which has a community base of various ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Their claim that Salafis are perfect followers of Islam (according to pure teachings) has reduced Islamic teachings to be narrow, limited, and local. The reduction carried out through a narrow puritanization concept will produce a single culture (anti-pluralism) that lacks solutions in the framework to answer the times’ various problems. The Salafi view that needs to be watched out for is the understanding possessed by radical Salafi-jihadist groups; they call for the use of force by force or jihad to overthrow existing socio-cultural structures.

2. Portrait of Antipluralism Transmission in the Digital Media Space

Digital trace tracing directs researchers to a millennial community site that provides a hyperlink to a site which in this study is called “MoI”. The site “MoI” is a site that likes to narrate anti-diversity ideas and becomes a reference for a site that loudly voices the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII). The link
(hyperlink) built by the group can be understood as a network in cyberspace that indicates communication between the individual or group. Hyperlinks build a space for cooperation, exchange information, and maintain good relationships with the same background, interest, or project. The hyperlink between the millennial community site and the “MoI” site indicates a good communication and collaboration relationship about a project in cyberspace. It was supported by several informants who have accessed millennial community sites, then surfed to find Islamic study materials through the “MoI” site. The hyperlink can be seen in the illustration image below:

Figure 1. Hyperlinks between Millennial-MoI-ProNII Sites, Capture was Taken in 2018.

The “MoI” site became a media of transmitting anti-pluralism on digital media, which had hyperlinks to millennial sites. The forms of anti-pluralism are as follows:

a. The spirit of anti-difference

The digital footprint reveals the spirit of disrespecting people other than Islam. The broadcast has been publicly uploaded on online media with vulgar themes that create the impression of demeaning other religions’ people. These themes include: “Non-Muslims are Kafirs”.

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27 Interview with DN, IP, dand LPT, November 13, 2018.

The discussion thread in this paper presents the arguments that confirm the term “kafir” for Non-Muslims. This attitude is also shown to fellow Muslims who have a different understanding by calling him a kufr group.29

The narrative is presented in the public space of digital media to be accessible to their internal circles and the public at large. The sentence “Non-Muslims are Kafirs” can be a source of misunderstanding for Non-Muslims in evaluating Islam, and can even be misunderstood as an attempt to discredit them. Meanwhile, the article’s discussion entitled “Not kafir Kafir is Kufr” has the tone of blaming Muslims for choosing manhaj outside their class. The two discussions have implied an anti-difference distribution aimed at building group superiority in the digital media public space.30 It can injure humanity, mutual respect, and unity within the framework of Bhineka Tunggal Ika.31

b. Sole Ruler of Truth

Excessive attitudes in assessing the truth of their group and blaming religious people who have different points of view have been broadcast in several narratives on the “MoI” site with hyperlinks to millennial sites. The effort to develop the propaganda departs from the group’s excessive superiority to the group’s religious understanding. It could be listened to in the following sentences.

... So, it is very accurate. we. say and we call Non-Muslims as “kafir”... 

... removing or not using kafir words is against the fundamental faith of Islam. Islam is a religion that is firm and not gray. One of the faiths of Islam is to infidel people and call them “kafir”...33

The implied meaning of the narrative above is a love of belief in the too strong (excessive) truth.34 This understanding is spread through millennials’ digital media; they label groups other than themselves as the wrong group and even be interpreted. This excessive encouragement of

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32 See Bahraen, Tidak mengafirkan orang Kafir adalah Kekufuran ..., 2019.
33 Ibid.
love makes them seem to want to dominate the space of truth and tightly shut the doors of other truths. A religious culture like this can encourage the emergence of a rash attitude to blame others outside the group.

c. Building a Syiar about Thaghut

The data obtained by the researcher from the results of an interview with a teenager clearly explains that the anti-pluralism group has problems with Pancasila and the Merah Putih flag. They do not want to respect the Merah Putih flag and reject Pancasila because they are considered part of the thaghut government. This thaghut is understood as something made by humans or jinn excessively and exceeds the limit, from the position of being a creature (servant) to being equal or more than the position of being Illah (God). There are six kinds of taghut in their terminology, among others: Jinn who are worshiped, given offerings, and feared; idols who are treated as God; God-given humans; lust; rules other than those made by Allah; as well as objects that are godly, such as stars, moons, or anger.

In this perspective, the Republic of Indonesia’s Government was considered a thaghut because it imposes rules other than those made by Allah SWT. For them, whatever worship and pious deeds are done will be in vain while still acknowledging and obeying taghut, because the first condition of Muslims is to reject taghut. It was one reason for their anti-government stance, making them similar to the radical Salafi jihadi groups.

The development of thaghut propaganda through digital media also explained the attitude taken by its adherents to everything that is considered as thaghut. There are five attitudes to be taken in addressing the taghut, namely: declaring the taghut is false, staying away from the thaghut, showing enmity with the thaghut, hating the thaghut, and declaring the thaghut as kafir.

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36 Interview with DN, on December 7, 2018.
39 See Jihad is My Life, *Trilogi Thaghut* ... 2019.
This group believed that an intense effort was being made to persuade every believer to become apostate and subsequently become infidels. Thus, they need to stay under the banner of tawhid and reject *thaght*, because rejecting *thaght* (fulfillment of the first pillar of tawhid) is the key to understanding the Kalima Shahada, to surviving hell and entering heaven. Attitudes and views as above illustrate superiority and the imposition of values to erode existing values and order.\(^{40}\)

### d. Anti-Pancasila

The anti-pluralist group considers Pancasila as a wrong doctrine and contradicts Islam’s teachings, even respecting the Red and White flag is also considered the same as acknowledging the kafir *thaght* government. The interview data shows a teenager who had rebelled against his parents for working as a government employer (ASN). This teenager once blamed his parents for being sworn to be loyal to the *thaght* government, which was not according to Islam. According to his belief, the *thaght* Government will not answer the various problems that surround this nation because it is not based on Islamic law.\(^{41}\)

Meanwhile, the broadcast developing in cyberspace shows several discussions propagating the theme of pessimism over the future of the nation and the existing order. The propaganda can be read in two writings entitled: “Pancasila democracy is sure to fail”, and “Waiting for the death of the Republic of Indonesia”. The propaganda explains that the nation’s various messy conditions will not be possible to unravel and be solved by the existing system; even this group believes that Pancasila democracy is just waiting for its destruction.\(^{42}\)

The narrative above shows a pessimism towards Pancasila because it is considered a universal framework with multiple interpretations. It made the basis of the Pancasila ideology fragile, resulting in chaos in various fields, including politics and economics. The impact of the more severe chaos was the occurrence of political struggles, which would destroy the nation “they have been waiting for”. This group considers that the democratic system in this Republic only provides opportunities for the rulers to become “colonizers of their people”.\(^{43}\) This pessimistic

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\(^{41}\) Interview with DN, on Desember 7, 2019.


expression of emotional considerations can be understood from the following description:

The Republic of Indonesia’s fate would be like Majapahit, a kingdom that was considered the pillar of the state’s idealism to measure past perfection. The Republic will be destroyed by its own people. The people who will someday realize that their government is nothing more than colonizers who blackmail them without empathy are covered in utopian rhetoric and jargon.44

Pancasila democracy was also considered the cause of the weak enforcement of essential justice for the people. They made sharp criticisms regarding their aspirations to create a just and prosperous society for all Indonesians. For them, this dream will be unattainable, like a long dream, could never be awake. The people’s oppression will continue to happen, while the people themselves are not aware of it, they even seem to enjoy it, so that the rulers are even freer to enjoy their power. Pancasila is considered to be a glass of wine that makes rulers forget themselves.45

As mentioned above, opinions continue to flare up; for example, in an article entitled “Democracy Pancasila Must Fail”, they develop a discourse that Pancasila is a philosophy of power that is full of obscurity. Pancasila as a source of political application (manifesto) that can be interpreted based on each’s paradigm and interests. For example, they complement it with alibis: for Soekarno, Pancasila is Marhaenis or Marxism in Indonesia, for Wahid Hasyim Pancasila is Islam, everything in it is Islamic, for Non-Muslims, Pancasila was teaching their religion.46

This group also views that the multiple interpretations of Pancasila have caused the State to fall into chaos, making the rulers make decisions that contradict one another. It would give birth to a paradigm of justification that places the ruler in deciding the truth. Social justice for all Indonesian people is impossible because justice requires certainty, and certainty comes from the Most Just. Only the Islamic law revealed by the Most Just can become the State’s ideology.47 This fanaticism is the source of the growing pessimism that underlies the anti-Pancasila transmission.48

44 Ibid. 2019
45 See Jihad is My Life, Demokrasi Pancasila Pasti Gagal, ... 2019.
46 See Jihad is My Life, Demokrasi Pancasila Pasti Gagal, ... 2019.
e. The Spirit of Revolution

The anti-pluralist group propagates that revolution is a necessity for the sake of upholding Islamic sharia. Islam will not be established without revolution, so that revolution is seen as the way to go. The revolution will pave the way for building Islamic sharia to become the basis of life that underlies the social, economic, and political system. It is impossible to run this system effectively without power.49

The narratives uploaded on digital media reveal a strong passion for broadcasting the Islamic revolutionary movement. Researchers found at least four pieces of writing propagating the revolutionary movement uploaded on a site with a hyperlink to the “MoI” site, where this site also has a hyperlink with millennial sites. The four themes, namely: Understanding the Targets of the Indonesian Islamic Revolution, a Revolution Must Start Immediately, a Revolution is a Storm, and Towards an Islamic Revolution in Indonesia.

Most of these writings contain propaganda to transform the spirit of the Islamic revolution through digital media. One of the expressions that contain a fiery spirit is revealed in a piece of writing as follows:

“An Islamic revolution is bound to happen, sooner or later. As long as the mujahid were still there, even if there is only one mujahid left, the revolution will never die. If the Islamic revolution dies, then this nation will be covered by the grace of Allah. However, we could see with our own eyes the martyrs at any time fertilize this country with their blood”.50

The above expression describes the spirit to inflame the provocative nature of the Islamic revolution through offensive jihad. They provoke that the revolutionary struggle’s spirit will never be extinguished, will continue, without feeling tired, and always be ready to carry out the struggle. Various obstacles and defeats will not dampen their will and enthusiasm.51

The anti-pluralism group’s spirit is expressed through the slogan “Jaa’al Haqqo wa zahaqqa Baathil, innal Baathilla kaana zahuqaa ...”. This slogan gives the spirit that the truth (al-haqq) would defeat falsehood. This spirit then builds the belief that one day, the truth system built through the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) will be able to defeat the evil that exists in the system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

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51 See also Jihad is My Life, *Revolusi Harus Segera Dimulai*, ..., 2019.
They also discouraged that “The evil of the Republic of Indonesia will be destroyed and al Haqq (NII) will be sovereign again is sunnatullah.”

Meanwhile, to accompany the belief in a revolution, they have designed stages consisting of 8 phases, namely:

1. Phase 1: self-revolution, which was to condition their members mentally and scientifically, cleanse, and distance them from the concept of Jahiliyah (al-Muzamil), and begin to introduce deen/ideology (al-Mudatsir).
2. Phase 2: social revolution, namely forming exclusive, clean groups and communities, rejecting the social system of jahiliyyah (al-Qolam: 1-16)
3. Phase 3: mass movement and open preaching.
4. Phase 4: non-cooperative political movements, political mass formation, preparing political networks externally to find a suitable territory for the establishment of Daulah Islamiyah.
5. Phase 5: political revolution, Daulah Islamiyah, undertake a physical migration politics (separation of politics from the leadership of Jahiliyah), forming an Islamic political system.
6. Phase 6: total revolution, totalitarian war, defending the sovereignty of Daulah Islamiyah.
7. Phase 7: futuhat, taking over the power of jahiliyyah for the sake of the perfect establishment of Daulah Islamiyah. Eliminating all the potential for shirk in the power of the State, and implementing Islamic law thoroughly.
8. Phase 8: Expansion and Internationalism (Islamic Caliphate). Expand the justice of Islamic power around the world (Application of Rahmatan lil Alamin).

Based on the analysis results, the anti-pluralism content uploaded to millennials’ digital media is an attempt to transmit radical Salafi-jihadist ideas. At least several things marked the transmission process, including efforts to instill the doctrine of rejecting plurality, the spirit to practice the “al-wala wa al-bar” doctrine, developing an opposing attitude to the government (anti-Pancasila) and considering it as a thaghut kafir, and build understanding to move the spirit of revolution towards the formation of an Islamic state.

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53 See Jihad is My Life, Islam Politik, Politik Islam, ... 2019.
3. Why do They Carry Out The Transmission of Antipluralism?

This research finds that revolution is the central point of efforts to build the anti-pluralism of radical Salafi-jihadists. The approach to violence used in the revolutionary movement is considered an effort to defend Allah’s religion by fighting enemies of Islam or groups deemed deviant from Islam.\textsuperscript{54} The ultimate goal of the revolution, as digital documents found, is to form Daulah Islamiyah in the formal form of an Islamic state.\textsuperscript{55}

The establishment of an Islamic state (khilafah Islamiyah) is broadcast as an obligation for Muslims, which must be upheld to enforce Islamic law. Sharia values in the social, political, and economic order would be carried out through power. Without power, they see that the enforcement of Islamic sharia as the basis of national and state life will be impossible, so that revolution becomes the chosen path, even though it must be pursued through violence (offensive jihad).\textsuperscript{56} Borrowing Foucault’s theory of discourse,\textsuperscript{57} this Islamic caliphate is a discourse for constructing the collective thoughts and behavior of its supporters in building political power as a means of implementing Islamic law as a whole. Part of this effort has been carried out through the transmission of anti-pluralism values to millennial youth.

The transmission of anti-culturalism through digital media channels can prepare a generation that, in their terms, is referred to as clandestine/underground regeneration.\textsuperscript{58} They carry out this mission based on the rationalization that digital media is a strategic means to spread its influence to the younger generation. This development must be recognized, wary of, and resisted through counter-discourse efforts that promote a moderate understanding of Islam.

Conclusion

Radical Salafi-Jihadist groups have transmitted anti-pluralism into the digital media space of millennials. The transmission is carried out through digital


\textsuperscript{58} See Jihad is My Life, \textit{Menuju Revolusi Islam Indonesia}, 2019.
media (websites) with hyperlinks between sites and millennial sites. Researchers found several variations of the anti-pluralism doctrine broadcast in the millennial digital media space. There are at least five forms of anti-pluralism doctrine to be instilled in the millennial generation, namely: anti-difference, single truth owner, taghut, anti-Pancasila, and revolution. Revolution is the central point of efforts to transmit anti-pluralism in the digital media space of millennials. This effort is a clandestine/underground regeneration process carried out by radical Salafi-jihadi followers. They carry out this mission because digital media is a strategic means to carry out regeneration for the young millennial generation.
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