NETWORK SOCIETY AND TRANS-NATIONAL RADICALISM:
CASE STUDY ON ISIS SUPPORT IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Since Arab Spring gobbled the Middle East region, Islam Trans-National Radicalism has flourished in Indonesia with the spirit of religious puritanism. This movement supports ISIS and has proclaimed themselves as an affiliate of Ansharul Khalifah in Irak and Syria. The presence of global injustice and inequality which are easily seen in television, internet network, and social media accumulates the rapid growth of this movement. The revolution in information technology and communication has finally formed trans-national network society. Using the approach of network society, Manuel Castells said that the changes in information technology have resulted in revolution in many aspects of life including ideology (religion). In the middle of homelessness of personal identity in this era, the political identity and religious puritanism have become the pushing power to fight back the western domination in social, economical, political and cultural aspects of life. The birth of ISIS supporters in Indonesia is the society movement that resists the west world that performs the global injustice. Basically the ISIS label is only new identity based on fanaticism of the radical Islam group that has already existed in Indonesia.

Keywords: network society, information technology, global injustice, identity revolution and religious radicalism (Islam).

Introduction

In the history of Islam entering Indonesia, it is mentioned that Islam was taught in peaceful and tolerant way. With the help of Wali Songo, archipelagic Islam could adapt with local culture known at that time such as puppet show which was used in its missionary endeavor (Riddle: 2001). The face of Indonesian Islam started to change when New Orde was ruined. Following the era of freedom, radical movement in Islam started to form. Some years later following Arab Spring that stroke the Middle East, there was more and more trans-national Islamic radicals in Indonesia.

The change in information technology and communication has changed the social life. Before the era of technology, social environment was related to geographic environment spatially. When that change happened and the digital
network outsped, the social environment changed too. A lot of issues which are also global problems can be seen in social media. Unfortunately, before one issue is done, the next issue appears and it uses social media as a place of significant changes without any pattern that can be understood or read.

The era of information technology and globalization is marked by the massive use of information technology (internet). In this era, virtual room has become an essential dimension in daily reality. As this network does not stop at national border, the network society constitutes themselves as a global system that shapes new society, global society which is called network society.

On the other hand, global expansion continues to go beyond territorial border which is marked by national economical and cultural dependence as well as inter-cultural intervention that worsens the global situation. Trans-nationalism driven by globalization has changed people’s relations. As a result, more and more people end up in uncertainty, so then those who are restless create locality as a media to show their feeling, life ownership and communal ideology.

Work relation also spreads globally, and network of inter-organization state borders also accumulates. In addition, crime organization such as mafia begins to go globally and internationally. As the network society develops, infrastructure and facility that accomodate this society continue to grow. The new system of communication such as digital language, and other technological gadgets also take part in this society development that is connected through this network.

The arrival of freedom era in Indonesia was closely connected with the influence of globalization and the development of information technology. As a result of this information technology and communication development, the ideology of Islamic fundamental groups can penetrate easily into this country. The great amount of use of information technology has inducted and penetrated beyond geographical borders. The power of technology also spreads to every individual, group, region and country. The group of Islamic fundamental such as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) and Salafi also use this information technology in transferring messages of their ideology that they want to convey to societies. The power of information technology is adopted by Islamic fundamental movement to spread their ideology values embraced as the truth.

Network Society

Today we are in real virtual culture. This culture is formed by the process of communication. There is no division between reality and symbolic representation. The reality as experience has become virtual as it is perceived as symbol to couple practices that are far from their semantic meanings. Through polysemic discourse, the quality of complication, sophistication and message opposition of human thoughts of self-esteem real virtuality appears. (Castells, 2010:403-404)
Information technology has formed a model of new society which is called network society through real virtuality. The great numbers of people are represented by a community beyond time and space as there is social network through this internet social media. The presence of enormous information has epistemology implication for the truth which in the end has to be selected by individuals. The epistemology truth cannot be realized as universal anymore but it is back to each individual’s choice. This influences ethical choice (and esthetic: justice, peace) in the domain of axiology. The seep of technology in all human activities cannot be avoided anymore. However, human with his ethical choices, realize how far they can get involved in this information access. This is an identity problem.

Referring to The Paradigm Dialog, Guba (1990: 15), ontology of cultural study on information technology is the processes of communication network which are virtual with characteristics of occasional appearance which is then substituted by overlapping new information and competes in presenting the information. The implication is that the epistemology of this virtual reality is characterized by short subjective which is very relative (For example: information status and the communication of FB users can be updated). However, repetition and blow up in this information presentation does not necessarily damage the world information. Ethical and esthetic choices can be done by the power of individual identity whether operationally and technological politics this information can provide positive and negative sides in life. In the case of its ideology, it is still questioned whether the critical and constructive methods, hermeneutics and deconstructivism, are still valid for the study of real virtuality in the society of information technology and communication. The possibility to use cross-paradigm is needed to handle the study on information technology culture and other possibilities in inter-disciplinary study and inter-disciplinary of culture, technology, information and communication in the world of real virtuality.

The Influence of Network Society on Islamic Radical Movement in Indonesia.

Initially Islam was spread in Indonesia through peace and tolerant way. After the fall of New Order, Islamic radicalism (as it was underground movement) grews flourishly. This movement does not only describe the phenomenon of how religion is perceived by its written form (scipture), but it is also a movement that is closely related to communal politics, identity formation, and the problem of power in plural society as a competitor of liberal and secular movement (Nasr, 1996:4). Another name of this movement is puritanism. This name is referred to wahabi group in Saudi Arabia. This puritan group offers a set of textual reference that supports their intolerant theology orientation and undermines the other groups that oppose them. This intolerant group quotes Al-Qur’an verses by isolating Al-Qur’an texts from their historical and sociological background. Thus the product of tafsir or interpretation has high tendency to undermine other groups. They claim they are the testator of the devine truth.
The presence of Islamic radical movement is closely related to the influence of global fundamentalism, either directly or indirectly. The models of Islamic fundamentals can be referenced to salafi movement. It is a movement that promotes salaf tradition (the early generation) in Islamic world. In addition, this movement also has some variants that are different from one another. Initially, the period of salaf ranged in 400 years from the first time of prophet Muhammad’s life. Based on this belief, anyone died in this period belonged to khalaf period. Then the term of salafi was revived to mainly be used as slogan and movement to promote the return to sharia orthodoxy that then would purify Islam from all foreign influences. (Suhaymee, 2005:80-85).

The way of the above text interpretation and reading owned by salafi group results in seeding the theology of intolerance which is the opposite of the theology of tolerance. The theology of intolerance is not only owned by wahabi but it is also owned by other Islamic puritan groups. It described that there are some crucial elements that are similar to the principles strived by Islamic fundamentalist group. Those elements are some theological interpretations which are intolerant and undermine non-muslim groups or the opposing muslim groups.

The salafi movement in Indonesia is closely related to history and fundamentalism in other places or to the network of International salafi. The presence of fundamentalist movement in Indonesia stems from determinant fundamentalist outside the country. Today Indonesian Islamic society is the target of conflict by Islamic groups who want Puritanism in religion as these groups believe that the present Islam developing in Indonesia is identical to bid’ah, shirk, superstition, and far from the true value of Islam.

There are some reasons how fundamentalist Islam could enter Indonesia and influence a number of Indonesian Islamic believers. Some of them are political, economical and jihad reasons. The relation between fundamentalist understanding and politics can be seen in its two background causes. The first is their reaction to changes (threat of changes) that threaten their religious identity such as christianization, liberalization and secularization. The second is their reaction towards democratic systems that are considered too Europe-centric. They want the caliphate system to be re-enacted to answer all never ending national problems. HTI, for example, has a motto, “Save Indonesia by implementing sharia” (Yusanto: 2003, 135-171).

In the second reason, in economic sector, the fundamentalists are directed to the efforts to improve economic structure based on religious values and norms. This can be seen as resistance to secular economy. That is the reason that they want sharia economy.

The third reason is related to the religious motivation (read jihad). It is said that the fundamentalist often take the path of violence to realize their goals. For them, there are only two options, implementing Islamic sharia or to die as a martyr to fight for it. (Jamhari and Jahroni (ed.): 2004, 67-88).

In the middle of this discourse, the development of information technology and communication that form network society is very massive. This shows
inequality in which the West always dominates in social, economical, political and cultural sectors. This can be seen easily in television, internet network, and other social media.

On the other hand, colonization in economic sector has caused resistance in society. Consequently, new social movements emerge in different parts of the world and provide opportunities to the development of value and identities that are relative. Alberto Melucci (1989:109) calls this homeless of personal identity when describing alienation experienced by people whose identity becomes relative. He also adds that this condition requires individuals to reconstruct their identity and home continually. He also stated that this condition makes each individual to reconstruct his identity and home continuously.

In parallel analysis, well-known socialologist and a philosopher, Manuel Castells, in his book of The Rise of Network Society (2000: 15-27) explained that the changes in information technology has caused revolution in all aspects of life. Castell said that identity has become the power to push in contemporary history that is formed by the tendency of conflicting globalization. This only happens in network society. It starts from the system of economy, and capitalism follows the pattern of changes in technology and a more flexible development of capitalism also supports individualism and diversification in relation and work.

This liberal identity relativism finally undermines conventional social stability and causes the community who do not accept this reality to search for new identity which is ideal for main goal of life in the hectic of identity relativism. In the end, this creates resistant community.

As source of meaning for social actors, identity organizes meanings by determining how the goals of selected actions are identified symbolically. Then through halaqoh and daurah, radical Islamic movements introduce the formal ways of religious expressions like jalabiah for men and niqob for women to show their identity pillars while most of Islamic people identity fades away as a result of globalism and capitalism. Globalism and capitalism which are Europe-centric are accused for the emergence of cognitive dissonance which is doubt in faith that causes a person to have strong motivation to dismantle it. In this context, resistant community toward the West flourishes. The West becomes the object of anger from the excluded groups. (Sayyid,1997:158)

At this stage, the fundamentalists express their dissatisfaction and disappointment experienced by Islamic world. The expression of dissatisfaction and disappointment experienced by Islamic world and people takes place during daurah, and then they ask their fate and identity in the middle of the world of uncertainty while dreaming the glory of Islamic caliphate as the only alternative to kaffah Islam.

In this case, the subject is no longer individuals but collective social. This is what is called enclave. Enclave is a facility used to identify ‘a call back’ to basic identity as a key to main agenda of contemporary religious radical movement.
Enclave can be seen in almost any part of the city in which Islamic resistant community grows including the one in Malang. Enclave emerges as reaction by marginal society whose social mobility is hampered by global power that colonizes every aspect of social life effectively. Enclave is seen by them to help with the efforts to gain control over the world and gain power. This is done by bordering their control territory. Their criticism toward the outside world is mainly on political, economical, social and cultural secular system as they see this system coming from the West.

The emergence of ISIS supported by the availability of information technology eases the entry of hard line Islamic ideology in Indonesia. ISIS which was at first a local movement starting from Jamaati jays ahl al-sunnah wa l-jama’ah (JJAS) or arm forces of Sunni civil society which was established in 2003 after the invasion of America on Iraq. This group is the group that fought sporadically to American military in Iraq. In the year of 2006 this movement changed into Islamic State of Irak led by Abu Umar al-Baghdadi. The goal is to fight the American military and establish military power in Iraq. Several years later, after Arab Spring gobbled the region of Middle East, ISI helped anti-government group with the fight against President Syria, Bashar al-Asad, and in 2013 ISI changed into ISIS. Its goals are to establish a country and to enforce an Islamic caliphate in Iraq and Syria by building military power as a form of resistance towards American domination in Iraq and Syria government.

ISIS as a recent phenomenon also entered Indonesia. Some groups of fundamental Islamic movements due to the same feeling of ownership with the group that is opposing other group, the same vision and mission, finally united as ISIS. ISIS supporters in Solo, in the area of Tipes wrote on mural as symbol of ISIS flag. In this Solo case, the robe of radicalism may have changed from Al-Qaeda to ISIS.

The pledging to ISIS is done due to the similar interest of their doctrine and that of ISIS eventhough genetically they are not related to each other at all, even no contiguity. Uniquely, information technology and network society make these essentially possible to happen and create resistant group. ISIS itself is resistant to America and western countries. An example of domestic pledging took place in Malang when ISIS supporters pledged to Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi as a support to the establishment of caliphate. They hope with the establishment of Islamic caliphate, moslem people can reconstruct their identity shaken by massive stream of social change forced by modern global society.

They want to return to their main identity, goldly new world community which ever existed during the period of prophet Muhammad and friends. In the analysis of Castells, these people oppose the identity of McWorld that is global and homogeneous; those who appreciate individualism ideology and capitalism: material consumption.

The utilization of information technology facilities and the establishment of network society increase as globalizaton develops. The declaration of Ansharul Khalifah that supports ISIS in the Mosques of Jamı Sulaiman al-
Hunaishil in the village of Sempu, Gading Kulon sub-district, Malang Regency on July 20, 2014 was one example of this case. They use and utilize this era of globalization, especially in information technology sector, as an instrument to spread their teaching, show their existence, and recruit members. They send invitation through social media and online media, so at the time of declaration the number of visitors is varied and they do not know each other. Furthermore, their magazine, Al-Mustaqbal, contains vision and mission of ISIS. It also contains the photograph of ISIS leader, Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi.

In addition to the role of information technology that has made the ISIS ideology has gone globally, there is also the role of agency. This agency helps individuals to interact with certain topics in internet. This agency facilitates people with pre-text knowledge. Even though they are not generally applied, their role is real. They can be in the form of activities of mobile teaching, halaqahs in the mosques of schools and campus mosques.

Closing

The presence of ISIS and its supporters in Indonesia is an interesting phenomenon to be discussed as they spread the ideology and recruit their members through information technology and network society. One of the social media they use is twitter with hashtag #Mujatweets. Here the ISIS terrorists can communicate each other and share different experiences in doing their activities. In addition, another popular media used by ISIS to recruit young people is online media Al Hayat. Al Hayat documents all ISIS members who conduct training and it also presents the lifestyle of the members that was designed in such a way to attract the young people. (http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-uses-social-media-to-recruit-western-allies/).

When it is observed philosophically, the use of social media by ISIS group does not only underline the utility section of network convenience. On top of that, cyberspace simultaneously is a space for alienation as well as space for freedom for ISIS members to spread their ideology that they think ideal to fight the West world ideology and its allies in heroic and violent ways. Using the analysis of Foucault in his speech titled “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopia”, he discussed how the fight emerging is a product of different kinds of space of thoughts or ideologies that are overlapping. He gave an example of how opposition was formed from simple idea, sacred and profane space. The history of human has been formed through the fights of these spaces. The fight against the existed power hierarchy created counter spaces. In the narration of ISIS group, their ideology is considered as a competitor of the present power; American liberalism and its allies.

Indonesia is known as an area that has significant ISIS supporters. Basically the label on ISIS is only new form of identity based on fanaticism and radicalism of Islamic fundamental group. Information on this organization is easily found because they use the internet media technology such video uploading.
and other web-internet media. The spread news of ISIS is like *multi level marketing* (MLM), from on mouth to the next globally. The change of culture is influenced by information spread consciously. Technology is one of the facilities that can speed up the spread.

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