Reconfiguring Post-Ahok Populism, Post-Truth, and Cyberspace in Indonesia

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Abstract: The current political tension in Indonesia has fuelled speculation that the political orientation in Indonesia itself is moving from the democratisation characterised by the paradoxes in various realms which degrade the subsistence quality of its democracy (Hadis, and Robison 2005; Mietzner 2011; Okamoto and Rozaki, 2006), to the contestation among distinct streams of populism (Hadiz and Robison 2017; Perastyawan 2018; Djani and Tornquist 2017). Furthermore, it is observed as the global phenomenon that cyberspace has become a significant site for such contestation, where disinformation and hate are frequently rampant (Bradshaw and Howard, 2017). In particular, Indonesia has recently witnessed the rise of political figures who embrace the aspiration of dissatisfied people; of these an Islamist group is one of the notable contestants among others attacking each other in cyberspace by frequent use of social media and fake news. This paper will, firstly, describe the nature of such populist cyber activities in the Indonesian political context, drawing primarily on that of the opposition parties' supporters in facing the 2019 presidential election, and, secondly, discuss the validity of the populist force in navigating Indonesian political dynamics, namely in terms of whether it will be a new political model or end up as a brief phenomenon empty of significance.

1 INTRODUCTION

Researchers have not found a firm interpretation of political orientation in Indonesia since democratisation. In general, democratisation has resulted in paradoxes in various realms which degrade the subsistence quality of its democracy (Hadiz, & Robison 2005; Mietzner 2011; Okamoto & Rozaki, 2006). At the same time, populism is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon, including in Indonesia. In the West, recently, such populist spirit is exuded in events such as Brexit and Trump's victory. In the context of Southeast Asia, Thaksin began it in 2001 in Thailand, and was also followed by Duterte, the penal populist, in The Philippines in 2016. One of the most prominent events in Indonesia was the political situation since the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. The election gave rise to seemingly new elements in electoral politics, such as identity politics, hate and fake news, social media, and Islamist mass mobilisation.

That is to say that cyberspace is becoming a frontier of political communication in Indonesia. It facilitates a space for and amplifies many styles of populist political mobilisation, especially the recent Islamist one. Looking closer into each case of such, one may find an indication that the Indonesian political orientation is now moving from this peculiar place into a post-truth model. Indeed, Islamist activities in cyberspace depict the logic of emotions, sensation, and belief rather than accountability and rationality. Moreover, transformation from cyber populism into post-truth politics can be explained in terms of rapid circulation of information and less mediated aspirational grounds that break the conventional political legitimacy.

However, it must be considered carefully, for populism is theorised as a temporary political strategy in nature, and post-truth might be an

unjustified speculation on uncertainty. Polarisation since Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election has intensified and resulted in domination of political discourses based on religious identity and deterioration of Joko Widodo (henceforth Jokowi) electability. The narrative of current Islamist populism on social media also describes that continuity. However, if this was dichotomised, it could be seen namely as encompassing the supporters of Basuki Tjahaja (henceforth Ahok) and Jokowi, with the reformists as rational participants, and those of the opposition as irrational masses of a post-truth kind. This may lead to fail to capture the ambivalent and immanently polarised masses that connect in the political sphere through cyberspace. The series of aksi during and in the aftermath of Jakarta's election explained the capability of discourses in cyberspace to materialise. Clearly, the event has signified the role of cyberspace and somewhat became a moment of the rise of proliferation of intentional engineering of political environments in cyberspace. However, still, the events have not yet given solid ground for claiming that there is an ongoing rigid political change. Thus, it is neither about internet-literacy of the majority of users in Indonesia nor how much fake news and disinformation influence reality. But it is the matter of how cyberspace has been politicised. For instance, the formerly recognised status of Islamic populism in Indonesia is that it, "has continued to falter within and outside of the state…. [and] is doubtful that Islamic populism is a transforming force within Indonesian politics" (Hadiz & Robison, 2017, p. 498). However, after Ahok's blasphemy case, it is indeed unintuitive to consider this to be the case.

For these reasons, relatively new constituents of populism, post-truth, and cyberspace should be carefully considered, and translated into the context of Indonesian politics.

Firstly, the global rise of populism is often captured as a result of the failure of the neoliberal system. However, in many localities, "the roots are likely to be thick tangles of economic, cultural, existential, and other factors… [that] are not always directly traceable to the neoliberal system" (Postill, 2018, p. 756). Furthermore, contestation among distinct streams of populism in Indonesia is not new. It has been observed as a phenomenon that has occurred at least since the 2014 presidential election and also has roots deeper than merely the emerging popular powers riding on a democratising wave

(Hadiz & Robison 2017; Djani & Tornquist 2017; Mietzner, 2015).

Secondly, the fusion of populist and cyber activism or what Gerbaudo (2017) labeled "cyber populism" is a "new wave in the late 2000s and 2010s, that has been shaped not just by … shift from web 1.0 to the web 2.0 of social network sites but also by changes in the ideology of connected social movements" (Gerbaudo, 2017, p. 487). In this sense, Indonesia is important because, the Indonesian internet population is one of fastest growing and highest in the world; during 2016, there were more than 27 million new users (We Are Social, 2017). On the other hand, dynamics of political communication in cyberspace among Indonesians also falsified the monolithic notion of cyber populism. It means that, in relation to cyberspace, it is said that populists define cyberspace as a fountain of popular power, and non-traditional grounds for aspiration which they seek to occupy to serve the purpose of popular mobilisation against neoliberalism (Gerbaudo, 2017). However, many "establishment politicians have been as adept as their populist rivals in the use of social media," as exemplified by various cases across the countries, "from Obama in the United States to Prabowo in Indonesia or Rajoy in Spain" (Postill, 2018, p. 756).

Thirdly, Corner (2017) explains that post-truth is a concept that is interconnected with fake news. For instance, what Trump has uttered during many of his campaigns or on Twitter is called false speech, and is processed into fake news by the mass media, but is still able to gain a lot of support. The advantage for Trump was that he sought to aspire to the majority of voices who felt disadvantaged. These are circumstances which turn emotional appeals on, as factors that are more important than the truth itself. In Indonesia, Ahok's case of blasphemy was the one that may most examplify this. The public pressure for Ahok to be punished gained legitimacy while it was still debated whether it was defamation or not by academics, considering that religion is the most important thing and there is a taboo in terms of criticising it. Furthermore, how the case was publicised depicts that process of viral reality affecting most of society. Blackal (2017) adds that the post-truth phenomenon in mass media is related to journalism. News today rarely demonstrates how a news story is tested to deliver replication results, meaning that it does not provide space for testing the reported facts.

Furthermore, in order to avoid ambiguity in

navigating the political dynamics in Indonesia, relationships between populism, post-truth, and cyber space that have simultaneously become prominent should be clarified. This paper will do that by considering the context of Indonesia's post-democratisation political dynamics. Moreover, in doing so, this paper not only offers a contextual understanding of the abovementioned global political elements, but also exposes each element with questions and points to be monitored further.

2 POPULISM AS POLITICAL STRATEGY IN INDONESIA

Populism has become an important word in capturing the defects of democracy in modern-day Indonesia. What has been observed in terms of past political dynamics was the institutional or structural creed that gives rise to some political powers or conflicts that degrade the quality of democracy. In terms of populism, the source of agitation is neither the friction between elites nor hyper-sympathetic groups but it is an anonymous and seemingly indiscriminate crowd. Speaking of which, populism itself, regardless of its high exposure to historicism, and contestation, tends to be defined by the association with "the people". For example, "in the United States, the word populism remains associated with the idea of a genuine egalitarian left-wing politics in the potential conflict with the stances of a Democratic Party whereas in Europe has been regarded as technocrat" (Müller, 2016, p. 8). Moreover, its understanding and usage have been ambiguous as early attempts at defining populism as such were seen as attempts that failed to illuminate the concept itself. There is similarity in the criticism of these early attempts in that the definitions try to cover the wide extent of the phenomenon that might be captured as populism; they then leave no crucial point in the definition (Deiwiks, 2009).

Such a problem is also apparent in the accumulated literature on populism where "there exists at least four central approaches to populism – as ideology, logic, discourse and strategy/organization" (Moffitt, & Tormey, 2014, p. 383). However, Deiwiks (2009) further assesses that the relatively long remain effort is the definition by Berlin et al. (1968) which emphasises the elements of the people (Gemeinschaf) and rejection of politics (Deiwkis, 2009, p.2). Recent attempts are

characterised by careful emphasis on the element of "people" as Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008, p.3) define it as an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others'. Furthermore, the literature on populism has also identified many characteristics. For Taggart, those are the stance of anti-representative politics, the tendency of heartland narratives, a lack of core values, sense of crisis, and self-limiting (Taggart, 2004, pp. 273-276). From a different view point, Laclau adds that populist practice is covered by a lens of dislocation within which there is a process whereby the hegemonic identity becomes an order of empty signifier that in itself embodies an unattainable fullness (Gauna, 2017).

On the other hand, a determinant of populist uprising is that sense of disappointment at the performance of politics, to recover from certain conditions that damage the established social order. For instance, Taggart (2000) mentions that the emergence of populism is the result of a structural transformation in society. This, however, contradicts with another characteristic of populism as episodic and discontinuative political mobilisation. Alternatively, Panizza (2005) explains that populism is much more a form of the reactions to a situation of vast change in society, than that of macro structural transformation, by pointing out that such triggers might not only happen in the form of an economic crisis but also a civil war, a corrupt government and a natural or man-made disaster.

Considering this, it must be noted that the recent rise of populism in Indonesia is not a serial sequestration or a result of worldly transformation. Furthermore, out of all these different understandings, this paper sees populism as one of the ways of political mobilisation as Weyland (2001) defined populism: a "political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, un-institutionalized supports from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland, 2001, p. 14). Basically, the term populism is not only theoretically problematic as described above, but also, realistically, it is problematic as it can be applied in Indonesia. Current figures, neither Prabowo, Jokowi, nor leaders of the anti-Ahok movement, can be fully qualified as populists. There is a lack of at least one of the conventional elements of populism, namely anger, anti-foreign sentiments, political outsiders, or clear differentiation between

elite and non-elite. Thus, if any of the political figures in Indonesia may be categorised as populist, it is through the character of his/her way of mass mobilisation, and the attachment established with potential voters. Speaking of populism broadly in terms of "people worshipping", it is possible to say that the political climate of Indonesia has long been frequently coloured by the style of that sort of behaviour. As Farid & Fauzi (2017) wrote in their brief historical account, in Indonesia at least, since the first crossroads of the 20th century, the term little people or wong cilik exerts a strong political charm. Thus, the little people might be separated from the elite circle but, at the same time, have a strong and popular agency that can sometimes be linked with the established ruler in a symbiotic relationship, or it might sometimes be exploited by a certain moment of political contestation as a source of influence. Politics in Indonesia has been characterised also by the management of latent political mass. In a new order era, there was an unofficial manifesto preventing the floating masses from participating in practical politics and joining political parties, by creating networks of buffers consisting of "quasi-official, expendable enforcers such as preman" (Azali, 2017, p. 8). Accordingly, the recent rise of populism in Indonesia may indicate that there has been change in the relationship between political elites and this floating mass. However, to address this point, one must consider the dynamics of politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

Törnquist made a concise intellectual map of interpretations of post-authoritarian Indonesian politics by dividing them into three general perspectives. Firstly, the liberal account says that Indonesia shows a hope for further democratisation where the matter of substantiality is not so problematic compared to other countries in the global south. Secondly, there is an analysis from a structural perspective in which the conservative position argues that democratisation raises corruption and conflict, thus, in essence, requires a solid state and government building prior to democratisation, whereas the radical position says the system's drivers are still controlled by the old players, and additionally, leave opportunities wide open for the private sector to state resources leading to the formation of oligarchic democracy. Finally, observers from the perspective of social democracy put the democratisation in Indonesia as a shift from dictatorial to opportunist rule based on an agreement

between moderate actors and old regime actors by excluding hardline supporters of the new order and popular movement (Törnquist, 2014).

Furthermore, another point which arises from the debate on the status of Indonesian democracy, is the long strong presence of clientalism in the Indonesian political realm. The significance of this system, even after democratisation as the engine of the inner working of politics, is admitted by any perspectives, and, indeed, the interpretation of its consequence becomes a point of debate among them. However, political mobilisation based on clientalism has become stagnant recently and there is a need for other ways to invite more independent voters. Consequently, one of the fairly common rationales is implemented which elaborates that "a central post-clientelistic technique is populism, and politics conducted through a relatively direct relationship between a charismatic leader and the people" (Törnquist, 2014, p. 25). This is to say that populism as a post-clientalism strategy, is the result of the growth of the middle class as well as being widespread – through various media and forums – in public opinion that is critical of the corrupted administration of many sectors, making the voters and sources of political influence increasingly distant from any sort of conventional political affiliations. Hadiz & Robison (2017) argue that 2014 marked the coming of a new era of Indonesian politics by political outsiders, both Jokowi and Prabowo representing a different tone of secular/nationalist-populism, in their presidential campaigns. Furthermore, they explain that one unique character of Indonesian populism at a regional level is the competition among different kinds of populism. In addition to the competition inside the secular/nationalist circle, Islamic populism also has a strong presence in the arena. Similarly, Mietzner (2015) categorises Jokowi as a technocratic populist who did not propose radical transformation of the established system, and also created enemies. Pragmatically, the image that he presented to the public was that he was the one who could make good governance work under the system. On the other hand, Prabowo was an ultra-populist, who was more matched with the conventional definition of populists, because he created political enemies, offered a strongman image and represented anti-foreign sentiment.

3 CYBERSPACE AND DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

Cyberspace that absorbs people directly into the political realm can be treated positively in terms of democracy because it may break the inefficient intermediaries, such as a patron-client relationship in the context of Indonesia. On the other hand, the negative effect is the possibility of the unfiltered and concurrent political participation to stimulate "Internet-led mobbing" (Kim 2008). For the latter context, Bulut & Yoruk (2017) show how the political troll fin twitter can act on behalf of the establishment, and creates a digital culture of lynching and censorship in Turkey (p. 4093). Similarly, Bradshaw and Howard (2017) found that, since 2010, there have been growing numbers of organised social media manipulations employed either by government, the military or political parties in countries across the world.

For the Indonesian context, Suharto's regime could not fully supervise the coming of the global technology called the Internet in the late period. Thus, cyberspace at the beginning, by notorious popularity of internet cafes (warnet), became a kind of space free of the authoritarian oppression on speech (Lim, 2006). The fall of Suharto and also the development of an online environment later, provided a suitable condition for rising Islamic fundamentalists to operate as can be seen from the creation of Laskar Jihad Online in 2000 as one of the earliest forms of online-supported radicalism that now states it is combatting tough surveillance and counter-discourses (Candra, 2017). Not only on the radicalism front, but also cumulatively, as the number of users in Indonesia becomes globally significant (We are social, 2017), the government's concern about vast cyberspace has grown. In general, this concern has been demonstrated in the creation of laws on Electronic Information and Transaction, and on Pornography in 2008. It then continued with the development of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology's role in blocking the "illegal websites", and most recently we witnessed the creation of the National Cyber and Cryptograph Agency in 2017. On the other hand, although there is a skeptical account on the capability of the internet, especially social media, to mobilise the Indonesian masses (Samuel, 2017, p. 214), political interest also radiates around cyberspace. This can be observed from intense utilisation of YouTube videos and other platforms on social media during the Jokowi presidential campaign as well as that of vlog and online-supported direct aspiration namely sistem lapor in almost every body of his administration that have somehow marked the stance of the serving government from 2014. This dynamic of politics and cyberspace in Indonesia echoes with Gerbaudo (2017)'s argument that political activities in cyberspace now have changed from underground political communication to activities that are more oriented toward popular mobilisation.

Such a tendency has been intensified recently as Gunawan & Ratmono (2018) see cyberspace is problematised as a site of black-campaign by any sort of affiliation and as the magnitude of misinformation, trolls and hate speech is spreading. Furthermore, the case of the anti-Ahok Islamist movement during Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election has chiefly exemplified how online political contention can be materialised into physical mass movement on the streets. The series of Aksi Damai Bela Islam at the time that polarised Jakarta as well as the foundation of the 211 reunion association later and continuous Islamist online activities in facing the 2019 presidential election may inspire anyone to link current Indonesian politics with post-truth politics headed by Islamic populism. However, if that is done ahistorically, the specific importance of cyberspace as well as Islamist elements in current political dynamics might be ignored.

A long debate on Islam and politics in Indonesia since democratisation relates to explaining the low performance of Islam in politics, particularly the decline of Islamist parties, in the face of the Islamically-socialised vast majority of citizens/voters (Feillard, 2017). Multiple factors can be identified, from the depoliticalisation and nationalisation of Islam during the new order, the gradual deterioration of traditional religious powers, to the Islamisation of secular/nationalist parties (Heryanto, 2015; Miichi, 2015). Furthermore, although Islamist mass mobilisation has been rampant since the demise of the Suharto regime, the influence on electoral politics was not crucial. However, the recent Islamist political mobilisation stimulated by a discourse war on cyberspace is contradictory in terms of the formerly recognised state, in the sense that the vast Muslim masses that used to be a-political are now clearly showing the opposite character. Additionally, it is also important because the anti-Jokowi sentiments or # ganti

presiden that spread in cyberspace are seemingly a continuation from the Ahok case. If this is so, it means that Islamist populism in cyberspace is much more than the result of political figures freeriding on accidental and uncertain viral discourses. Rather, it may have some agency.

4 CYBERSPACE AND POST-AHOK POPULISM

Recently, various organisations ranging from governmental agencies to civil society, started to capture undemocratic and uncivil online activities such as fake news, hate speech, and internet lynching, under the jargon of "negative contents". Many of the items they collected can be categorised as or associated with populist political discourses. In other words, these negative contents are said to be commonly used by the populist interests to fight against their opposition in a way that is triggered by the political figure, underground movement, and finally shared by much larger society itself. Furthermore, Allcot & Gentzkow (2017) explain that fake news is news that is proven to be a mistake, that is purposely made to mislead the reader. Fake news is similar to a hoax, but the hoax is not entirely false news; rather it uses manipulated facts that potentially mislead the reader. Meanwhile, hate speech is an utterance that aims to strengthen hatred and racism among people or groups of people including areas such as race, nation, ethnicity, country, and religion (Gelber & Sarah, 2007, p. xiii).

However, it seems that there is not yet a rigid consensus among the organisations regarding differences between types of "negative contents" including the abovementioned hoaxes, fake news and hate. Moreover, it must be noted that some cannot be considered automatically as political content, and most importantly, the categorisation of such itself is a political construct these days. For instance, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology reports, in 2018, that complaints of negative content in 2017 increased 900% on 2016 (Kompas, 2018). Nevertheless, the trend is clear as Mafindo (Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia – Anti-hoax Organization), reports that, in 2017, there were 76,195 pieces of hoax-related news recorded.

Mafindo's report provides us with better grounds for assessing how disinformation shapes the current Indonesian political situation. Mafindo created a report on media news addressing hoaxes in social media, including topics such as hoaxes on Facebook (21%), Jokowi's persuasion on the fight against hoaxes (18%), regional elections vulnerable to hoaxes (16%) and so forth. It also depicts that the presence of hoaxes in the media peaked in January during the campaign period for Jakarta's gubernatorial election, and gradually relaxed later but sustained its numbers at around 50.
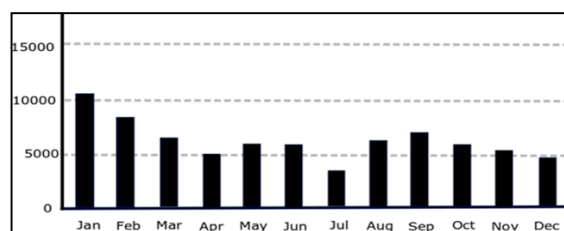

Figure 1: "Hoax" related news in Media during 2017
(Source: Mafindo, 2018)

This is to say that online populism had gained significance by cultivating a political moment in 2017. Since that time, disinformation became a realistically as well as a politically significant mode of information. On the one hand, in a realistic sense, harms that so-called negative contents may bring to civil society and also democracy cannot be ignored, but on the other hand, although the black campaign is not new in Indonesia, it is conceived as being an altering force, because the last gubernatorial election showed something different, i.e. social media, and Islamist mass mobilisation. Furthermore, according to AJI and Dewan Pers, the top three issues that were addressed by the hoax in 2017 were: (1) social politics (91.8%); (2) SARA (88.6%) and; 3) health (41.2%). Research done by Gunawan & Ratmono (2018) shows that these so-called negative contents are spread by the organised syndicate that operates systematically to create and share certain interest-laden content by using social media. One notable case, that of Saracen, a professional account that spread the provocative news, stated that there are specialists of facts and opinion manipulation in cyberspace that are hired by actors that have political and economic interests. However, if the moment at which online disinformation broke out intersected with Ahok's blasphemy case in 2017, it is inevitable to consider the degree to which such endeavours may influence mass political attitudes. In

other words, it is a question of whether disinformation is one inherent constituent of the post-Ahok political attitude of identity politics or merely a slight phenomenon of hyper-sympathetic actors or political troops who went online, to participate in a discourse war.

This is also where Islamic politics and cyber populism are linked, because one of the most debated issues since the event is religious intolerance in a political context or the rise of Islam-led identity politics. The Wahid Institute (2017) reports that 39.3% - 47.9% of Muslim respondents are against a non-Muslim becoming president, vice president, governor, or regent. The report argues that the public now tends to choose their leader based on his/her religion, not because of his/her capability, personality, or even background.

Based on this data, one may predict that cyberspace is the site where such discourses of identity politics are shared. However, the report also states that respondents obtain knowledge of Islam that is spread 24.59% in mosques, 28.61% through religious sermons on TV, 18.03% by preachers/clerics and 1.05% on social media (Facebook and YouTube). This is contradictory with online Islamic preaching that has also been growing recently (Husein & Slama 2018).

Furthermore, Molaei (2017) shows that 97.9 % of respondents in his research on Indonesian Facebook users, use the internet weekly to get political news. What can be seen here is that, firstly, Islamic and political information are, in many cases, perceived by individuals as different things. And, more importantly, as Johansson (2016) proves, since the 2012 election campaign, social media has become the domain of political communication that is alternative to traditional media controlled by conglomerates and thus, it is inevitable that cyberspace will become a vehicle for recent identity politics, no matter if there is concrete prospect of participants or not. Essentially, Islamic knowledge and political knowledge are circulated in different epistemic bases; however, if they are fused into identity politics, they also have to blend their bases. However, it is hard to see such bridging as totally an automatic process, and it must be accompanied by intentional signification made by certain actors who are masked as online moral entrepreneurs.

In this sense, the rise of identity politics may be related to the demise of the secular public sphere, clearly marked by the fall of Suharto. Heryanto (2015) explains that, after the fall of the New Order,

a great spirit for the rise of Islamic influence in various aspects of Indonesian society emerged. As one of these penetrates into the political sphere, religious purity begins to be applied in various aspects of life. In this contemporary era, people who pursue religious purity meet with various things relating to modernity but on the other hand which are also desirable. In some ways, religious purity can be reconciled with those things of modernity. Unlike the New Order era, now religion has begun to merge overtly as a political instrument. Hadiz (2016) adds that it is relevant to the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia. Islamic politicians, who are the opposition of a moderate government, use the issue of religion for political purposes. In addition, there is an anxiety built on the emphasis on Islamic religious issues and indigenous people (pribumi) being marginalised by governments and foreigners, the government allegedly doing so for foreign interests.

4.1 Amin Rais: A Peculiar Free Rider?

Amien Rais is one of the interesting figures who has represented an extreme kind of populism after the anti-Ahok movement in 2017. He openly campaigns politically in places of worship to try to stop people from re-electing Jokowi as president in 2019. This is also campaigned for by other leaders of opposition groups, for example Habib Rizieq, though he is not a professional politician, but his solicitation for a non-Muslim as a leader was also influential in the election of the Governor of Jakarta. Amin Rais said religion should be a guide in every line of life in the world. "Recitation should be inserted politically, if not, it's funny". Whatever his personal rationale, Amien Rais, by joining in line with Habib Rizieq, and expressing sentiments against current government, is clearly, and beneficially followed by the assembled Islamist mass from the post-anti Ahok movement.

The spread of political discourse based on religious identity is certainly becoming more massive through cyberspace, especially social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and also mass media. Some of the things highlighted by Islamic figures are not far from such an issue. All the elements, public figures, masses of ordinary users, and conventional media, have reacted to each other and co-constructed a viral reality of identity politics which they are all affected by.

The Islamist mass after the anti-Ahok movement in 2017, upon which figures like Amien Rais gained

influence, was indeed created by such a process. The case of Ahok's "defamation of religion" started from a video uploaded on Facebook by Buni Yani with transcripts of the text and captions that emphasised that Ahok was deliberately insulting Islam. The uploaded video soon became viral after being liked and shared by netizens and sparked outrage among the masses of influential Muslim figures. Some of the Islamist figures such as Habib Rizieq, amplified the issue into several contexts like political, racial, and economic ones. This led to a series of demos with the theme of the Aksi Damai Bela Islam I - VII that also became viral in the mass media, demanding the police and the state to implement a legal process against Ahok. The mass protest finally got a response from President Jokowi on 5 November 2016 at 00.00; to immediately settle the case, on May 9, 2017, the North Jakarta District Court sentenced Ahok to two years in prison for religious blasphemy.

Since the event, use of social media as a means of political expression has become more prominent. Both sides, Jokowi supporters and those opposed to Jokowi do the same, of course, by carrying out their discourses along with religious issues. However, what has been significant is the presence of public figures. For instance, Pro Jokowi academic figures such as Ade Armando (using Facebook) or new opposition politicians Jokowi like Ahmad Dhani (using Twitter) did not miss the opportunity to join provocative speeches in their respective social media, as shown below. In this context, it is related in the statement; the intended religious insult is Ahok, while henchmen of religious insults are people who still support Ahok.

Figure 2: Ahmad Dhani Provoke Tweet (2017)

Figure 3: Ade Armando Provoke on Facebook (2017)

Here it can be observed not only that is social media now being used by any sort of populist groups but, both figures from Ahok's side, and Anies's side, have expressed sentimentalised opinions. For instance, Ade Armando supported Ahok with a provocative statement on Facebook (Figure 3). Recalling the discussions on Amien Rais's actions as an oppositional figure, he also said a statement which became viral. He divided the party between the party of Allah and the Party of Satan (CNN Indonesia, April 13, 2018). The Allah party in question was Amien Rais's own party, namely PAN, then its allies, Gerindra and PKS, while he did not mention Satan's party specifically, but in the same place and time, he made a criticism of the Jokowi government and wanted the removal of Jokowi as president. Amien Rais also said that he did not agree with the current government, because he considered that Jokowi's government separated religion from politics. This indicates that his neologism of "Satan's party" is aimed at parties that support the current government that in his narrative, is secular.

The other action of Amien Rais that went viral took place at the National Coordination Meeting of alumni of 212. There, by pointing to Jokowi's photo on the podium, he said that he strongly believed that Jokowi would be overthrown by God. From the maneuver of AmienRais, it can be observed that there is a driving force in the Islamist mass to sync their purpose, after having had achievements in navigating Jakarta's politics, with that of the coming national one. Amien Rais is the personification of such drive, and he himself, in becoming so, affectively interacted with his supporters and assembled different sentiments into that particular context.

4.2 Internet Mobbing: Voluntary or Syndicate?

One of the political activities related to cyberspace that became rampant after Ahok's case is persekusi. Persekusi refers to hunting of social media accounts that reveal discourse contrary to morality especially that defined by Islamist groups. Once they have found the target, they can attack the target virtually as well as physically.

Between January and June 2017, 59 cases of persecution against alleged critics of Islam and FPI (Islamic Defenders Front) were reported in Indonesia. In May 2018, police arrested several people who are identified as Muslim Cyber Army (hereafter referred as MCA) members, a virtual organisation that operates in social media to conduct persekusi in terms of carrying out surveillance and also making and spreading fake news. They not only participated in a campaign against Ahok but later worked to engage in various issues, ranging from anti-LGBT, anti-PKI, to a Starbucks Boycott (Safenet, 2018). Apparently, police and media tried to portray them as a group of experts with an organised funding source.

However, such a label is not confirmed, for the MCA is also said to be an unstructured hub of accounts and affiliated groups who identify themselves as moral and religious defenders. A member said that "MCA has no leader, no central office, and no source of income. The MCA has an array of affiliated groups, with names like the Srikandi Muslim Cyber Army, the United Muslim Cyber Army, the Legend MCA, Muslim Coming and many others" (Juniarto, 2018). The ambivalence of MCA's status offers an overview of a network of discourse war machines, in which some are experts, and some are self-claimed.

The experts of discourse war are not limited to buzzers, but also includes "real" action takers. One of the most notable events of persekusi was the case of a 15-year-old Chinese boy being physically intimidated by FPI members. He shared offensive content relating to Habib Rizieq on Facebook, then mobs of adults visited the boy's house and took him away to be judged and intimidated. This shows that the mobs have the capability to track someone they deem to be offensive on mass media. This phenomenon tends to occur only in a case where some of the most respected religious leaders are insulted. The message is clear, however, that if anyone dares to say anything critical of Islam on social media, then mobs are ready to take action.

From this perspective, it can be said that persekusi of this kind is an extension of the activities of vigilante groups which have been rampant reality socially in post-Suharto Indonesia. In addition, persekusi is said to have an organised way of operating involving action often being taken by vigilante wings of Islamic mass organisations. The members of groups monitor social media, and when they find targets, they visit his/her house so that they can directly force him/her to apologise. On the other hand, it is considered to be an organised operation also because, unlike collective vigilantism or street justice that is spontaneous, many persekusi have been carried out by utilising existing socio-judicial mechanisms in a way that suits their purpose. For example, in the case of the 15-year-old boy mentioned above, FPI members met their suspect after informing the local neighborhood leader of their intentions. In addition, most cases have also been attended by police officers who have led the apology request processions (Jeffrey & Mulyartono, 2018).

Furthermore, this also exemplifies the argument of Trottier (2017, p. 68) that digital vigilantism is an act in defiance of the police, and police typically condemn and prosecute vigilante activity. Yet these relationships may resemble a more nodal form of governance. Digital vigilantism is concerned with both the spread of information as well as punitive desire. Cases of persekusi also showed both: participants try to get a suspect's apology and in so doing, they deter specific suspects they face directly and also, indirectly, they give a message to other people who might post materials in cyberspace insulting their morality. Furthermore, this is not a phenomenon which is exclusive to Indonesia; it is a global one, in which social media visibility delocalises the sphere of everyday moral policing. For instance, in Thailand, since 2010, online vigilante groups have been operating to expose political opponents by accusing them of lèse-majesté, and social media has also been used as a tool of mobilisation for state-sponsored mass events by the authoritarian regime (Schaffar, 2016, p. 215).

Meanwhile, digital vigilantism in Indonesia or persekusi was fuelled by the post-Ahok political situation as the number of incidents of persekusi intensified after Habib Rizieq was made the suspect of pornographic action by the police. Therefore, it depicts the moment when vigilante wings of Islamic mass organisations started to define cyberspace as

one of their battlefields. As in the case of conventional vigilantism, the state itself which is represented by the police is balancing its relationship with these groups, between preserving due process in terms of justice and taking majority moral appeal into account.

5 RECONFIGURING POST-AHOK POPULISM, POST-TRUTH, AND CYBERSPACE

Having examined the current situation in Indonesian politics, in this section, the authors try to provide a brief outline of the connection between post-Ahok populism and post-truth politics. In order to do so, it is inevitable to clarify how populism and post-truth are linked and exist in cyberspace. Indeed, for that reason, cyberspace became politically important, yet in the Indonesian context it did so because cyberspace provided a space for direct participation as well as access to the masses. This situation which the masses face has historical roots, and most importantly, by considering that historical context, the state of such political masses, namely any sort of cyber warriors being "the people" and how certain political figures gain advantage in such circumstances, can be addressed.

To begin with, Maldonado (2017) explains that the rise of populism, the post-truth politics, and expansion of cyberspace are interrelated in a sense that they strengthen each other. That is to say, "populism is strengthened by digiticization and affectively charged; sentimentalization is facilitated by digiticization and expresses itself in populism; digiticization shows an important expressive-cum-performative dimension and paves the way for a populist way of communication" (Maldonado, 2017, p. 10). In other words, cyberspace is a suitable site for both populists to appear and post-truth narrative to be circulated.

Meanwhile, post-truth and populism would both be causes and consequences of each other. This tangled dynamic can be observed in post-Ahok identity politics in Indonesia. On the one hand, the Ahok blasphemy case triggered the rise of Islamic populist figures such as Habib Rizieq, and Anies Baswedan. On the other hand, led by them, non-factualist, and sentimentalised narratives are increasingly proliferated especially in cyberspace by various actors ranging from voluntary participants in discourses of war, to organised factories of fake news and hate. Then, the post-truth narratives that

have accumulated in cyberspace are expressed by other freeriding figures, in the hybrid form of particular discourses. This is exemplified by Amien Rais who simultaneously conveys sentiments that rarely appear in the same context. In retrospect, Ahok's case, which is seen as a source of all the problems after, was also the beginning of the post-truth phenomenon intensified by the tension of a particular political moment and the digitalisation of the public sphere. From this perspective, not only is there an ambiguity of interpretation in terms of the content of video posted on social media, where Ahok is captured insulting Al-Maidah 51, the decision taken by the criminal justice system also reveals socio-political logic based on non-factual reasons. To put it briefly, criminal justice agencies issued a sanction that is in accordance with Islamist sentiments, i.e., imprisonment of a former governor. However, Buni Yani, an Islamist academic who uploaded the video, was also sentenced to jail for committing "treason", and Habib Rizieq, who is the leading figure in the Islamist mass protest, was also made a suspect in a totally unrelated case of "pornographic action" by the police, based on the contents of his personal mobile communication that oddly spread on social media. This result of justice is peculiar in many senses, depicting a judicial and governmental apparatus that is negotiating with emotional and sentimentalised appeals both from Ahok supporters as well as Islamist groups.

The important element in this case is the fact that the masses become the actor as well as the audience in cyberspace. In the context of Indonesian political history, during the authoritarian regime, the masses were made a-political. Masses were defined as a functional element of the state that should be guided, which was the idea also often referred to as floating mass. However, after democratisation, civil society exploded, but the democratisation at the time only spread, and could not penetrate deeply (Wirasenjaya, 2015). As a result, many uncivil elements in civil society, as well as local bosses emerged under the oligarchic system established since the Suharto regime (Beittinger-Lee, 2013; Okamoto & Rozaki; Bertrand, 2006). That is to say that the euphoria of democracy felt by civil society cannot embrace all civil circles and the old regime system remained strong. Thus, not all of those excluded from practical politics under more than 30 years of authoritarian rule could be recalled after regime change. However, the rise of populist politics through Jokowi who represents reformists and former oligarch Prabowo publicised more direct and two-sided political participation. Here it must be

noted that the masses seem to have been polarised ever since this period. They were both interested in a populist technocrat as well as ultra-populism, yet less so for the latter because the urgency for change was not realistic (Mietzner, 2015). In addition, we must consider another kind of mass group, namely the Muslim masses. The Muslim masses were also oppressed and made to "float" by the secular-developmental Suharto regime. But unlike the others, the Islamic traditional political apparatus did not enjoy resurrection after democratisation; instead they deteriorated. Besides, the general public has been increasingly Islamicised through networks and socialisation orientation outside the conventional circle (Miichi, 2015). Furthermore, recalling Hadiz & Robison's (2017) discussion on Islamic populism, they also argue that Islamic populism can be, at least, traced back to organisations that have emerged in a mid-new order, consisting of the urban middle class. After new order emerged, it further branched off; however, due to the strong influence of oligarchy and absence of leftist politics, it tended to focus on social justice aspirations. In other words, it might succeed in promoting cultural resources under the notion of "unified ummah" to act "against elites identified as secular, ethnic Chinese, or foreign" (Hadiz, & Robison, 2017, p. 498), but still, eventually, it is absorbed into the established structure. Therefore, in terms of our discussion, it created great potential without solid shade, yet always exposed with practical politics after democratisation.

In 2014, the Islamic masses, as the majority of the population of Indonesia is Muslim, could, at the same time, be bound to the populist agenda whether a technocratic version of Jokowi or ultra-populist version of Prabowo. But, identity politics marked by Ahok's case, in 2017, can be said to have attracted a portion of the Islamic masses who used to be attracted to reformist agendas offered by figures such as Ahok and Jokowi. Cyberspace makes this "floating" subject an actor as well as a spectator in political contestation. Cyberspace can swallow an apathetic subject into the part of political mass, and can also lead already incorporated subjects to sink deeper into their echo-chambers. Emergence of types of cyber troops such as the MCA, conventional vigilante wings of mass organisations going online, and general polarisation in social media, seem to be inevitable consequences, since, is the masses are already polarised between spectators and actors, as well as secular and Islamist individuals. However, the most important point that should be highlighted is that such post-truth dynamics in cyberspace can

clearly be utilised further by populist political figures. It has, for example, also been said that the opportunity has been opened wide for Islamic populism to "align with oligarchy while mobilising popular support on the basis of an ummah-based political identity" (Hadiz, & Robison, 2017, p. 498). However, based on the above discussion of the situation of politics in the aftermath of Ahok's case in 2017, the dynamics are such that both are approaching one another as a result of their desire to take a portion of the masses that have activated due to the viral realities of identity politics.

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