

The Contribution of Media in Disseminating Religious Intolerance in West Java

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Abstract: A research conducted by SETARA Institute reported that West Java is considered to be one of the provinces with the highest level of religious intolerance. These religious intolerances include interference to places of worship in various forms: assault, sealing, rejection, destruction of houses of worship, and the prohibition of the construction of houses of worship, the prohibition of worship activities, and others. The intolerance acts were recorded in news published in various online media so that the information immediately spread and read by the public. This research aims to determine the contribution of online media in conveying the news of religious intolerance that occurred in West Java in 2017. This study used content analysis to analyze some news delivered in online media in disseminating religious intolerance that occurred in West Java in 2017 in Kompas Com. and Tribun News. The result of this study shows that online media specifically in Kompas Com. and Tribun News contributed to disseminating news content of religious intolerance in West Java during 2017. This contribution shows in the form of reports of incidents of attacks, sealing, rejection, destruction of houses of worship, restrictions on the construction of houses of worship, and the prohibition of worship activities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a plural country with various cultures, ethnic, and religions. Indonesia contains cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity but unified as the State of the Republic of Indonesia with the slogan of the unity in diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) (Casram, 2016; Miharja, 2016).

There are several types of diversity of Indonesian society namely: (1) Indonesia is the Muslim majority country in the world; however, (2) Indonesia recognizes six religion and protect their adherents; (3) Indonesia contains many different ethnic groups; (4) Indonesia consist of thousands island that called archipelago.

In reality, there are several conflicts occurred related to ethnic and even religious differences. Indonesia is also seen as more and more adapts to curving freedom of expression include in term of religious freedom. Hamayotsu reports that this is related also to the representation of more conservative and radical Islamic elements in governmental representatives (Hamayotsu, 2013). In the last five years, based on data released by the

Wahid Foundation the practice of Freedom of Religion and Belief (KBB) in West Java is fairly poor. In line with Wahid Foundation, SETARA Institute reported that most of the abuses occurred in Jakarta and on the outskirts of Jakarta such as Bekasi, Tangerang, Depok, and Bogor, and other areas of West Java.

The most serious social tensions and violations of freedom of religion/belief are primarily related to places of worship of minority religious groups, criminalization of Ahmadiyya congregations, hate speeches, including statements or sayings of government officials / public figures that incite (condoning), all of which are classified in the category of intolerances.

Reports from Wahid Institute that examine religious harmony from year to year until 2011 showed that more intolerance occurred in recent years than in previous years. These intolerance behaviors occurred in the name of religious violence such as against Ahmadiyyah member. The Wahid Institute also reported that West Java is the province with the highest rates of violations from year to year (The Wahid Institute, 2011). Nowadays, these

religious intolerances that occur in some areas of West Java are easily accessible and well known due to electronic media news presentation. Derived from these news are several comments from the community related to that events as they were spread quickly.

According to Antony Mayfield (Mayfield, 2008), social media is a medium that users can easily participate and create various roles especially related to blogs, social networks, wikis / online encyclopedias, virtual forums, including virtual worlds (with avatars / 3D characters) (McQuail, 1987).

The presence of social media has made easier access to various public spaces than before. There is no more barriers and limitations in obtaining any news occurs in everyday life (Eriyanto, 2001; Ghifari, 2017). Thus, social media has an important contribution in disseminating news content including the news related to religious intolerance. People can read the e news version of immediate events occurred everywhere and at anytime (Furqon and Busro, 2017).

Several publishing and media companies that specialized in reporting news transform their news presentation by accommodating technology. They provide the presentation of their news not only in printing but also in electronic version. This paper aims to uncover and determine the contribution of online media in conveying the news of religious intolerance which occurred in West Java through Kompas.Com and Tribune News in 2017.

2 METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative with content analysis to analyze a variety of news related to religious intolerance that occurred in West Java published by Kompas.com and Tribun News throughout 2017.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It is important to firstly discuss the meaning of tolerance. Tolerance originated from Latin, *tolerantia*, means endure, forbearance or patience [Hornby AS, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford: University Printing House, 1995), 67]. Generally, tolerance refers to willingness to accept with open minded. According to UNESCO, tolerance means respect, acceptance and

appreciation of the rich diversity of any world's cultures, forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. (Michael Walzer, *On Toleration* (New York: Yale University Press, 1997), 56).

In the case of religious intolerance means any conduct that one religious group having prejudices to other religious groups in term of practices, adherents and beliefs. Intolerance is an attitude of disrespect to the belief system of other religion. (Wikipedia, *Ensiklopedia Bebas*).

Previous studies by Georgene Suryani's reported the objectivity of media coverage specifically in VOA-Islam.com related to the rejection of Ahok (previous governor of Jakarta) during the period September-October 2014. This study shows that the content of VOA-Islam.com is dominated by psychological inclusion facts (72.9%). This study also provides complete and clear incident with qualified and valued sources of information (Suryani, 2015; Rumata, 2016).

Furthermore, Jordie Yonatan Susilo wrote a Thesis on "The Objection of Online Media Reporting *Republika* and *SuaraPembaruan* on Mosque Burning Issues in Tolikara, Papua: A Quantitative Content Analysis". The conclusion states that in general, the online media *Republika* and *SuaraPembaruan* have not met the objectivity category in disseminating news about the burning of the Mosque in Tolikara, Papua. Both online media are contradicted to each other in providing the news. But both online media is trying to be objective. This can be seen from the suitability of the title and the content of the news, clear attribution, the inclusion of the time of the occurrence of the event, and news created containing news value (Susilo, 2016).

Fery Rohmadi, et al., also wrote about, "Framing Analysis of Cases of Alleged Blasphemy of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama in Kompas Online Media.Com and *Hidayatullah.com*." He reported that *kompas.com* framed the case of alleged blasphemy against the non-active Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama that he is innocent in that case and concluded that he is in fact a tolerant person. The news also reported the background of Ahok who were hosted in Muslim family and he has learnt about diversity. *Kompas.com* explains the news using syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structure to build public opinion. *Kompas.com* also provided arguments by displaying support of their opinion from experts who argue that Ahok's speech is not contain of defamation (Rohmadi and Siswanta, 2017).

On the contrary, the report presented in Hidayatullah.com framed that the case of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is the act of blasphemy and therefore should be sentenced. The analysis for this news is using syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structure. In hidayatullah.com the news fill with argument related to the interpretation of surah Al-Maidah verse 51. The verse according to this report has been used to deceive people and to disgrace Islam. Hidayatullah.com framed the issue mentioning that Ahok is a person who humiliated Islamic religion and thus he is intolerant.

Many intolerance incidents have been reported occurred in several places in West Java, Indonesia. Wahid Institute conducted a research related to religious tolerance and reported that the act of intolerance increased every year simultaneously. This intolerance mostly related to religious intolerance against Ahmadiyah and West java was reported the highest province to have this intolerance behavior toward other minority religious groups. This intolerance behavior among West java society occurred every year(The Wahid Institute, 2011).

Several intolerance incident happened in Bandung. For example in 2011the incident in Buni Jaya, GunungHalu district, as reported by CRCS(Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies, UGM), the Muslim community dismantled the grave of deceased Ahmadiyah adherent. Before the funeral took place the day before, the community do the protest to reject Ahmadiyah adherent to have the body being buried in their village(Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies, 2011).Other incident took place in Perum Parahyangan Kencana, Desa Nagrak, Kecamatan Cangkuang, Bandung where the fundamental Islamic group protested against the members of Kelompok Amanah Keagungan Illahi (AKI) in 2009. They accused AKI as tarnished Islamic doctrine and troubling for the community. This incident is mediated by the local Indonesian Ulama Council by signing an agreement between the parties mentioning that AKI will not continue their activities that could trigger further conflict among the community. In the same year, intolerance behavior occurred in Ciparay, Bandung where the adherents of Aa Cucu the leader of a sect were reported to the police for having unusual activities and rituals that disturb the community(Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies, 2009).

In 2010 intolerance took place in Bandung as well related to the sealing of GKI church by the Government. The government received a report from Islamic defend Front (FPI), Muslim Forum (FUI)

and Garis (Islamic Reformist movement). These organizations objected to GKI Kemah Injil Indonesia because they use regular house to perform their religious rituals. In addition, the sealing also occurred to the church of HKBP Betania, GKII Jemaat Filadelfia, Gereja Pantekosta Jemaat Immanuel, gereja DPdl, gereja Pantekosta Tebernakel Jemaat Maranatha, and Gereja Katolik Stasi Rancaekek, Paroki Santa Odillia Cicadas. Most of the incident related to misuse of personal resident to be a place to perform religious ritual that invited many people(Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies, 2010).

The study related to disharmony that occurred in Bandung, West Java showed that the factors leading to disharmony are various and not necessarily religious alone. Other factors contribute to intolerance behavior are: different interest in politics, different of economic and legal access as well as social problems(Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies, 2010).Many cases related to the sealing of the church as stated above are related to the difficulty in gaining permit from the government on the establishment of the church. As a result, there are many churches that have not have a permission document not only because of the document preparation but also because too many intimidation from the community who most of them are Muslim and they are rejected to the establishment of the church around them. In fact, daily social interaction as a member of the community are going well, however, it is a third party interest who usually provoke the community to reject the development of the church(Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies, 2010).

Apart from Bandung, Bekasi is also a place where religious intolerance behavior found in several cases targeted the religious minority groups. Bekasi is located in the outskirts of Jakarta as an urban community and heterogenic people who come from different areas of Indonesia. Different ethnics, religions and characters of individuals resulted in disharmony among the community and could trigger conflict(Ahnaf *et al.*, 2015).

Several incidents that occurred related to religious violent in the case of Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) Filadelfia adherents and Ahmadiyah followers. Violent behavior in the name of religious intolerance in the case of HKBPFiladelfia was the sealing and preventing them from accessing their church. In the case of Ahmadiyah followers, they were attack physically and also sealing of the mosque they usually used for religious activity. Intimidation was also often

directed to the religious minority in their daily life (Ahnaf *et al.*, 2015). Lodging the document for licensing of the place of worship is among many cases found in Bekasi.

Besides, intolerance behavior also directed to the groups considered by the community as astray to the main believe system. In Indonesia there are six religion recognized by the government, namely: Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddha, Hindu and Konghucu. Any religious group other than those six categories is considered astray. Bekasi is the region that people comes from many different religious groups as it is usually can be seen from blank identity related to religion.

Based on the report from Department of demographic in Bekasi stated that many identity cards remain blank in the column of religion. Almost 1.609 people unsure about filling their religious affiliation as many of them belong tounregistered religious groups. Most of them reside in the village of Jatiranggon and Kranggan of Jatisampurta district of Bekasi. Alexander Zulkarnain as the head of the department stated that "these people are not belong to any registered religion in Indonesia, therefore, they leave their column for religion blank in their identity cards (KTP)" (16/5/2016). Alex further explained that based on the national regulation number 23/2006 related to demographic administration stated that for those who belong to the belief system other than registered religion in Indonesia, they should put the cilumn blank. Meanwhile, their data were restored only in databases not in the ID card.

Alex emphasized that regardless of differences related to religious affiliation, the government never differentiate in terms of service as they are all citizen of Indonesia. The government try to give the best service and facilitate the citizens to get their rights and in this context to have citizens Identity cards.

The head of National Unity and Politics of Bekasi, MomonSulaiman) stated that these people who chose to have their religion blank in their ID card means that they belongs to one of religious groups that unrecognized by the government. Thus, it is their choice and they did not want to change their religious affiliation to any religion that admitted by the government.

Momon further explained that this kind of belief system are found in any regions in Indonesia as it is the belief system that adhered by the ancestor of Indonesian. Thus, it can still be found until today as it is transferred from generation to generation. This generation preserved what their ancestor have in term of rituals and doctrines. Some of them even

on" } (Ahnaf *et al.*, 2015)¹ ¶ !! .Lodging the widely to the society.

Other issues related to religious disharmony is the case of the permission of the development of the house of worship for the Christian of Santa Klara Bekasi. Forum of religious Harmony of Bekasi (FKUB) through its head Abdul Manan stated that it is already decided in accordance with the recommendation as lodged by the head of the district of Bekasi. He mentioned further that as a citizen, it is normal that the protest to annul this permit of the church development. He explained that the permit for the development of Santa Carla Church is already followed all the regulation needed and recommended to be approved. This process of submission for the Church development is also reviewed for the second time and verified until it is given a decision to be accepted. In the plenary meeting of 17 members of FKUB, Bekasi mostly agreed to accept the permit document.

At this plenary meeting of the members of FKUB, out of 17 members, 12 of them are Muslim and they were agreed to give permission on the development of Santa Carla Church. The permit process is actually has been lodged by the adherents since 2014 and they received the permission in 2015 where the protest blast.

Based on the joint regulation between the ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs no. 9 and Nomor 8 year 2006 about the establishment of house of worship, the church of Santa Carla has followed all the requirements stated in the regulation. Based on their report, there are 172 members of Santa Clara adherents that live in the village ofHarapanbaru, district of North Bekasi. Thus, the regulation that stated to establish the house of worship it need at least 90 members of the adherents should live nearby and they has exceeded the requirements. Other requirement is that it should have at least 60 consent signatures of the residents around the proposed building. Even more, the church of Santa Carla has proven has all the signatures of consent together with copy of their ID card and verified by the local government officers.

These documents are verified by the FKUB before lodged it to the head of Bekasi district. The head of FKUB Bekasi stated that this document is also studied by FKUB members intensively before giving recommendation to be approved. Thus, it is based on formal procedures and no bribes or manipulation the data in the process.Verification of data in the field was also monitored so there was no forced in the process of consenting to the building of the church.

Besides, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also added that they department has given the permit to the church of Santa Carla to be built and give recommendation to the government of Bekasi to issue the permit for the establishment of the church. Thus, there is nothing wrong in the issue of permission to build Santa Carla church and in reality no need to be protested when that happened.

All the procedures have been followed by the church of Santa Carla from the very beginning as required. Every step is passed in accordance with all the requirements. Thus whenever there is a protest to annul the establishment of the church it is unrecognized and difficult to accept. The force to annulment of the permission to the church came from outsiders who provoke the community to reject it. It needs open mindfulness from all the member of the community to respect all the adherents of religious groups for harmony and be aware of ant propaganda or provocative messages to act violet against other religion.

Whenever there is a protest to annul the permit letter, the governmental office of Bekasi is ready to be questioned or ready to the court because there is nothing wrong in the process. Thus, the mayor of Bekasi still hold to the decision of giving permission to the establishment of church until further notice if any.

Other story of intolerance came from Tasikmalaya, West Java where conflict of Ahmadiyyah with other Muslim community arose. The conflict related to Ahmadiyyah is the most cases happened in many areas in West Java. Ahmadiyyah is considered a sect that humiliates the true doctrine of Islam as their ritual and belief system is differ significantly from that of Muslim. Many Ahmadiyyah members experienced intimidation and even violent from other religious groups. The conflict aroused since 2000 and gain intense conflict recently.

Religious intolerance became attention of all elements from organization, individual as well as institution. Many research have been conducted to analyze these intolerance behavior among religious adherents and the background behind it. For example research by PPIM (Center for the study of Islam and Society) UIN Jakarta reported that more than half (about 67%) of Indonesian is intolerant. The report further mentioned that the reason for their intolerant behavior is discontented to live with people who have different social, political and religious affiliation. Besides, the research also showed that about 29% stated that they trust each other in their community, but 86% mentioned that

they should be aware and do not give trust to the people surround them (Kusumah, 2016).

It is ironic to see that West Java people are intolerant for Sundanese is famous with solidarity and religious and respect ancestors' cultural values. Sundanese people bond together by the traditional saying *silihasah*, *silihasih* and *silihasuh* meaning that Sundanese should take care of each other. The philosophies of lives among Sundanese are to live in harmony. Sundanese proverb says "herangcaina, beunanglaukna" which means that we should solve the problem without taking a risk of having another problem through win win solution.

Sundanese people respect for one another following the proverb: "*Ulah Unggut Kalinduan, Ulahgedag Kaanginan*"; This proverb means to be consistent to do good deeds and synchronize it with the hearth and saying and rationality. Other proverb also mentions "*Sing Katepiku Ati Sing Kahontalku Akal*", meaning think first before act otherwise you will regret for what you do.¹ These traditional sayings are very useful to maintain harmony among community members. However, it seems that these proverbs no longer being internalized in many Sundanese people. Perhaps, many of them even no longer know with all of these ancestors' philosophical messages as it can be seen from the report of high intolerant incident in West Java

This research investigates the role of Media in spreading Religious Intolerance in West Java through their news content specifically in Kompas. Com and Tribun News during the period of 2017. Data gathered from analyzing the news content in both media related to several incidents such as: attacks, sealing, rejection of the worship houses, and the prohibition of the construction of houses of worship, and the banned activity of worship. Details explanation showed in table below:

| No | Media | Date | News Title | Event |
|----|------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Kompas Com | March 11, 2017 | Prohibition of Worshiping Chronology at 3 Churches in Parung Panjang | GKI Yasmin congregation and HKBP Filadelfiacann of worship in their church because they are rejected by the community |

¹Buku Profil Selayang Pandang Jawa Barat

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|----|-------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Kompas Com | March 24, 2017 | Establishment of the Church Rallies Held chaotic Rejection | The protest against the establishment of Santa Clara church in Bekasi was chaotic | | | Strike Sealing Ahmadiyya Mosque | case of Al-Hidayah Mosque |
| 3 | Kompas Com | March 24, 2017 | Mayor of Bekasi Asks Rejection of Church Establishment Files Lawsuit | Bekasi Mayor, Rahmat Effendi opened the opportunity for the parties objected to the issuance of the license for the establishment of the Catholic Church of Santa Clara to take a claim to court. | | | Hundreds of People Protest The Presence of Three Churches in Bogor | Hundreds of people on behalf of Muslim Parungpanjang protest against the existence of three churches in GriyaParungpanjang Housing, Bogor, West Java |
| 4 | Kompas Com | March 16, 2017 | Mayor of Bekasi: Better shoot my head rather than pull the IMB Church | The Mayor of Bekasi affirmed his commitment to ensuring all citizens of Bekasi get the rights of Religious Freedom and Belief | | | Ahmadiyya Mosque Sealed by Depok City Government, Minister of Religious Affairs: Please See Contents of LC 3 Ministers | Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifudin asked all parties to re-refer to the Joint Decree (SKB) Minister of Religious Affairs, Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General in view sealing event Al-Hidayah Mosque in Sawangan, Depok. |
| 5 | Kompas Com | June 5, 2017 | Ahmadiyya Questioning Reason of Depok Government Prohibits activity at House of Jemaah | JAI questioned the attitude of Depok Government which prohibited the activities held at the home of an Ahmadiyya congregation in Depok | | | Replace-Load the seal of Ahmadiyya Mosque Depok | Ahmadiyya mosque in Depok, West Java, re-sealed for the eighth time during the year 2012 until now. Basic sealing was not based on law, but only fatwa Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which calls misguided. |
| 6 | Kompas Com | June 5, 2017 | Depok City Government re-seal Ahmadiyya Mosque | Depok City Government sealed Al-Hidayah Mosque which is located on Jl. Moehtar, Sawangan Depok. The sealing of the Ahmadiyya mosque was known for the seventh time in 2011-2017 | | | | |
| 7 | Kompas Com | April 25, 2017 | Komnas HAM: Depok Government did not ignore Related | Komnas HAM confirmed that it has sent a reprimand to the Mayor of Depok related to the sealing | | | Ahmadiyya Mosque in Sawangan, Depok, Back Sealed | The mosque, founded by Ahmadiyya Jamaat in Sawangan Depok, West Java, was again sealed |
| 8 | Tribun News | May 21, 2017 | | | | | | |
| 9 | Tribun News | June 9, 2017 | | | | | | |
| 10 | Tribun News | June 20, 2017 | | | | | | |
| 11 | Tribun News | June 4, 2017 | | | | | | |

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|----|-------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | by Depok City Government, assisted by Metro Depok Police Department. |
| 12 | TribunNews | August 3, 2017 | Wow! West Java is the Province With the Case of Highest Intolerance in Indonesia | West Java seems to get a red light in the case of intolerance in Indonesia. Because of the various provinces in Indonesia, West Java topped the list |
| 13 | Tribun News | March 24, 2017 | Demo Reject Establishment Places of Worship in Bekasi Tightening Clash, Three People Injured | As many as two out of three victims of the chaos demonstration establishment of places of worship in Bekasi, West Java, had to undergo treatment at the Emergency Room (ER) of the hospital. |
| 14 | Tribun News | March 25, 2017 | This is the Reason of the Mayor of Bekasi to Defend the Church of Santa Clara | Mayor of Bekasi, Rahmat Effendi affirmed his commitment to ensuring all citizens of Bekasi get the right to freedom of religion and belief. |

The analysis related to the reporting of religious intolerance as reported by Kompas.Com above can be classified as follows: first, the event of a sealing nature, the prohibition reported during the year 2017 has a clear object of the Ahmadiyya congregation and Jemaah Gereja. Second, the obvious headline proclaimed it happened, when it happened and contains elements of religious intolerance which afflict Ahmadis and Christians, as well as Catholic. Third, the news delivered contains the element of news value.

Furthermore, the news submitted by Tribun News has similarities to that reported by Kompas Com. However, the Tribun News revealed the news of religious more natural than that of Kompas.com.

Tribun News reported these events as natural as possible without provocative aim. Tribun also provided the real time event clearly, and the content of the news has a news value element.

Both media are disseminating religious intolerance with a distinctive style of news that characterizes each of its mediums. Then, both are very responsive media related incidents or events that appear in the society, especially related to the problem of religious intolerance which occurred in West Java, so that every event immediately reported. Through media language, the head news in these media could be provoking to attract the readers. This actually for better or worse give significant influence in directing the readers to intolerant behaviour. Both of these media are widely read in the community and give significant influence to the opinion of community related to the issues discussed above. Thus, counter narrative of such issues related to intolerant incidents reported in these news media online should also display to educate people concerning respect to religious members other than themselves.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The presentation of the media above related to intolerant behaviour among people of West Java is ironic. This reflected that Sundanese people no longer hold of the traditional proverb of taking care each other and should maintain harmony in live. The report above showed the intolerant behaviour related mostly about religious objection of other religion to live and perform ritual among their neighborhood. As many report stated that the intolerant activities mostly related to sealing the house of worship among minority.

Thus, it is very reasonable if various agencies present the results of research and studies related to the life of religion and belief, which states that the West Java province still ranks first in the issue of religious intolerance affecting religious minorities. This is in line with the news delivered by the two online media, Kompas.Com and Tribun News, which convey news related to sealing, banning, rejecting houses of worship establishment that are still happening in some areas in West Java throughout 2017. It is suggested that more news should be directed as counter narrative of religious intolerance in media

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