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DIGITAL RADICALISM: IDEOLOGICAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

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Abstract

Digital transformation has brought fundamental changes to various aspects of social, political, and religious life. The rapid development of social media and online platforms has not only expanded public participation but has also generated new challenges in the form of the dissemination of extremist ideologies, commonly referred to as digital radicalism. Digital radicalism refers to the spread of radical and extremist ideas through social media that occurs rapidly, massively, and is difficult to control. This phenomenon poses not only a threat to national security but also a serious challenge to ideological security, particularly to the values of Pancasila, pluralism, tolerance, and democracy in Indonesia. This article aims to comprehensively examine the phenomenon of digital radicalism, including its driving factors, the role of social media in the process of radicalization, and its implications for ideological security. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach through a literature review by analyzing 30 scholarly references consisting of academic books, research reports, and relevant national and international journal articles. The findings indicate that digital radicalism develops as a result of a combination of ideological, social, political, and technological factors, reinforced by low levels of digital literacy and ideological awareness within society. Social media plays a significant role in accelerating the radicalization process through algorithmic mechanisms and information echo chambers. Therefore, strengthening Pancasila-based ideological education, enhancing digital literacy, promoting religious moderation, and revitalizing local wisdom are essential and sustainable strategies to address the challenges of digital radicalism in the era of social media.

Keywords: Digital Radicalism, Social Media, Ideological Security, Pancasila

Abstrak

Transformasi digital telah membawa perubahan mendasar dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan sosial, politik, dan keagamaan. Perkembangan media sosial dan platform daring tidak hanya membuka ruang partisipasi publik yang lebih luas, tetapi juga menghadirkan tantangan baru berupa penyebaran ideologi ekstrem atau yang dikenal sebagai radikalisme digital. Radikalisme digital merupakan fenomena penyebaran paham radikal melalui media sosial yang bersifat cepat, masif, dan sulit dikendalikan. Fenomena ini tidak hanya menjadi ancaman terhadap keamanan nasional, tetapi juga menimbulkan tantangan serius bagi keamanan ideologi negara, khususnya terhadap nilai-nilai Pancasila, pluralisme, toleransi, dan demokrasi di Indonesia. Riset ini

bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara komprehensif fenomena radikalisme digital, meliputi faktor-faktor yang mendorong kemunculannya, peran media sosial dalam proses radikalisasi, serta dampaknya terhadap ketahanan dan keamanan ideologi negara. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif melalui analisis terhadap beberapa referensi ilmiah yang terdiri atas buku akademik, laporan penelitian, dan artikel jurnal nasional maupun internasional yang relevan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa radikalisme digital berkembang akibat kombinasi faktor ideologis, sosial, politik, dan teknologi, serta diperkuat oleh rendahnya tingkat literasi digital dan pemahaman ideologi masyarakat. Media sosial berperan signifikan dalam mempercepat proses radikalisasi melalui algoritma dan ruang gema informasi. Oleh karena itu, penguatan pendidikan ideologi Pancasila, peningkatan literasi digital, moderasi beragama, serta revitalisasi kearifan lokal menjadi strategi penting dan berkelanjutan dalam menghadapi tantangan radikalisme digital di era media sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Radikalisme Digital, Media Sosial, Keamanan Ideologi, Pancasila*

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation marked by the rapid development of information and communication technology has brought fundamental changes to the social, political, economic, and religious structures of global society, including in Indonesia. The presence of the internet, social media, and digital communication platforms has created a new public space that is no longer limited by geographical boundaries or traditional social structures. In this context, digital space functions as an arena for the production, distribution, and contestation of discourse that is crucial in shaping public opinion and the ideological orientation of society. This change marks a shift from one-way communication to networked communication, in which each individual plays the role of both producer and consumer of information. This phenomenon shows that digital transformation is not merely a technological change, but also a change in the structure of information power and knowledge authority (Wahid et al., 2020; Wibowo, 2020).

Social media has evolved into a digital public space that has strategic power in shaping contemporary social and political realities. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok enable the rapid, massive, and viral dissemination of information, thereby influencing how people understand social, political, and religious issues. From a political communication perspective, social media accelerates the processes of framing, agenda setting, and collective identity formation. Information is no longer strictly mediated by formal institutions such as conventional mass media, but is produced horizontally by users. This condition creates opportunities for the democratization of information as well as the risk of disinformation and ideological manipulation (Nastiti, 2020).

On the one hand, digital transformation provides significant benefits for the democratization of information, public participation, and freedom of expression. Social media allows marginalized groups to gain a voice, expands public literacy, and strengthens community-based social movements. In a religious context, digital space also allows for the wider dissemination of preaching, religious learning, and interfaith

interaction across regions. However, on the other hand, the open and algorithmic nature of social media creates fertile ground for the spread of extremist ideologies. Algorithms that promote emotional and sensational content have the potential to accelerate the spread of radical narratives, as such content tends to generate high engagement (Baihaki, 2022).

The phenomenon of digital radicalism has emerged as one of the complex consequences of digital transformation. Digital radicalism refers to the process of spreading, reproducing, and internalizing radical ideas through social media, online forums, websites, and instant messaging applications. This process is not always directly related to acts of violence, but more broadly includes the formation of intolerant, exclusive, anti-pluralistic attitudes, as well as the rejection of national values. Thus, digital radicalism can be understood as a process of gradual ideologization through repeated exposure to information and the strengthening of group identity (Muthohirin, 2015; Wahid, 2016).

The main characteristic of digital radicalism lies in its systematic propaganda and indoctrination mechanisms. Radical content is often packaged in the form of religious narratives that are simple, emotional, and easy to share. The use of symbols, verse excerpts, short videos, and personal testimonials makes ideological messages more persuasive. In addition, digital space allows for the formation of echo chambers, a condition in which individuals are only exposed to information that reinforces their pre-existing beliefs. This phenomenon accelerates the radicalization process by reducing exposure to alternative perspectives and strengthening group identity (Wahid, 2020).

In the context of Indonesia as a multicultural country, digital radicalism has serious implications for social cohesion and the ideological resilience of the state. Indonesia is built on the principles of plurality, tolerance, and the values of Pancasila, which emphasize a balance between religiosity and nationality. However, the spread of exclusive religious narratives in the digital space can trigger social polarization, delegitimize state institutions, and increase intolerance. These narratives often place religious identity in opposition to national identity, thereby creating ideological conflicts in the digital public sphere (Nugroho, 2020).

Digital radicalism is also closely related to changes in religious authority. In the digital era, authority is no longer monopolized by formal religious institutions but is open to individuals or groups capable of producing content effectively. This creates competition for religious authority, where religious interpretations can spread without scientific verification mechanisms. This condition has the potential to give rise to a textual, simplistic understanding of religion that is detached from the social context. In the long term, this phenomenon can influence the ideological orientation of the younger generation, who are the main users of social media (Tim Walisongo, 2020). Social media is an effective medium for spreading radical ideas because of its personal and interactive nature.

Content is not only delivered informatively, but also builds emotional attachment and group identity. The communication strategies used often exploit issues of injustice, victim identity, and moral narratives to attract sympathy. This approach makes digital radicalism

difficult to detect because it does not always appear in an explicit extreme form, but rather through a gradual normalization process (Arizal, 2021).

In addition to technological factors, digital radicalism is influenced by psychological, social, and political factors. Individuals experiencing identity crises, social alienation, or dissatisfaction with social conditions are more vulnerable to radical narratives. Social media provides alternative communities that offer a sense of belonging and ideological meaning. Thus, digital radicalization is a multidimensional phenomenon involving the interaction between technological structures, social dynamics, and individual psychological needs. The main challenge of digital radicalism lies in the complexity of controlling it. The transnational nature of digital space limits state regulation. In addition, a security-only approach is insufficient because radicalization is an ideological and cultural process. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed that includes digital literacy, strengthening religious moderation, and producing counter-narratives. Digital literacy plays an important role in improving the community's ability to evaluate information, understand algorithmic bias, and avoid ideological manipulation.

In the context of Pancasila ideological resilience, digital radicalism can be understood as a transformation of non-military ideological threats. Threats no longer come in physical form, but through battles of discourse and identity in the digital space. The ideological resilience of the state depends on the community's ability to uphold the values of tolerance, pluralism, and nationalism amid the global flow of information. Thus, strengthening civic education, moderate religious literacy, and civil society participation are strategic factors in confronting digital radicalism. The role of educational institutions is very important in this context. Schools and universities not only function as spaces for knowledge transfer, but also as spaces for the formation of critical awareness of digital information. Education that emphasizes critical thinking, dialogue, and religious moderation can serve as a bulwark against the internalization of radical ideologies. In addition, teachers and lecturers need to adapt to the digital ecosystem in order to be able to produce educational content that is relevant to the digital native generation.

On the other hand, the government has a role in building a healthy digital ecosystem through platform regulation, collaboration with technology companies, and national literacy programs. However, these efforts must be carried out in a balanced manner so as not to reduce freedom of expression. A collaborative approach between the state, civil society, academics, and religious communities is a more effective strategy in dealing with digital radicalism. Academic studies on digital radicalism are becoming increasingly important as this phenomenon continues to evolve alongside technological advances. Research is needed to understand the patterns of dissemination, communication strategies, and individual vulnerability factors to radicalization. In addition, research is also important for developing prevention models based on education, communication, and public policy. An interdisciplinary approach involving communication science,

sociology, religious studies, and political science is crucial in comprehensively analyzing this phenomenon.

Thus, digital radicalism can be understood as a complex phenomenon that is part of social transformation in the era of social media. It is not only related to security, but also to identity, knowledge authority, and digital cultural dynamics. If not systematically anticipated, digital radicalism has the potential to erode the internalization of Pancasila values, weaken social cohesion, and create ideological polarization in society. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy, religious moderation, and the production of alternative narratives are key strategies in maintaining the nation's ideological resilience. This approach emphasizes that preventing digital radicalism is not only the responsibility of the state, but also the collective responsibility of society. In this context, research on digital radicalism as a transformation of ideological threats in the era of social media has very high academic and practical relevance, especially in efforts to maintain the sustainability of democratic, pluralistic, and civilized life in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method to understand the phenomenon of digital radicalism as an ideological and social symptom that has developed in the era of social media and its implications for the resilience of state ideology, particularly the Pancasila ideology. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration of the meaning, patterns, and dynamics of digital radicalism in a contextual, critical, and interpretive manner. The type of research is descriptive-analytical, which systematically describes the phenomenon while analyzing the causal factors, characteristics of dissemination, and ideological impacts caused by the radicalization process in the digital space. This approach allows the relationship between social media and ideological construction to be analyzed comprehensively (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2018).

The research data sources come from various scientific references, including academic books, national and international journal articles, and reports from government agencies and relevant organizations related to the research topic. The selection of sources was based on the criteria of relevance, credibility, and novelty of information to ensure data quality. The data collection technique was carried out through systematic literature searches, including the stages of identification, selection, classification, and recording of data based on the study theme. The collected data was analyzed using content analysis to identify themes, concepts, and major narrative patterns regarding digital radicalism, then supplemented with a descriptive-interpretive approach to interpret the meaning and ideological implications of the research findings (Krippendorff, 2018).

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing various perspectives in the literature to increase the validity and reliability of the research results. In addition, the researchers checked the consistency of concepts and terminology to ensure that the analysis remained coherent, systematic, and academically accountable (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Radicalism as a Transformation of Ideological Threats in the Age of Social Media

Digital radicalism is a form of ideological threat transformation that has developed alongside changes in the global communications landscape, characterized by the dominance of information technology, the internet, and social media. In the pre-digital era, the spread of radicalism tended to occur through limited physical networks that were hierarchical and highly dependent on formal organizational structures. This pattern made it relatively easier for countries to conduct surveillance, identify actors, and take action because radical networks had clearer leadership structures, communication patterns, and areas of activity (Baihaki, 2022). Thus, ideological threats at that time could still be mapped through conventional security approaches that focused on organizations, groups, and physical mobilization.

However, digital transformation has fundamentally changed the nature of these threats. The presence of social media platforms has enabled the open, rapid, cross-border, and decentralized spread of ideology. Radicalism no longer relies on formal organizations, but rather on the production of narratives, fluid ideological networks, and horizontal digital interactions (Wahid, 2020). This shift shows that the power of digital radicalism lies in its ability to produce meaning, shape perceptions, and influence public awareness through symbolic communication in the digital space. This change makes individuals the main actors in the radicalization process. Every social media user has the potential to be a producer, distributor, and consumer of ideology. The line between passive sympathizers and propaganda agents has become blurred because simple activities such as sharing content, commenting, or liking posts can serve as a means of reproducing ideology (Nastiti, 2020). From an analytical perspective, this condition marks a shift in radicalization from collective mobilization to gradual and often unconscious individual internalization.

Digital radicalism works primarily in the cognitive and affective realms. Radical narratives simplify social reality into sharp dichotomies such as “us versus them,” “right versus wrong,” or “faith versus infidelity.” This simplification creates an exclusive framework of thinking that rejects social complexity, plurality, and dialogue (Arizal, 2021). The impact is not always immediate in the form of violent acts, but rather in the form of changes in perspective, intolerant attitudes, and the delegitimization of national values. In the context of a multicultural country such as Indonesia, digital radicalism has the potential to erode the internalization of national values and weaken the ideological foundation of the state, namely Pancasila. This threat is gradual, systematic, and often invisible because it works through the normalization of extreme discourse in the digital space (Nugroho, 2020). Therefore, digital radicalism must be understood as a long-term ideological threat, not merely a security issue.

This transformation of threats is also related to changes in the authority of knowledge. In the digital age, legitimacy no longer depends on institutional authority, but on visibility, virality, and emotional resonance. Radical content can gain social legitimacy simply because it is widely shared or consumed, not because of the validity of its substance. This

phenomenon shows that digital radicalism operates through the logic of digital communication, not the logic of conventional ideological organizations.

The Mechanism of Digital Radicalism as a Transformation of Ideological Threats

Digital radicalism works through communication mechanisms that are unique and different from conventional radicalism. One of the main mechanisms is the use of social media as a space for the production, reproduction, and normalization of extreme ideologies. Digital platforms operate based on the logic of the attention economy, a system in which user attention is the main commodity. Content that triggers strong emotions such as anger, fear, or hatred tends to gain higher visibility because it increases interaction (Kurniati, 2024). In this context, radical narratives gain structural advantages due to their provocative and emotional nature.

In addition, social media algorithms play an important role in creating echo chambers. When users interact with radical content, algorithms repeatedly recommend similar content. This process narrows exposure to information, reinforces cognitive biases, and creates the illusion that extreme views are the dominant truth (Baim, 2021). As a result, the internalization of ideology occurs without critical reflection. Another mechanism that reinforces digital radicalism is anonymity. Obscured identities allow individuals to spread propaganda, hate speech, and extreme narratives without immediate social consequences. This condition creates a climate of communication that is permissive of extremism and lowers the ethical standards of public interaction. In the long term, the normalization of extreme speech contributes to social polarization and fragmentation.

Social media also functions as a space for the formation of virtual ideological communities. These communities provide emotional support, social legitimacy, and collective identity for individuals exposed to radical ideologies. For individuals experiencing identity crises, social injustice, or alienation, digital communities offer a sense of belonging and meaning in life. These emotional bonds strengthen ideological loyalty and hinder the process of deradicalization. Thus, digital radicalism is not only a matter of content, but also a matter of digital communication systems that are structurally vulnerable to exploitation by extreme ideologies. Digital platforms are not entirely neutral because their algorithmic design tends to reinforce content that triggers emotional engagement. This explains why digital radicalism is highly resilient even though it is not always supported by formal organizational structures.

In addition to technological aspects, psychological factors also play an important role. Digital radicalism exploits human needs for certainty, identity, and meaning. Extreme narratives offer simple answers to complex problems, making them easily accepted by individuals experiencing uncertainty. From this perspective, digital radicalism is an interaction between technological, communication, and social psychological factors.

Strategies for Strengthening Ideological Resilience in the Digital Age

To combat digital radicalism, a comprehensive strategy is needed that is not only repressive but also ideological, educational, and cultural. A security-only approach is insufficient because digital radicalism operates at the level of consciousness and identity.

Therefore, the main strategy is to strengthen the ideological resilience of society through education. Pancasila ideology education is the main foundation in building the ideological resilience of the younger generation. Education should not stop at the transfer of normative knowledge, but must be directed at the internalization of values through a dialogical, critical, and contextual approach. This approach enables students to understand the relevance of national values in digital life and to be able to identify manipulative ideological narratives.

In addition to ideological education, improving digital literacy is a key strategy. Digital literacy includes technical, cognitive, and ethical skills in accessing, evaluating, and producing information. Digitally literate individuals have the ability to recognize disinformation, propaganda, and ideological narrative manipulation (Muthohirin, 2015). Thus, digital literacy serves as a mechanism to prevent radicalization. Another strategy is to strengthen religious moderation. Religious moderation offers an inclusive, contextual understanding of religion that is in line with national values. This approach is important because digital radicalism often exploits narrow and textual interpretations of religion. Religious moderation acts as a counter-narrative that can prevent ideological exclusivism.

The revitalization of local wisdom also has a strategic role. Values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, and social solidarity are sources of collective identity that strengthen the ideological resilience of society. From an anthropological perspective, local wisdom functions as a social mechanism that maintains cohesion and prevents fragmentation (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). The integration of local values into the digital space can be a cultural strategy in dealing with radicalism. In addition, multi-stakeholder collaboration between the state, educational institutions, civil society, and digital platforms is needed. Combating digital radicalism cannot be done by one actor alone because of its cross-sectoral nature. Public policy needs to integrate regulatory, educational, and technological approaches simultaneously.

At the structural level, digital platforms need to be encouraged to increase algorithm transparency, strengthen content moderation, and support the distribution of constructive alternative narratives. At the community level, positive digital communities need to be strengthened so that they can become spaces for healthy identity formation. Conceptually, ideological resilience in the digital age does not mean closing the space for freedom of expression, but rather strengthening the capacity of society to deal with ideological narrative competition. Ideological resilience is the adaptive ability to maintain the nation's core values amid changes in technology and communication. Thus, digital radicalism must be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that demands a multidimensional response. An effective strategy is one that combines education, digital literacy, religious moderation, local wisdom, and technology policy. This integrative approach enables society not only to be protected from radicalization but also to build a digital space that is healthy, inclusive, and in line with national values.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the dynamics of digital radicalism, it can be understood that this phenomenon represents a transformation of ideological threats that have developed in line with changes in the communication landscape in the digital age. Whereas in the past ideological threats tended to be physical, organized, and structurally identifiable, in the digital context these threats are more latent, non-physical, and work through individual cognitive and affective processes. Digital radicalism operates by shaping the perceptions, value orientations, and ideological identities of social media users, so that its impact is often not immediately apparent, but has long-term implications for the resilience of the state's ideology, particularly the Pancasila ideology as the foundation of nationality.

Furthermore, the mechanisms of digital radicalism exhibit characteristics that differ from those of conventional radicalism. The spread of extreme ideology occurs through the use of social media platforms supported by algorithmic systems, anonymity, and the formation of echo chambers. These conditions allow extreme narratives to gain high visibility, be reproduced repeatedly, and be accepted as the dominant truth. As a result, the space for critical dialogue narrows and society has the potential to experience ideological polarization. This process shows that digital radicalism is not merely a matter of content, but also a matter of digital communication structures that facilitate the normalization of extreme discourse.

Thus, combating digital radicalism requires a comprehensive and multidimensional strategy. Strengthening Pancasila ideology education is a fundamental step in building ideological resilience from an early age, especially through a dialogical and contextual approach. In addition, improving the digital literacy of the community is important to equip individuals with the critical ability to sort information and recognize ideological propaganda. This strategy needs to be complemented by strengthening religious moderation and revitalizing local wisdom as an alternative source of values that can strengthen national identity and maintain social cohesion in the era of social media.

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