

MEDIA IN THE MIDST OF RELIGION MODERATION

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Abstract

Media is an important tool to deliver an information for the public. Communication technology contributes greatly to the dissemination of information in the community. On behalf of freedom of information and democracy, all types of information are scattered in a wide society. It even tends to lose its control. Many ideas carried along with the dissemination of information. Among the ideas that exist are about radicalism and extremism in religion. The wild ideas that developed in the midst of this society pushed the government to rebuild religious thought. Religious moderation is an idea raised by the government to minimize radicalism and extremism. Then how should media regulation be carried out? And how should the media carry out its role within the framework of developing religious moderation? This study was conducted with a normative approach. Standards on how the media should be run and managed become the dominant perspective in this study. Of course, this is intended so that this study cannot be separated from the system applied in democratic politics and existing information. The issue of the role of the media in the midst of democracy and the idea of religious moderation can be explained as follows. First, the needs of information for the society in the era of democracy are pushing to bring more and more widespread information dissemination to a wide audience. This point places the media as an important institution in society. The strategic position of information media in the midst of democratic nature requires the government to be able to formulate media regulations appropriately. So that the media can carry out its role appropriately, namely as a pillar of democracy. Second, Islam is a universal religion that carries the values of humanism and rationalism. For this reason, media professionals must

understand Islam's teachings well so that they are not trapped in the spread of information that provokes the emergence of extremism. In the next turn, media practitioners are also expected to be able to respond well to various existing problems, so as to be able to take frames appropriately, neutrally, and educatively, so as not to cause extremism in the community. Furthermore, the idea of religious moderation must also be disseminated by utilizing the media. Whatever the media. So that the idea of religious moderation can be spread, accepted, and carried out by the widest possible audience.

Keywords: Media; Democracy; Information; Moderation; Religion

Introduction

The wave of democracy, inevitably, places the media as a social institution that has a strategic role in disseminating information. The dynamics of social politics in society in the era of democracy requires information intake to be able to determine the steps and strategies. Both for the general public and, moreover, political practitioners. Without the media, as if losing a compass. Difficult to determine IAIN Kediri political steps. For entrepreneurs, information is also absolutely necessary. The development of the digital economy puts information as an absolute must for the perpetrators. Not to forget, even for the world of culture and entertainment, also cannot be separated from the bustle of information, to be able to package cultural and entertainment messages in accordance with existing developments.

Furthermore, the media is also a means to build public opinion. Democracy cannot be separated from public opinion. Therefore, democracy needs the media to disseminate information and to build public opinion. Political campaigns are a necessity in a democracy. Political campaigns have become easy to do with the presence of the media in the midst of social dynamics. Because with the presence of the media, political information can be formulated and disseminated easily and quickly. Thus, democracy and media are inseparable.

The strategic position of the media in the era of democracy ultimately places it as one of the political forces. This power is often referred to as

the fourth pillar in democracy, after the executive, legislative, and judiciary.

Not only in the political area, but the media also occupies a strategic position. In the realm of socio-cultural and religious development, the media also has a strategic role. How many media today provide space for religious development. How many television programs are allocated for recitation? There are many clerics appearing on television delivering religious taushiyah (Islamic speech contains messages and advices). There are many televisions that specifically carry religious content. Not only the religion of Islam but also the recognized religions in Indonesia have appeared on television and made television a medium for spreading religious values.

In the early days of broadcast media in Indonesia (RRI for radio and TVRI for television) there are spiritual programs often appeared. Recitation for Muslims. Many religious teachers were invited to give religious lectures, both on radio and television. So, there has been mentioned that there is a radio cleric (ustadz; Islamic religious leader or an expert in Islam), an RCTI cleric, an SCTV cleric, and so forth. Because it can be certainly said that the cleric who is invited by the certain radio or television is a particular religious leader or expert called ustadz.

In the last ten years, there are more and more clerics who have been invited by television stations to deliver religious material. It cannot be separated from Arif's thesis mentioned above, that the invited ustadz became a television icon (and vice versa). For instance, Prof. Dr. HM Quraish Shihab always delivered his interpretive studies on Metro TV. Ustadz Maulana on Trans TV, Ustadzah who is known as Mamah Dedeh as a cleric in Indosiar, and so forth. Thus, each cleric became synonymous with television broadcasting his lectures.

Not only that, many radio and television programs always follow the moment. When the radio and television Ramadhan moments broadcast tausiyah (Islamic speech containing messages), ngabuburit (the activity related to cultural and religious thing during ramadhan when waiting for break fasting), sahur (First break fasting) together, tarawih (typically praying after Isya' during Ramadhan), and so forth. But when special moments for Muslims pass by, the television program is also finished.

Practical media become a strategic means to disseminate religious thought and advice for anyone means for any religion. As long as the missionary activists expect those, then the media is ready to serve him.

Next, when the issue or phenomenon of radicalism and extremism strengthens, the media is being the spotlight because it is considered as the spread of radicalism and extremism. A number of religious teachers who gave religious lectures were later accused of spreading radical ideas. On social media, information dissemination activities run rapidly. The process of filtering content is not carried out as rigorously as the mainstream media. So that information, both positive and negative, valid or invalid spread quickly to a wide audience even though the truth has not been confirmed yet. So, the government tightened information traffic on social media which is indicated to spread the radical understanding. Some media have been closed because they are considered proven to spread radical ideas.

Of course, it must be examined further, how should media regulation be carried out? And how should the media carry out its role within the framework of developing religious moderation?

Research Method

This study employs descriptive qualitative method. The sources of the study are mainstream mass media and other literary sources. The primary data taken are in the form of messages in mass media related to religious moderation. The secondary data are taken from various literary sources. Data collection is done by documentation and literary technique. Normative theory of mass communication is used as the approach of the study.

Results and Discussion

Media regulation amid waves of democracy.

Actually, the issue of democracy is not very relevant at this time because democracy is already running. Almost no state or community group rejects and does not practice democracy. Although the degree of democracy that is applied varies between one country or groups with

another countries or groups. What is clear is that democracy has become part of the life of the nation and state.

What is needed to be the focus of this study is how the media become part of the dissemination of information. Dissemination of information is part of the communication processes. One of the 'rukun' (essential principal) in communication is the existence of communicators, messages, media, communicants, and effects (influence). Now the media becomes a means of disseminating information. And the delivery of information to the public message receivers will have a certain effect. It can influence cognitively, thus the audience will know. Affectively, it can influence the audience to make them feel happy, worried, or even scared and traumatized by the information they receive. It could also be a psychomotor effect, which is the result of information that is received by the public receivers makes the attitude being introvert, passive, or vice versa, progressive. (Severin & Tankard, Jr., 2005; 14).

Democracy provides equal opportunities for all parties to convey messages and spread information. Whatever the information. In principle, anyone has the right to disseminate and receive information. Perhaps there are questions, then what would happen if everyone felt allowed. I can send any message and to anyone. Can you receive any message from anywhere?

This is where the role of the government is to regulate the flow of dissemination and also the receipt of information. How to disseminate information and how to receive information. Through what and for whom information must be conveyed. Likewise, where the information was received and what content the information received. Then what should be done with the information received? Although ultimately dependent on the disseminator and recipient of information, the government is obliged to make regulations so that the dissemination and reception of information do not harm the general public.

Based on those aspects, various laws were formulated related to the media. There are laws on print media, namely Law No. 40 of 1999, No. 32 of 2002 concerning on broadcasting, Law No 11 of 2008 dealing with information, and electronic transactions. Probably the law is not ideal. Probably. However, at least there have been quite serious efforts from the government to regulate the development and dissemination of

information. So that it can be controlled, at least it can protect the media users community from invalid information as known as hoax. So that the public community as audiences of media users are able to think critically and rationally. Society is not easily influenced and provoked by the information received. (Heryanto, 2017; 3-20).

Another important thing is first, the ability of state managers (government) to be able to understand the development of information technology and the socio-cultural reality of society. The presence of communication technology has led to conditions of interconnection between citizens in various parts of the world. Indonesians can connect, communicate directly and quickly with citizens of the United States, Russia, China, and so forth. Even technology makes it possible to carry out economic transactions. As a result, the outflows of goods (exports and imports) highly increased. Not only that, but information technology also presents various cultures and encourages cultural exchange. So, what happens is the emergence of a reality called the 'global village'. Because almost all walks of life in a country can be easily connected with citizens in other countries through existing media. Through the mass media, newspapers, radio, television, the public generally can access information from various parts of the world, both domestic and foreign, in a person directly one-way aside. However, the development of communication technology that continues to move and spread makes people able to do interactive communication.

Second, state managers are required to work transparently (openly), accountably, and fair. One of the keys to democracy is the maintenance of justice for citizens. Because democracy puts all citizens together before the law. All have the same opportunities politically. This is where transparency, responsibility, and justice are needed. The media whose duty is to convey information is demanded to convey information from anyone and to anyone else in a balanced manner. The media is not allowed to take sides. The media must be neutral. The media is in the middle. The principle of journalistic which said that news must be balanced is intended to maintain the neutrality of the delivery information. When there are two news sources with different perspectives, both must be used as news sources and their opinions are raised as parts of the news.

In this context, the media has a strategic role. The emergence of many issues included in the community are facilitated by the media. Issues regarding terrorism, radicalism, extremism, liberalism, and so forth develop through the media both mainstream media and social media. The social and political frenzy ahead of and after the 2019 elections are inseparable from the media, especially social media. The mainstream media with complex organizational structures can filter information closely. Both in acceptance and in dissemination. While social media with a simple organizational structure makes it quickly and easily to receive the dissemination of information. As a result, the screening of information is not rigorous. Even though its social influence is quite large, it is not inferior to the mainstream media.

A relatively current case at this time, restrictions access on social media by the government is in line with the announcement of the presidential election in 2019 is a proof of the influence of the media for the social dynamics of society. At least, social media is seen to have such a large social influence that is to anticipate the development of unwanted issues that the access to the media must be restricted.

The Touch of Media about Moderation

Normatively, media cannot be separated from various rules. Both the positive rules, namely in the form of statutory regulations, and in the form of social norms that are consensus which means unwritten. Both of them become guidance to manage the media. Either printed media, electronic, or online media. (Arifin, 2019; 200-201).

The guidance cannot be separated from the political system adopted by a country. Indonesia, at the beginning of the reformation practices to the freedom of press. Many media turn up freely. Although at the end, many of them dropped out because of market tastes. Such a natural selection, the media are not able to meet market tastes, it will die slowly. Media that cannot survive and are unable to adapt to the market will finally out of business, as known as bankrupt.

Freedom of the press adopted by this nation finally became a means of spreading various ideas. This includes the idea of religious understanding. As indicated by the police, terrorists spread their ideas

through the media. When the mainstream media are guarded by a gate keeper so that extreme ideas are, either dealing with religion or other things, it cannot get through out, activist of terrorist enter and spread their ideas through social media. Thus, the idea of terrorism can still spread to the community although the system and legislation regarding the media (print and broadcast) have been well fenced. Because, social media as new media, have not been tightly linked by legislation.

However, the media, both mainstream media and social media have relatively clear duties and responsibilities. In social norms which are a consensus in the life of the nation and state, maintaining harmony becomes a necessity for all elements of society. The media as one part of the life of the nation and state cannot be separated from the necessity to maintain harmony. (Anwar & Haq; 2019)

The media, as a channel of communication and information dissemination, ideally has restrictions in line with existing and applicable social norms and norms. Although in detail there are specific norms, in general the media cannot be separated from the values and norms that is applied in the society. Stanley J. Baran and Dennis K. Davis explained that normatively the media should not only convey information to wide societies, but also help communities to identify and solve existing problems. Besides the media has a responsibility to maintain the prevailing values. (Baran & Davis, 2010; 124.)

Referring to the theoretical ideality, the number of media operating in Indonesia should be both a heating and a cooling machine. The engine heater in the sense of encouraging the realization of religious life that is fair or moderate or not extreme. Likewise, the media has a responsibility to cool the atmosphere. When there are extreme opinions and ideas disseminated, they need to be neutralized by the media. So, it does not become a source of social conflict. Especially conflicts related to religion.

Often the media is active in conveying information about extreme thoughts about religion. The point of view of the news tends to highlight the extreme sides of religious groups, or even conflicts between religious groups and other groups. Like the news about Ahmadiyah, FPI, and also HTI, which relatively has a minimum neutralization.

Apart from the various weaknesses and strengths of each, the media has a responsibility to create harmonious inter and interreligious relations. The lack of media neutralization in the reporting, or framing of improper media causes to the disruption of religious harmony. The public spotlight about the religious groups were reported to be unbalanced. And at the end, unilateral 'judgment' of opinion happens.

Simply, it can be said that the emergence of many religious conflicts, one of them is caused by the weak responsibility of the media. The media only conveys information without conducting education and neutralization. Unfortunately, the media sometimes tends to catch up on sales circulation, so the news tends to be manipulated to make a bombastic news that are well-sold.

Religion Understanding as the Principal of Religious Moderation

Religion was born and developed in the cultural space. Religion cannot be separated from the cultural context where it exists whatever the religion is. Islam, was born and cannot be separated from the cultural context of Arabic, Makkah and Medina. When entering the archipelago, it cannot help but, Islam intersects with the culture of the archipelago. So that the acceptance and dissemination of religious teachings requires a deep understanding of the substance of religion. Here in lies why many patterns of religious thought. In Indonesia, patterns of understanding and religious thought can be found varied. There are religious thoughts from the version of Nurcholis Madjid, the version of Abdurrahman Wahid, in the dynamics of the Islamic Archipelago's thinking. In the Christian tradition, there is also Martin Luther, the innovator, thus bringing up into two major schools of Catholicism and Protestant Christianity. Likewise, in other religions, various forms of thought and religious schools or sects are emerged. Of course, all of those are based on the socio-cultural context and understanding of religious teachings. The cultural context where growth and development of the religion and its followers should be understood so that the differences and debate related to the religious aspects can be managed properly, so the dream to embody independence

in a peaceful and wise society can be achieved. This is the homework for the leader on this country, Indonesia. (Khanata, 2004; 263-271).

It is not easy to be able to distinguish between the substance of religious teachings and the existence that is closely related to culture. For that, it requires a comprehensive understanding, deep understanding of religious teachings. Whatever the religion is, a person is required to be able to understand the aspects of esoteric religion in order to be able to develop the life of the nation and state well. Of course, without having to lose its religious substance. (Rachman (ed), 2011; 2017).

Furthermore, a good religious understanding will be able to encourage acceptance of differences in religious perspectives. According to Taufiq Adnan Amal, the difference in interpretation, in Islam, is an encouraging thing, so we should be grateful. The government does not need to impose a religious understanding to be practiced. (Rachman (ed), 2011; 231-233) Because it will bring up social problems. From this thought, of course, the author agrees. The only problem is that the different depths and understandings of these different Muslims need to be addressed wisely. As long as religious communities have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the principles and teachings of their religions, religious extremism will be avoided. The harmony between religious communities can be realized, without having to mix religious understanding into religious ideas that are faltering. (Akhmadi; 2019)

In the context of Islam, there is a very favorite verse because it is often cited or referred as an argument or an idea in promoting religious moderation. In Holy Qur'an QS. Al-Anbiya verse 107 is mentioned as follows; *And no, We did not send you (Muhammad) but to (be) a mercy for all nature.* (Damas, dkk., 2013; 332). This verse gives the understanding that Islam was revealed in the framework of realizing grace for all human beings, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Also for all human beings on earth.

Again, this verse is relatively simple, but it cannot be comprehended comprehensively if it does not explore the substance of Islamic teachings. Without understanding the substance of Islamic teachings, efforts to create mercy will shift the meaning of Islamic teachings themselves. Then what is exactly the substance of Islam that must be understood. There are

at least some principles of Islamic teachings need to be understood in order to be used as a benchmark in maintaining the substance of Islamic teachings and in the framework of realizing the mercy for all nature.

First, Islamic teachings are theocratic, that is oriented to the divine aspect. Everything that people do, it must be presented to God, Allah. This orientation is intended to make Islamic religious leaders have religious teachings as a spirit and principal standard in action. But that does not mean it will always blame other people. Islamic spirit is expected to encourage a Muslim to become a humanist. Having a sense of humanity and high concern for others. Because you do not expect anything except blessing from Allah. The concept of theocracy was finally intended that a Muslim behaves and acts democratically. How come? When a person focuses on seeking pleasure from his Lord, then he will not feel superior to others. Because the degree level of people on the side of God is concealed. Nobody knows except Allah. This is the source of the spirit of democracy. (Ishaq, 2016; 80-87).

Second, Islamic teachings are rational. This means that all of the teachings conveyed and must be done by Muslims and that should make sense. Neither superstitious nor imaginary. Even it always asks people to think. Many verses of the Holy Qur'an always invite people to think about natural phenomena. Third, Islam is universal. Islam for all nations and tribes. There is no difference between Muslims in Indonesia and others. Moreover, the teachings of Islam are also not only for Muslims, but also for human beings in all of nature. (Ishaq, 2016; 91-94).

Fourth, the teachings of Islam are futuristic. It means to be long term oriented. Islam invites human beings to think and act by considering the future. On the other hand, it can directly reject the way of thinking where people are being hedonistic to only seek for the world comfort of life, rejecting pragmatism which means not only looking to get the things easily. It also rejects materialism, which means placing matter as apart and means of reaching a substantial life. (Ishaq, 2016; 100-103).

These principles must be well understood by Muslims. And of course, in other religions, moral values are also taught. As it is widely known, adultery, drunkenness, gambling, stealing, hurting, and anything that harms others is not justified by all religions. No religion advocates adherents to carry out these actions. Although the concept of Shari'ah

and its theological foundation are different, but it cannot be denied that every religion has the same moral teachings of humanity. Relative means not totally the same. This common moral teaching can be a meeting point for every religious community to be able to work together and build a harmonious national and state of life. Like the life of Muslims in the time of the Prophet Muhammad after moving to Yathrib (Medina). There were many religious communities in it, but they were bound by the same social interests. Social relations are not only based on theological similarities but the basis of human values. (Haekal, 1992; 208).

An in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the values and teachings of religion will be able to make religion as; First, a unifier tool, both between and among different religious communities. Second, religion can also be a tool of social control. As it is emphasized that prayer can prevent someone from doing fakhshya' and munkar (bad things). Third, religion can be a driver of fulfillment of social functions. With religion, people can be encouraged to spread goodness to others both between the same and different religions. The key is a deep and comprehensive understanding of religious values and teachings. (Badan Litbang Agama, 2014; 12-14).

In the context of Islamic da'wah (Islamic speech teaching), a deep and comprehensive understanding of the principles of Islamic teachings is needed to be able to preach religion in a "wisdom". As confirmed by Allah, in the Holy Qur'an;

"Call on people in the path of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching, and debate with them in a good manner. Indeed, your Lord, He is the one who knows better who is lost from His ways and He who knows better who is guided." (Surah An-Nahl (16); 125)

The word wisdom in the above verse is interpreted with various meanings. But in essence, wisdom cannot be separated from knowledge, understanding, and understanding that can lead someone to the ability to distinguish between the right and the false. (Aziz, 2004; 127, 157-158). With the knowledge (wisdom) possessed, a person can take a stand

following the situation and conditions. Sometimes soft and sometimes hard (firm). (Shihab, 2013; 238).

Moderation Flow in the Touch of Media

In the context of this discussion, moderate attitudes towards religion, or in another term it is called by religious moderation, can be realized with one thing, namely a deep and comprehensive understanding of religious teachings. So that a believer is not blind fanatic person (stiff). Therefore, the ability to understand the principles of religious teachings will be able to deliver how a religious community behaves appropriately. How to hold one principle without compromising another.

Islam is a religion that is, was than. A religion that emphasizes the principle of justice. Islam avoids extreme attitudes. (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019). As confirmed in the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143;

"And so (also) We have made you (Muslims), a just and chosen people so that you can be a witness to man's (deeds) and that the Apostle (Muhammad) will be your witness (deeds). And We did not set the qibla that became your Qibla (now) but so that We knew (so that it was real) who followed the Apostle and who defected. And indeed (the transfer of the Qibla) feels very heavy, except for those who have been instructed by Allah; and God will not waste your faith. Surely Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to humans. "

The above verse can be interpreted that Islam is a moderate religion. Islam teaches to avoid extreme attitudes. Both right and left extreme. (Shihab, 2019: 5-7)

The Islamic moderation framework, according to Fahrurrozi and Thohri (2019) can be implemented with several things, namely contextual, tolerance, respecting tradition, progressive, and releasing (problem solving). This moderation framework needs to be disseminated to a wide society through the media, including online media. Because the

role of the media is very strategic and has 'forced power'. Thus, the role of professionals in the media field is very important.

The flow of modernization and globalization is one of the challenges for the religious community. Because, not all problems can be found textually. The development of human civilization brings humanitarian problems become more complex. (Ismail & Hotman, 2011; 259-263). This complexity requires the religious community to understand religious teachings both textually and contextually. So that religion is not as a ritual, but as a way of life. (Iffan, Ridho, and Sain; 2020).

In the midst of this rapid flow of information, ideas and concepts about religious moderation need to be echoed continuously. So that religious moderation becomes the mainstream of people's religious life. Thus, religious extremism and radicalism will not flourish.

Now, the 'duty' to echo ideas to the wider community is the media. In the midst of digital society today there are many media institutions that always convey ideas to a wide society. There are printed media, broadcast media, and the online media from the network, such as through the media face book. Ideas on religious moderation must be disseminated through the media. (Effendy, 2003; 17) Without the media, the idea of religious moderation is only like a scream in the studio. This means that it will not be accepted and heard by a wide community. Only those who are in the studio hear it.

Conclusion

As a result, the discussion about the role of the media during religious moderation can be concluded as follows; First, the era of democracy encourages everyone to progressively explore and disseminate information to a wide society. This places the media as an important institution in a society that implements a democratic system. The strategic position of information media in democratic nature requires the government to be able to formulate media regulations appropriately. So that the media can carry out its role appropriately, namely as a pillar of democracy. Second, Islam is a universal religion that carries the values of humanism and rationalism. Therefore, it must be understood

comprehensively, thus people will not be trapped in an extreme understanding. The media has a strategic role in spreading religious teachings. The idea of religious moderation needs to be promoted by increasing the understanding of religious teachings for each adherent of the religion. For this reason, media professionals must understand the teachings of Islam well so that they are not trapped in the spread of information which provokes the emergence of extremism. In the next turn, media practitioners are also expected to be able to respond well to various existing problems, to be able to take frames appropriately, neutrally, and educatively, so it will not cause extremism in the community. Furthermore, the idea of religious moderation must also be disseminated by utilizing the media. Whatever the media is. Thus, the idea of religious moderation can be spread, accepted, and carried out by the widest possible audience.

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