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Revitalizing Social Capital Among Muslims in the Post-Truth Era

Abdul Rahman

Universitas Negeri Makassar

Corresponding Author: Abdul Rahman abdul.rahman8304@unm.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

In the post-truth era, social capital, which is the ability of people to work together and achieve common goals, faces major challenges. The spread of inaccurate information, polarization, and a lack of trust in institutions pose serious threats to social cohesion and the ability of people to act together. This paper attempts to elaborate on the importance of strengthening social capital among Muslims in facing the post-truth era. Several studies have found that the challenges faced by Muslims in the post-truth era include conflict among Muslims due to ideological differences, the strengthening of the takfiri movement, and the misuse of information technology to spread hate speech and hoaxes. These challenges need to be responded to by strengthening the principles of Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* (blessing for all the universe), *taawun* (conformity), and *tabayun* (religious tolerance)

INTRODUCTION

It was early morning, Thursday, May 21, 1998. Suharto delivered a speech announcing his resignation as President of the Republic of Indonesia, a position he had held for 31 years, 2 months, and 9 days (Suparno, 2021). Since that historic morning, we have been living in the era of reform for 20 years. As a nation living in the reform era, we have witnessed how the transition from long-established and deeply rooted authoritarianism is a dynamic, complex, and difficult transition (Mietzner, 2021). Even today, no one can guarantee that the reform era will usher in a glorious new Indonesia. This 20-year period has shown the public how the elites in the reform circles seem to prefer to re-knit and even expand the networks and circles of crimes against humanity, namely corruption, collusion and nepotism and various patterns of abuse of power, without any effort to resolve them.

The breaking of the shackles of political restraint imposed by the New Order government since 1998, has allowed the democratization phase, marked by the implementation of the democratic liberalization process, to accelerate on the political runway in Indonesia (Warburton, 2024). Freedom has been realized for groups with a desire to participate in politics as an effort to fight for power, competing to establish political parties. Thus, there has been progress in national politics, namely the guarantee of freedom for each individual to choose the figure most worthy of carrying out the mandate and representing the sovereignty of the people (Firdaus et al., 2024). The progress of national politics is also marked by the strengthening of democracy in terms of freedom of expression. Citizens have the right to express their own opinions without the risk of harsh punishment on issues of political equality defined broadly, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order, and the existing ideology (Fitriani et al., 2023). The reforms that opened up democratic space have given rise to a layer of civil society that is critical of various abuses of political power, for example intolerance and corruption (Sibuea et al., 2025).

In the reform era, Indonesia attempted to break away from its authoritarian past and chose to learn from modern political theory, known as democracy. The government no longer held a monopoly on guiding societal development; therefore, that

direction was no longer determined by the government, but by democracy itself. Freedom and equality were the ideas that motivated those seeking regime change, including reform activists in 1998 (Sulistyo, 2002). The question of *Quo Vadis* became open-ended because freedom and equality, in reality, depended on the political forces existing in Indonesia (Hikam, 1999).

One of the political forces in Indonesia during the reform era is the mass media. The strategic role of mass media in the information society era is essential to foster a responsible national political process, particularly as a medium for political socialization and political campaigns (Mashud et al., 2023). The shift in the media's role represents a form of productive transformation, transforming it into a political force that synergizes with government institutions and non-governmental organizations. Thus, the presence of mass media plays a quite effective role in providing information to the public (Anderson & Kuswanto, 2021). Mass media exists to minimize the monopoly of information by the government and those in power. Even the government sometimes struggles to confront uncontrolled liberal regulations regarding freedom of public information. Problems arise, as mass media play an increasingly large, even uncontrolled, role in conveying information, tending to ignore universal principles that uphold social ethics (Sugeng & Hadinata, 2024).

The mass media in the post-New Order government (the reform era) has reflected the dynamics, including political dynamics, that exist in society. The media also broadcasts important events quickly and widely without sufficient censorship as under the New Order (Hady & Ibrahim, 2023). Talk shows on various current issues are ubiquitous, both on television and radio. The public can actively provide information about events around them, including criticizing policies that have been, are being, and will be implemented by the government. The mass media has become a vital part of democratic life. Current political events are no longer solely known and controlled by a group of elites in Jakarta. Free, diverse, and numerous mass media easily disseminate information about various events. Thus, the public has easy access to these events (Maliki, 2018).

The globalization movement has brought about a shift in the role of the media, both print and electronic: what should be reported and how media personnel should behave in seeking and disseminating news. This shift in the role of the media and its personnel in Indonesia, especially since the beginning of the reform era, has also had implications for the values embraced by media owners and managers (Erlita et al., 2025). Reporting ethics concern not only what is permissible and what is not permissible in seeking and disseminating news, but also what is good and bad, what is beneficial and what is not, and what is appropriate and inappropriate. However, all of this seems to be tied not only to the culture and press system adopted, but also to the social, spatial, and temporal context (Bungin, 2017).

The information age sweeping Indonesia today makes it easy for people to exchange messages and news quickly, easily, and affordably. Information is freely produced by anyone, delivered quickly through various media, and affordably. In this era of information advancement, humans have become producers, users, and consumers of information. This advancement in information technology, which exists within the realm of press freedom as a consequence of the struggle for reform, has spurred the emergence of alternative media. Alternative media refers to communication experiences that emerge as a community needs to fulfill or advocate for marginalized interests. Alternative media is seen as a channel for challenging political power or the establishment (Gunawan & Ratmono, 2021).

The emergence of alternative media, both print and electronic, and the amplification of social media, has given rise to an unprecedented explosion in information supply. For example, on YouTube, more than 60 hours of new video are uploaded every minute. Meanwhile, Twitter and Facebook offer an abundance of status updates and news posts. The available information far exceeds the public's needs. Thus, we are faced with the challenge of having the ability to sort and select information that is needed and can be held accountable for its accuracy. The public must be able to restrain themselves from publishing information by first considering its benefits and harms (Ghofur, 2023)

It is undeniable that the spread of information without considering the impact it will have is very difficult to contain. The spread of information

without considering its aspects of truth has created an era known as post-truth. The post-truth era is characterized by the emergence of many parties deliberately producing information to arouse emotions and ignite anger and hatred against certain groups or groups. Post-truth is also characterized by the growth of fake media that aggressively produce hoaxes in collaboration with politicians who ignore ethics. The presence of media is like two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the media contributes to the formation of integration or harmony in a system, but on the other hand, the media can also give rise to disintegration or disharmony in a system both within the community and within the state environment and even globally (Zahid, 2019). The emergence of this post-truth era certainly presents a challenge for Indonesian society, especially among Muslims, because facts prove that religious issues are indeed rampant in the media, which sometimes gives rise to disagreements between religious communities and between members of the same religion. So that this problem does not give rise to conflict, whether latent or manifest, it is appropriate for Muslims to come forward to channelize these issues. One way is to strengthen social capital in social life.

METHODS

This article was written using a qualitative research method using a historical approach consisting of four stages. To reconstruct the traces of past history, four stages are required: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). Related to this article, heuristics is carried out by tracing library sources in the form of books, journals, and daily news from various media related to the topic of the writing. Criticism is carried out by assessing these library sources by comparing them with each other, then providing an interpretation as an effort to connect each event related to the efforts of Muslim communities in realizing a civil society in the post-truth era. This interpretation involves the use of primary and secondary sources to understand the causes and effects, conflicts, processes, and impacts of historical events, resulting in a structured and balanced historical narrative. The final stage is historiography, namely reconstructing events related to the efforts of Muslim society in realizing a civil society in the form of narrative descriptions which are expected to be useful for the development of

science, especially in the fields of social sciences and humanities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The claim that Islam is incompatible with democracy is based in part on the proposition that civic society is foreign to Islam (Alfian, 2022). However, Saiful Muzani carefully explains this claim by explaining that social capital is crucial for realizing a harmonious life, as envisioned and even required by Islamic teachings (Rahman, 2024). Islamic doctrine requires its adherents to continually serve and serve Allah, and to maintain harmonious relationships with fellow humans and with the universe, consisting of plants and animals. Islam also teaches the importance of maintaining global human relationships, bonds of brotherhood bound by the nation-state and bonds bound by a shared religion.

In general, social capital is a crucial element in societal life, in the form of norms and values that facilitate and foster cooperation through harmonious and conducive networks of interaction and communication. Fukuyama's simple definition of social capital is: an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals. By this definition, trust, networks, civil society, and the like, which have been associated with social capital, are all epiphenomenal, arising as a result of social capital but not constituting social capital itself. Social capital plays a very important role in several community groups in various activities. However, Fukuyama also states that not all norms, values, and culture can complement each other to support economic growth. Just like physical and financial capital, social capital can also have negative impacts. Fukuyama states that social capital is built by trust between individuals. Mutual trust is formed over time and requires complex social processes.

According to Francis Fukuyama, the emergence of capitalism has led to a loosening of social capital ties. Capitalism, born of Western civilization, was the culmination of various events that struck Europe. Capitalism began with a religious movement spearheaded by Martin Luther as a form of protest against the Catholic Church's dominance of European society. This movement ushered in a period known as the Age of Enlightenment. Europe experienced intellectual progress that culminated in the advancement of science and technology. One

such advancement was the discovery of the compass, a tool for conquering space, and gunpowder, a tool for conquering people. The progress experienced by European nations gave rise to the doctrine of imperialism, which was based on the pursuit of wealth, glory, and the desire to spread religion. Based on this doctrine, Europeans explored the oceans, and upon arriving at a location, they began their efforts to profit.

Capitalism continues to experience rapid development. Various efforts are undertaken to achieve profit (Tohis et al., 2024). Capitalism is no longer characterized by trade between countries, but also by the advancement of various media, both print and electronic (Fuchs, 2021). Numerous new discoveries in information and communication technology have made it easier for people to communicate with each other. The media has also gained the power to produce and disseminate information without considering the principles of truth and ethics. Events occurring around the globe can be experienced by the entire population with remarkable speed (Li et al., 2021).

The main challenges faced by Muslims in facing the era of globalization can be done to face it, the shift in cultural values and lifestyles that are different from Islamic values, these values are firmly held in Islam such as simplicity, discipline, and honor, radicalization and Islamophobia are also the biggest challenges in the era of globalization due to the very rapid dissemination of information, which allows the circulation of extremist ideologies, radical ideologies are sometimes exploited by certain parties to interpret Islamic teachings narrowly, resulting in extreme actions, Technological modernization also influences as a challenge in terms of the development of Islam in the era of globalization, marked by very rapid technological developments, financial technology, artificial intelligence, and bioethics raise new questions about how Islam views, for example the concept in the field of fintech, the concept of usury interest is a challenge in itself in developing Islamic financial products and should remain as determined by sharia.

In this context, it is natural that modern society presents itself as antagonistic. On the one hand,

modernism and capitalism have contributed spectacular progress in material terms. However, on the other hand, this paradigm has completely obscured the face of humanity. As science and technology advance, it seems as if humans no longer need spirituality, religion, or even God. Arrogantly and despotically, humans believe they are capable of solving all the challenges of our time, including the future, which is truly unfathomable (Arifin, 2019).

Advances in science and technology in producing and disseminating information worldwide have ushered humanity into a post-truth era. In Grayling's view, the post-truth era is not only filled with narcissism, but also with a terrifying narcissism. When any medium can be used to send messages that emphasize opinion over fact, and anyone can publish their own opinion, any fact will be drowned out by the loud voice of the message sender. Everyone can publish their opinion, everyone offers their own interpretation of the facts, and most troublingly everyone claims that their interpretation is the most correct. It is this opinion that is held up as the 'truth', not the fact.

Entering the post-truth era, we face various problems, both as citizens and as Islamic groups. First, the chaotic international environment, characterized by disagreements and even open conflict between countries, particularly those with predominantly Muslim populations in the Middle East. The classic conflict between Israel and Palestine has become increasingly complex because it has dragged neighboring countries into defending one side or the other. Second, the rise of radicalism and takfirism. In Indonesia, the rise of radicalism is inseparable from hardline Islamic groups.

According to Abdurrahman Wahid the aspirations of hardline groups in Indonesia are generally influenced by transnational Islamic movements from the Middle East, particularly those based on Wahhabism or the Muslim Brotherhood, or a combination of both. Hardline groups in Indonesia, including their political parties (Wijaya, 2022), have different agendas than moderate Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. In recent years since their emergence, hardline Islamic groups have successfully transformed the face of Indonesian Islam into one that is aggressive, violent, intolerant, and full of hatred. Hardline Islamic groups are also followed by takfiris. Takfiris are defined as groups

that use Islam as an ideology, thus using the greatness of Islam as a religion as a tool to achieve political goals. Islam is used as a political weapon to attack other groups that share their views. Islam is used as a slogan to fight for the people, while behind it, they use Islam as a packaging and weapon.

The third problem facing humanity in the post-truth era is the misuse of information technology. Advances in information technology have made the world increasingly smaller in terms of interaction. Information technology has opened up barriers between countries, allowing citizens to freely interact quickly. Likewise, the spread of information, both facts and lies, can be rapid. When false information spreads to those with poor media literacy, it can lead to conflict between groups. Conspiracy theory believes that any conflict occurring in a given location cannot be denied by certain groups behind the provocation.

In the post-truth era, Indonesian society has also felt the impact. Some Indonesians are known as the most talkative social media users when it comes to writing status updates and posting news, but the least critical of circulating news. News appearing on their Facebook pages is quickly and easily shared, allowing others to read it. Considerations that seek the truth of the news are no longer considered. The truth of a news story is no longer the primary concern, but rather the aspect of self-interest, meaning that the news aligns with their thoughts, choices, or political orientation.

We still remember the burning of what a group of Muslims claimed was a tauhid flag during the commemoration of National Santri Day. This action quickly sparked pros and cons among Muslims. Facebook pages were filled with debates between members. In a private television dialogue, Al Muzammil Yusuf, a senior member of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), stated that the word "tauhid" (the phrase "tawhid") is sacred among Muslims. Therefore, events related to it, such as arson, can easily be politicized, inciting anger among some Muslims. Therefore, it is appropriate that legal proceedings be carried out immediately, and that Muslims remain vigilant to prevent any parties from deliberately pitting Muslims against each other and seeking to profit from such incidents.

Muslims, navigating life in the post-truth era, are required to strengthen the social capital outlined in their primary sources of teachings, the Quran and

Hadith. Muslims already have a solid foundation for realizing a harmonious social order. Islam is committed to adhering to mutually agreed-upon agreements, norms, and values. The historical journey of Muslims over the past 15 centuries demonstrates that they were able to coexist peacefully with Christians and Jews within the framework of the state of Medina. During that time, the people of Medina were taught to foster and promote an ideal society, often referred to as a civilized society, one that upholds the values of civilization. A society with a sound social order is based on moral principles that ensure a balance between individual rights and obligations and the rights and obligations of citizens (Pinilih et al., 2022).

The principle of Islamic teachings that is compatible with social capital which functions as a glue for social life is Islam as mercy, mercy for the entire universe (Islam rahmatan lil alamin). This doctrine was very clearly conveyed by Allah to Muhammad as stated in the Koran, Surah Al Anbiya verse 107 that: "We did not send you, O Muhammad, except as a mercy for the entire universe". On the basis of this doctrine, it is fitting for Muslims to spread humanitarian emancipation to all mankind without distinction of ethnicity, religion, race and customs (SARA). The sending of Muhammad as a prophet and apostle is proof of Allah's love for the entire universe. However, it needs to be understood that the affection referred to is not loving everything that contains elements of evil. Compassion in accordance with the message of the Koran is to provide protection and freedom to followers of other religions to carry out their worship.

Another form of social capital in Islamic doctrine is ta'awun. This is clearly explained by Allah in the Koran surah almaidah, verse 2 fragment that And help you in (doing) virtue and piety, and do not help in committing sins and transgressions. And fear Allah, verily Allah is severe in punishment. Starting from this doctrine, the principle of ta'awun in Islam is helping each other for the good of fellow human beings regardless of differences. If the attitude of ta'awun is implemented by all mankind, especially Muslims, then social life will become harmonious and prosperous, there will no longer be people who feel injustice. If the entire community experiences prosperity and is treated fairly, then the ripples that will lead to protests will be easily

overcome. Propaganda news that pits fellow citizens against each other will be minimized.

Another aspect that Muslims must prioritize in maintaining social harmony in the post-truth era is tabayyun (reconciliation). This approach is crucial to avoid slander and hatred against groups or individuals. With technological advancements, it's very easy for someone's statement to be truncated or not presented in its entirety. This once occurred to Quraish Shihab while explaining a hadith on the Tafsir Almisbah program. In the program, he quoted the Prophet's hadith: "No one enters Paradise because of his deeds. A companion asked, 'Not even you?' He replied, 'Neither do I, except by the grace of Allah upon me.'" The quote was then distorted by several media outlets, suggesting that Quraish Shihab misinterpreted the evidence by stating that the Prophet Muhammad was not guaranteed entry into Paradise.

The principle of tabayyun (verification) is reinforced by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in its use of social media. MUI Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 concerning the Law and Guidelines for Transactions Through Social Media (Shuhufi et al., 2022) regulates the mechanisms and stages of conducting *tabayyun*. The *tabayyun* process for content or information is carried out in three stages: first, verifying the source of the information, including its personality, reputation, suitability, and trustworthiness. Second, verifying the content's veracity, including its content and intent. Third, verifying the context of the place, time, and background of the information's dissemination. Furthermore, the MUI fatwa also outlines ways to ensure the veracity of information, including questioning the source if known and requesting clarification from authorized and competent parties. Thus, when Islamic teachings are applied in national and state life, Indonesia can become a model for the relationship between Islam and the state that aligns with Islamic values on the one hand, and modern nationalism on the other (Arif, 2018).

Describe your research findings according to the research problem and purpose of the study. Discuss your findings according to the perspective of theory, concept or previous findings. Should describe this section in a comprehensive, simple and detailed manner. The author can make subchapters in this section.

CONCLUSION

It is understood that every religion fosters group solidarity based on shared faith. This is natural because religion shapes communities, and these communities are united in the unity of truth. Therefore, defending one's own faith is sometimes more important than defending those of other faiths. In this context, tensions arise between nationalism, which is national, and universal ummah. The differences in attitudes toward nationalism and ummah become increasingly apparent when the media engages in propaganda for ratings. Sensitive issues are increasingly given greater prominence in broadcasts, even being repeated. Faced with this situation, Muslims, the majority and a political force in Indonesia, must become more discerning in their handling of various issues, both national and religious. It is time for Muslims in this country to emerge, provide enlightenment and channel issues that could lead to disharmony among the nation's citizens. The social capital contained in religious messages and doctrines, such as mercy, *ta'awun*, and *tabayyun*, must be disseminated as a glue for brotherhood in the post-truth era.

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