

Polemic of Religious Intolerance among Indonesian Users on YouTube

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Abstract

Digital space has now become a medium for contestation and competition, including in the field of religion, in the context of Indonesia's multireligious society. YouTube is one of the social media that has become a digital space that can give rise to polemics of intolerance in religious harmony in Indonesia. The aim of this study is to find out the polemic of religious intolerance on YouTube channels. Using qualitative methods and a netnographic approach, data collection was carried out using YouTube media with content that is in accordance with the orientation of this study, namely the polemic of religious intolerance. The results show that there are 15 YouTube channels that upload 20 video contents about religious debates, responses to the uploaded videos show various comments from netizens who claim the truth of their respective religions. The implications of claims regarding religious truth often manifest in intolerance, conflict, hatred, and even war. This study is expected to contribute to the prevention of religious intolerance and support religious moderation in order to achieve a more harmonious and tolerant religious life.

Ruang digital kini telah menjadi media kontestasi dan kompetisi, termasuk di bidang agama, dalam konteks masyarakat multiagama Indonesia. YouTube merupakan salah satu media sosial yang menjadi ruang digital yang dapat memunculkan polemik intoleransi dalam kerukunan umat beragama di Indonesia. Tujuan studi ini untuk mengetahui polemik intoleransi beragama pada kanal YouTube. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan netnografi, pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan media YouTube dengan konten yang sesuai dengan orientasi penelitian ini, yaitu polemik intoleransi beragama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 15 kanal YouTube yang mengunggah 20 konten video tentang debat agama, tanggapan terhadap video yang diunggah menunjukkan beragam komentar dari netizen yang mengklaim kebenaran agamanya masing-masing. Implikasi klaim mengenai kebenaran agama tersebut seringkali bermanifestasi dalam intoleransi, konflik, kebencian, bahkan peperangan. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi bagi pencegahan intoleransi beragama dan mendukung moderasi beragama guna mewujudkan kehidupan beragama yang lebih harmonis dan toleran.

Keywords: digital space; Indonesian users; intolerance; polemic; YouTube

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Introduction

Information in written and video form is readily available on Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, and many other popular platforms (Omar, Hassan, and Sallehuddin 2015). These social media often facilitate the claims of truth. When combined with a lack of understanding of diversity, this often leads to differences in perception that cause conflict inter and intra religions (Zuhriah 2020). According to Digital 2022, Indonesia data on the Datareportal.com page, there were 191.4 million social media users in January 2022. YouTube is the social media with the most users, reaching 139.0 million users and equivalent to 50 % of the Indonesian population (Kemp 2022).

Previous studies have shown that the large amount of hate speech on social media influences people's intolerant attitudes and divides communities. Insults and hate speech on social media often escalate into labeling practices aimed at marginalizing or discrediting certain groups. Such labeling serves to divert attention or reduce empathy toward the targeted communities. To achieve this, online insults frequently employ language with implicit or coded meanings. For example, the terms "short fuse people", "tablecloth people", "napkin people", "flat earth people", and "camel urine" are some of the terms that are often used. According to Herlina (2018), insults with these words mostly refer to cornering groups, especially religious groups, not referring to individuals. Social media has developed into a second reality in modern human life, functioning as a tool for sending messages and information in the form of images, writing, and videos. Human existence in digital space has undergone a major transformation from active engagement in physical space to passive participation through screens. The digital world then becomes a place where people compete (Hefni 2020).

Habermas (1989) argues that the public space demands the willingness of modern society to learn from each other. Religious debate on YouTube contradicts this idea. The digital world then becomes a place where people compete (Hefni 2020). It is not surprising that actors from radical groups who seek to disrupt the stability of religious harmony in Indonesia emerge. In addition, problems that arise on social media apparently influence people's attitudes. In 2017 alone, there were 155 recorded violations of freedom of religion or belief, with 201 types of actions, with 75 examples of intolerant actions in society. Data on violations of freedom of religion or belief show this symptom, with 71 active violations, 3 violations of the rules, and 1 omission in the year of the violation. There were 126 actions carried out by non-state actors, with 28 actions carried out by citizens (Gerintya 2019).

Religious leaders and the government can work together to minimize religious provocation through religious dialogue, where people come together to maintain interfaith integrity, reconcile, and educate themselves. The media has become increasingly accessible to the public. Through social media, individuals can express their opinions or share reports about various events. Among the most popular digital platforms today is YouTube, which enables the dissemination of content and information through videos on social and cultural issues, including tolerance. Discussions on tolerance remain relevant in Indonesia, where differences in religion, ethnicity, and race continue to spark debate. Therefore, fostering mutual respect and maintaining tolerance remain essential in a diverse society.

The gap lies in the minimal focus on YouTube as an ecosystem of religious intolerance interactions, especially the dynamics involving

the role of algorithms and the visual or audio rhetoric of comments among ordinary Indonesian users. The novelty in this research is that in depth exploration of YouTube as an arena for polemics of religious intolerance in Indonesia, focusing on user dynamics and the role of algorithms, contributing to new understandings of how intolerance operates on video platforms. This research fundamentally fills a gap in the literature by focusing on YouTube as a new landscape for religious polemics in Indonesia. Its primary contribution is an in-depth analysis of the interplay between 1) intolerant video content, 2) active user engagement in the comments section, and 3) the function of recommendation algorithms in amplifying extreme narratives. The result is a new understanding of how digital infrastructure (algorithms) serves as a catalyst, not merely a platform, but also a catalyst for the spread and polemics of religious intolerance.

The aim of this research is to examine the expressions of religious intolerance on YouTube, to analyze how netizens respond to these controversies, and to assess the potential impacts of such intolerant discourses on broader social conflict. Given that religion is a highly sensitive and central element of individual and collective identity in Indonesia, this study seeks to understand how online debates or criticisms related to religious issues can escalate into forms of conflict and intolerance.

The research was conducted directly in relation to the subjects and objects being studied to obtain data and detailed observations of the research object. The study analyzed tolerance in YouTube channels that contained content related to religious intolerance by conducting searches on the internet. All videos from these YouTube channels discussing religious intolerance in Indonesia were then selected for analysis. This

research data collection was carried out through a digital literacy study on YouTube channels without validating it with people.

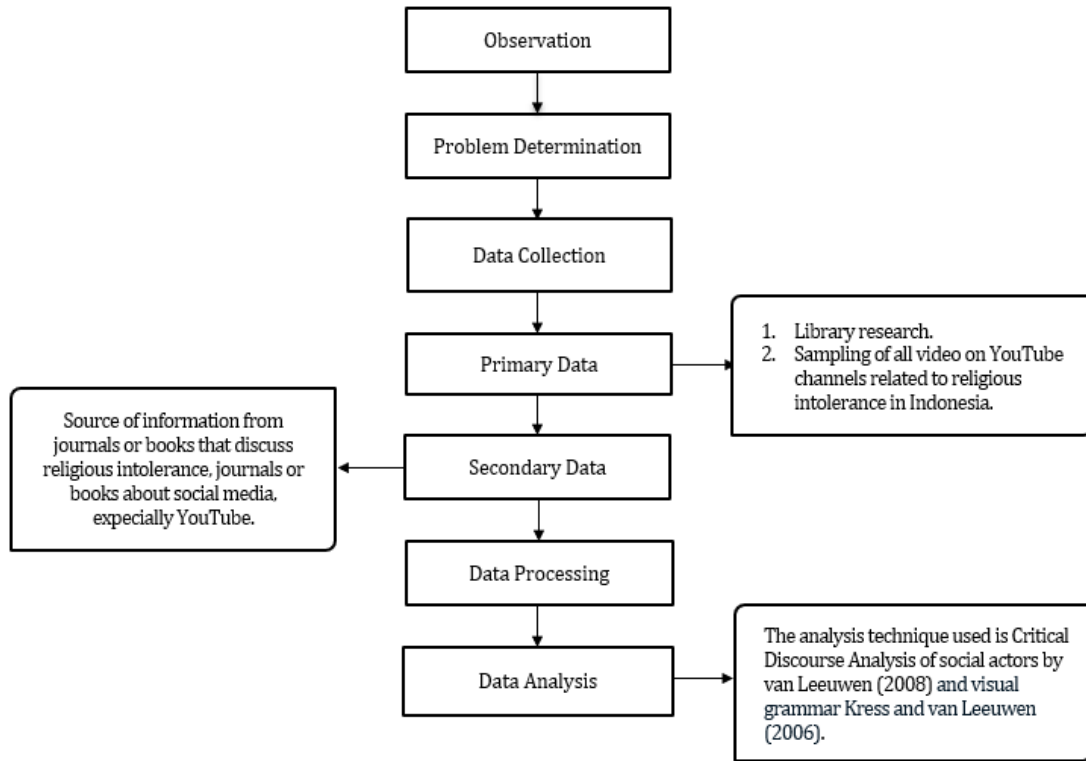
The stages in this research are as shown in Figure 1 (Research Flow). The states start by collecting literature or texts (both primary and secondary sources) and various other sources, then compiling them according to the study and its objectives. Then, a description or description of each literature obtained is made in detailed data to be used in the analysis process. Van Leeuwen's approach to CDA (2008) and visual grammar Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) will be applied in this research because it especially focuses on the representation of social actors in discourse as individuals or in groups, as active agents or patients; it also pays attention to their nomination, functionalization and identification, among others. Following van Leeuwen (2008) (2008), observing social distance, social relation and social interaction is useful to understand how people appear in visuals and their interpersonal relationships with the audience.

Then, the results are analyzed, reviewed, or interpreted to produce a new concept that is easy to understand and in accordance with the focus of the discussion. YouTube channels related to religious intolerance in Indonesia are primary data sources, the YouTube content reviewed during the research is still accessible, some content has now been taken down. Literature study includes collecting data from various sources, such as books, journals, and processing and analyzing materials (Anggito and Setiawan 2018).

The Expression of Religious Intolerance in YouTube

The results analysis of YouTube channels in Indonesia show that 15 YouTube channels that

Figure 1
Research Flow



Source: Primary Data.

upload videos about religious debates, with 20 videos discussing religious intolerance in the content and comments of people in Indonesia, as shown in Table 1. Cases of intolerance on social media, especially YouTube, trigger people to attack each other's religious beliefs. Nowadays, discussions on the internet are increasingly lively with people from various religions who want to know the truth about their respective religions. The effect of debates on YouTube, which generate many controversial comments from netizens, can cause religious phobias in society.

Regarding the information value of these contents, the YouTube videos are observed from

beginning to end, the speakers are present in all parts of the video, which contributes to highlighting that they are the main social actors and are the most prominent elements of the composition. The light spots in the video are even for all speakers. The speakers appear serious, looking at each other and also looking outside the video, which can be interpreted as a symbolic way of conveying the information being discussed (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Leeuwen 2008). The discussions in these videos are generally about worship procedures, debates about religious truth, podcasts that prove religion, and religious lectures.

Addressing the problem of intolerance today cannot only be done through television or conventional media. With the advancement of technology, new media such as social media have become one way to disseminate information. YouTube has become one of the most popular social media platforms for sharing information. 86% of people say they frequently visit YouTube to get the latest information (Praditya 2018). Data shows that YouTube is a great place to share sensitive issues, one of which is intolerance.

In addition, social media can help turn impressionable people into intolerant ones. Cases of intolerance in Indonesia have increased since 2016, according to data from the Coordinator of the Freedom of Religion and Belief Desk of the National Human Rights Commission (Marhayani and Suprpto 2018). This raises concerns about Indonesia's diversity. The principle of mutual understanding amid differences is crucial in Indonesian society,

which is characterized by its diversity. Tolerance emerges in such a plural context as individuals learn to understand and appreciate these differences.

Intolerance thrives on social media, making its suppression increasingly difficult. Many people on social media have exclusive attitudes justified by religious beliefs, which is a worrying sign that they do not know how to apply democratic rights in a religious context (Chusniyah, Hidayat, and Firdaus 2020). In other words, people who are fanatic and easily influenced by propaganda will find it more difficult to accept others. This is most evident when someone responds to a controversial post that discusses multiple perspectives, which has the potential to exacerbate the divisions that exist in Indonesian society. Religion is increasingly being misused, which should be a moral compass for its adherents (Saricam, Deveci, and Ahmetoglu 2020).

Table 1
YouTube Channels related to Religious Intolerance in Indonesia

No.	YouTube Channel/ Subscription	Documentation	Title/Description
1	Video Informasi/240K subscribers	 <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToN1-0g46Fw</p>	Pastor Gilbert Lumoindang went viral about the 2.5% zakat, comparing the Muslim zakat and the Christian tithe, which is much larger.

- 2 AN PROTV/103K subscribers



Report me to your God,
with Ustadz Yahya
Waloni from Manado.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgPEOtvRdJM>

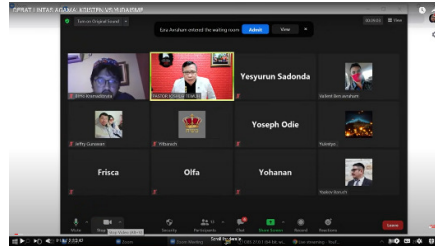
- 3 VIVA.CO.ID/3.41M subscribers



An Indian tourist engaged
in an argument with a
Hindu religious leader in
Bali on Saturday, May 11,
2024, at a place of
worship in Bali. The two
clashed because the
tourist protested Balinese
Hindu culture, which he
deemed incompatible
with his Indian teachings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TLdi8Zz1w>

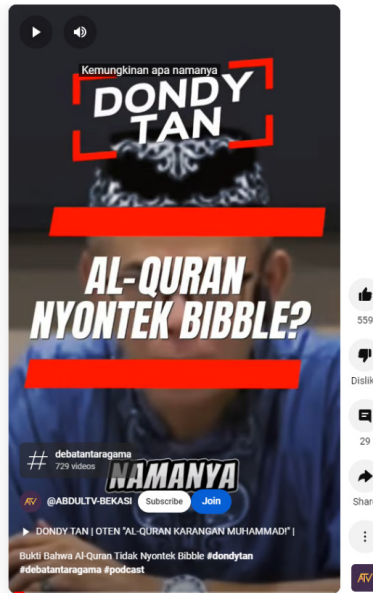
- 4 Joshua Tewuh/219K subscribers



Interfaith Debate:
Christianity vs. Judaism,
the conflicting
understanding in our
society about Judaism
and Christianity are the
same, then some say they
are not the same; as well
as various terms about
Judaism, modern Judaism
and Christian Judaism,
etc. Will be the topic of
discussion in our special
talk show tonight with
Rabbi Yaakov Baruch
about true Judaism with
several similarities with
Christianity such as
tithing. The discussion
seeks whether it is really
the same or extremely
different. This and many
more important doctrinal
discussions about
Judaism! Watch it in full
on our favorite Channel
with Kalam Kristus.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZmdD_dtFrQ

- 5 @ABDULTV-BEKASI/
94.2K subscribers



Proof that the Quran does not copy the Bible.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/irS8tmw2yoY>

- 6 @ABDULTV/94.2K
subscribers



Who created Christianity? The Islam vs. Christianity debate: Koh Dondy Tan was originally a Christian religious leader who received guidance from Islam after a seven-year search and research. Koh Dondy Tan finally decided to convert to Islam in 2014. He firmly converted after experiencing doubts about the holy book of his former religion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTCLROAnYc>

- 7 Hidayatullah
TV/378K subscribers



Intelligent Debate Islam vs. Christianity: Breaking down the Trinity Argument.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4TmxYt6pG0>

- 8 Ngaji Cerdas/1.13M subscribers



Climactic Moment:
Overwhelmed Pastor
Surrenders to
Christological Converts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6BG9NRLtj8>

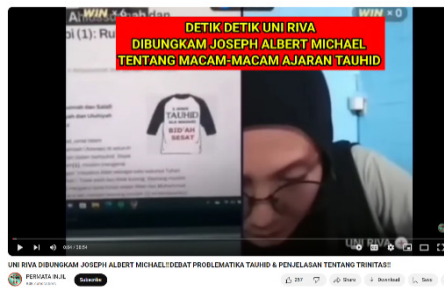
- 9 Permata Injil/84K subscribers



Proof that the Quran is
man-made: Inter-
religious debate between
Islam vs. Hindu Buddhist.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jRAAiWVicM

- 10 Permata Injil/84K subscribers



Uni Riva silenced by
Joseph Albert Michael:
debate on the
problematics of *tauḥīd*
and explanation of the
trinity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwk2JqEaRDY>

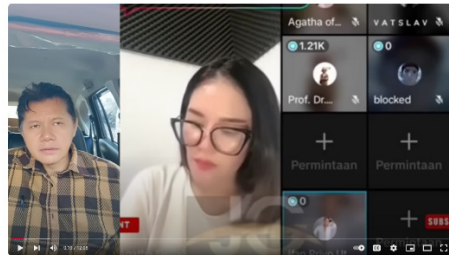
- 11 Ps Michael Engka/82.7K subscribers



An ustad who graduated
with a Bachelor's degree
in Islamic Studies was
unable to answer
Murtadin Joseph Albert
Michael's question.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7H1b_trHbU

- 12 Ps Michael Engka/82.7K subscribers



Which is true: The Quran or the Bible? Which is authentic and has not undergone changes?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08kkhdPuog>

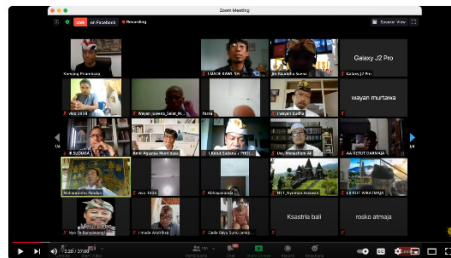
- 13 Gereja Youtube/593K subscribers



Hurry! Ustad Zuma was instantly given goosebumps and repented after discussing the Bible with this intelligent man.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1ucq9MKQKk>

- 14 Pemikir Bebas/2.17K subscribers



Heated debate between Hare Krishna and Bali's Hindu Dresta.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XG5rdga-0G8>

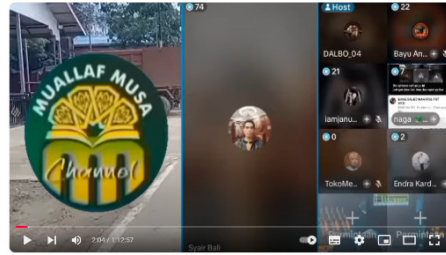
- 15 Samuel Christ/2.92M subscribers



So, which religion is true? Islam or Christianity? Ft. Ustadz Felix Siauw.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMgageGIC-M>

- 16 Muallaf Musa Channel/163K subscribers



Heated Debate between Hindu Priests and Christian Priests.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWWcB3fmLKk>

- 17 Akang Satria YT Channel/4,07K subscribers



Islam and Hindu people are angry that the name of their God was appropriated by Christians: Christian Islamic debate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nh0RrZzUDaM>

- 18 Ngaji Cerdas/1,14M subscribers



Tensive!! scolded by Christologists, three pastors silenced by their reasoning: Islamic-Christian debate part 1.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwWmjfec6v4>

- 19 Hidayatullah TV/381K subscribers



Heated Debate on Biblical Truth between Rev. Muriwali Yanto M. and Ust. Mashud.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKOYFt8oTi0>

20 Pdt. Esra Alfred
Soru/512K
subscribers



Muslims ask: if Jesus is God, why didn't he rise himself, but he was resurrected instead?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4ZWxX2s5VY>

A study examining the role of online platforms, particularly YouTube, in radicalization shows that content expressing religious intolerance or hatred is often embedded in recommendation networks. This means that users who show little interest in controversial topics may be directed to increasingly extreme content. Research by Tufekci (2020) and Benkler, Faris, and Roberts (2018) highlights how algorithms work to isolate certain views, effectively normalizing and reinforcing discriminatory narratives against minority religious groups or those with different theological perspectives. The process, driven by the need for monetization-based engagement, makes YouTube a medium with the potential to facilitate the massive and structured dissemination of intolerant ideas.

Analysis of hate content on YouTube reveals that religious intolerance often operates through layered communication strategies. According to Phillips (2018), hate speech often uses humor or parody to demean and dehumanize minority religious groups, thereby dulling the audience's sensitivity to the actual impact of hate speech. In similar situations, communication that contradicts conspiracy narratives is often identified as the work of a particular lobby, and such allegations enable the use of lines of

argumentation that draw on overly simplified and polarizing thinking patterns based on the "us vs. them" framing (Szynkiewicz 2023). In addition, Robertson shows that conspiracy theories can be seen as a secularized form of religious thought (Reformasianto, Triyaswati, and Faizah 2024).

Forms and expressions of intolerance that will give rise to various forms of discriminatory attitudes or treatment in everyday life, discrimination is a form of "differentiation in treatment", this differentiation in treatment can be caused by skin color, class, ethnicity, gender, economic status, religion, and so on (Fulthoni et al. 2009). This discrimination is bad because it will reduce and eliminate the recognition, implementation, and fulfillment of the basic rights of individuals or groups who are victims, in relation to religious freedom, these intolerant and discriminatory attitudes are often associated with the religious conservatism that has developed recently (Prasetya et al. 2021).

The consequences of the spread of religious intolerance on YouTube extend beyond the digital realm, significantly impacting the political and social dynamics of society. In relation to religious freedom, these intolerant and discriminatory attitudes are often associated with the religious conservatism that has

developed recently (Prasetya et al. 2021). The phenomenon of 'counter-media' that focuses on certain intolerant views creates communal validation for prejudice, which in turn can justify discriminatory actions in the realm of public policy, including issues related to the construction of places of worship, education, or freedom of belief (Tucker et al. 2018).

Responses of Netizens toward the Polemic of Religious Intolerance

Netizen responses have become a polemic regarding religious intolerance on YouTube channels, where the primary data is divided into two categories, namely the pros and cons of video content. Pro and con comments from each person who adheres to their respective religions are most in the content of videos 3, 15, 18, 8, 13, 20, 19, 7, 1, 4, 16, 2. While the response is low in videos 5, 6, 11, 12, 9, 10, 17, 14, however there are also netizen responses that are pro and con. From the analysis results, the composition of pro and con comments on the video is based on the content contained, including controversies in worship procedures, debates on religious truth, podcasts proving religion and religious lectures.

In the context of Indonesia's diverse and pluralistic society, the role of the mass media is increasingly crucial. Indonesia comprises various ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups living side by side in a complex social space (Kothur and Pandey 2025). This condition makes Indonesian society vulnerable to social friction that can lead to conflict if sensitive issues, such as religious, ethnic, or political differences, are reported in a provocative, biased, or unbalanced manner (Nabila and Anamta 2024).

Studies on digital activism note the paradox of netizen participation showing high solidarity in virtual spaces, but Tufekci (2020) cautions that, "Click based activism may be less effective in

generating structural change than physical mobilization, although it is important for building initial awareness." The results of research by Benkler et al. (2018) regarding the issue of disinformation regulation becoming crucial, the media ecosystem concluded that, "The spread of organized hate speech in online spaces systematically targets religious minority groups, exploiting platform architecture to marginalize peaceful narratives." It confirms that netizens' responses to the polemic of religious intolerance not only reflect offline social and political dynamics but also shape them through the speed and reach of online narratives.

Intolerance has become a part of everyday life in Indonesia. The advancement of technology, which facilitates the dissemination of information through social media and is deeply intertwined with Indonesian religion and culture, has influenced the basic attitudes of a society traditionally characterized by tolerance. When individuals are educated to respect and accept differences in perspectives, they are more capable of self-control and maintaining social harmony. Tolerance should be extended to all people, regardless of their birthplace, skin color, language, or beliefs. In contrast, intolerance can be defined as a lack of respect for others' opinions (Badaan and Jost 2020). Intolerant individuals often show resistance to pluralism and an unwillingness to accept differing views.

The dissemination of digital news offers benefits to people from diverse backgrounds. To reach a broad audience with targeted messages, collaborations involving so-called "buzzers" are often employed. However, the circulation of information on social media also brings social consequences. Discussions related to religion frequently become a source of intolerance. Irresponsible individuals can exploit digitalization to spread prejudice and hate

speech, thereby intensifying religiously motivated intolerance (Facal 2020).

Preachers from various religious backgrounds have utilized social media as a medium to disseminate their messages. Their influence often stems from their position as charismatic or inspirational figures. Through persuasive communication, social media preachers and lecturers possess the potential to foster national unity. Religious tolerance education can serve as a means to mitigate the excessive influence of religious dogma among adherents. However, some preachers appear to overlook the ethical responsibility of public communication, as provocative and sensitive content is frequently circulated freely through social media. The information presented in these lectures is sometimes treated as authoritative truth. Given that most Indonesians have access to digital devices, religious lectures can be viewed widely and without cost (Gusnanda and Nuraini 2020). Consequently, vulnerable individuals may become more susceptible to such doctrines.

With information from social media and the belief that one's decisions are correct, religious intolerance and fanaticism can increase. People who disagree with others often demand justification and compliance. Social media news articles condemning religious bigotry tend to exaggerate the problem. This type of content increases the debate about religious intolerance. The media plays an important role in raising public awareness of the issues at hand. Much of today's social media content shows prejudice and social tensions due to religious beliefs (Praselanova 2020).

In social life, individuals or groups may experience a sense of identity loss, which can contribute to the escalation of intolerance on social media. Feelings of injustice or neglect

within their environment often drive them to seek an outlet for frustration and dissatisfaction in digital spaces. Undeniably, social media exerts a powerful influence, as any content uploaded can rapidly go viral and shape public opinion. Emotional instability among users further exacerbates this condition, as certain groups may exploit such vulnerabilities for their interests. Consequently, intolerant content and militant propaganda can spread swiftly through social media platforms (Facal 2020). Manipulation of emotionally vulnerable communities becomes possible when such instability is deliberately targeted and controlled.

Internet users are encouraged to adopt a critical attitude toward information encountered on social media. Although some content or individuals may initially appear credible, the underlying motives or accuracy of the information are not always clear. Messages that seem positive at first glance may, in some cases, be part of orchestrated efforts with hidden agendas. Developing critical digital literacy can therefore help users protect themselves from manipulation and reduce susceptibility to provocation that may lead to the creation or dissemination of intolerant content (Fatoni and Rais 2018).

Impacts of the Religious Intolerance Polemic on the Social Conflict

More than a decade after the reforms, researchers and scholars have also shown various indications of the rise of conservatism among the Muslim community as the majority in Indonesia (van Bruinessen 2015; Crouch 2011). The increasing number of cases of intolerant actions, even in the form of persecution and violence, against adherents of other religions and minority groups is a real indication that can be

seen in the field (Kaptein 2016; Lindsey and Pausacker 2016; Menchik 2016).

According to a study by the Setara Institute (2014-2019), there are ten provinces where the most violations of religious freedom (cases of religious intolerance) were found, namely West Java Province (162), Jakarta (113), East Java (98), Central Java (66), Aceh (65), Special Region of Yogyakarta (37), Banten (36), North Sumatra (28), South Sulawesi (27), and West Sumatra (23). One of the triggers is the growth of intolerant organizations in these provinces. (Wardah 2020). Between 1999 and 2009, as many as 154 regional policies (19 provincial policies and 134 district/city level policies and 1 at the village level) became a means of institutionalizing discrimination, both in terms of their objectives and their impacts.

In 2016, the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs issued a list of 1,765 Regional Regulations/Regional Head Regulations of districts/cities that were revoked or revised by the Governor. This condition is called "Regional Regulation Obesity" or "Problematic Regional Regulation Inflation". Not only does it cause material losses, but it also erodes the authority and legal certainty in Indonesia (Hasani 2020). The phenomenon of the cancellation of problematic Regional Regulations is almost all related to the economy and investment, not Regional Regulations or Regional Head Regulations that are discriminatory or intolerant based on religion or belief. Regional Regulations/Regional Head Regulations related to religious intolerance tend to be slower or not responded to by the government (Kresna 2016).

Seeing the government's response, which seems slow or refuses to revoke the intolerant and discriminatory Regional Regulations/Regional Head Regulations, it is feared that the rise of conservatism through these intolerant

and discriminatory policies will also trigger radicalism, fundamentalism, and religious extremism in society. Religious extremism has always been closely linked to violence. However, this kind of labeling does not solve the problem, considering that religious communities have very diverse attitudes and behaviors. In the context of conservative Muslim groups in Indonesia, religious extremism also has a continuum from the most moderate to the most extreme. It has many dimensions, ranging from theological, ritual, social, and political (Wibisono, Louis, and Jetten 2019).

One of the most significant impacts is the dehumanization of religious minority groups. Through the dissemination of negative stereotypes and hate narratives, intolerant parties position the target group as "other" or even a threat, thereby justifying acts of discrimination or violence. The results of research by Ginges and Atran (2013) show that religious beliefs are often tied to "sacred values" which make individuals willing to make sacrifices, even commit violence, to protect these values, which directly triggers conflict. Moreover, "When sacred values are threatened, individuals often reject rational compromise and prefer actions driven by moral outrage, which significantly exacerbates social conflict." This phenomenon is exacerbated by the spread of biased information and agitation that utilizes social media, allowing identity polarization to grow rapidly beyond geographical boundaries.

The next impact is the rise of religious radicalization and extremism. Intolerance often creates an environment in which extremist groups can recruit members, exploiting the feelings of marginalization and injustice felt by some religious communities. Research findings underscore the importance of accurate and objective information for maintaining societal stability. Conversely, they caution against the

negative impact of incorrect information, which can contribute to fear, hatred, and misunderstandings, thereby fostering religious radicalism (Demant and Graaf 2010).

The Central and Regional Governments need to issue laws and regional regulations that specifically aim to encourage the strengthening of tolerance and freedom of religion and belief as an effort to reduce intolerance, discrimination, radicalism and violent extremism in their respective regions (Prasetya et al. 2021).

Conclusion

This study clearly highlights the central role of social media, particularly YouTube, as a new arena for discourse and conflict related to the issue of religious intolerance among Indonesian users. YouTube global reach has transcended geographical boundaries, allowing ideas and opinions to be shared widely, even to communities in remote villages. Although the diversity of cultural and religious backgrounds realized online is a manifestation of limitless connectivity, it is a trigger for disputes that spread quickly. Religious conflicts are inherently very sensitive and can easily be triggered through content and comment columns. Examples of religious intolerance are often found. Therefore, stricter and more structured regulations are needed from platforms and the government to proactively address and stop discrimination and hate speech in the digital space.

The main strength of this research lies in its sharp focus on a specific platform (YouTube) in a geographical context and a sensitive issue (religious intolerance in Indonesia). By selecting YouTube, this study successfully captures the authentic, real time dynamics of interactions in which religious polemics are constructed, debated, and exacerbated by online anonymity.

This research offers an in-depth qualitative perspective on how digital diversity, which should be an asset, can instead trigger conflict, while emphasizing the importance of fostering civility in online communities through open communication initiatives and user-to-user dialogue. These findings provide a strong foundation for developing digital literacy policies and mediating religious conflicts in Indonesia.

Despite making significant contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the nature of the data taken from YouTube content and comments may only reflect a small portion of the overall Indonesian user population, so generalizing the findings needs to be done with caution. Second, this analysis may be limited to a specific snapshot and may not fully capture the long-term evolution of intolerant sentiment or the effectiveness of platform moderation over time. Finally, because this study focuses on digital manifestations, it does not deeply explore the psychological and social impacts of online intolerance on real-world victims or the psychological drivers underlying users' intolerant behavior behind the scenes.[]

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