Policy Review

An Examination of Indonesia's Anti-Terrorism Policy During the Covid 19: the Rise of Digital-Based Terrorism Propaganda Among Youths

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ABSTRACT

The epidemic of COVID-19 has caused everyone to adjust and slowed global and national economic activity. The pandemic crisis situation, on the other hand, has not diminished radical terrorism groups; instead, it has been used to expand networks through the digital world and to target millennial youth groups. This article examines the shortcomings of government strategies in combating digital radicalization during the COVID 19 epidemic, notably the Government Regulation (PP) Number 77 of 2019. This policy regulates the strategy to prevent terrorism and deradicalization carried out by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT).Policy execution is complicated by the growth of teenage radicalization through digital media, which has played a significant role in COVID 19 pandemic breakouts around the world.

Keywords: policy review; terrorism; youth; digital radicalization; COVID-19

Introduction

A millennial couple was accused in the bombing of the Makassar City Cathedral Church on March 28, 2021. On March 31, 2021, this tragedy was followed by an attack on the Police Headquarters of the Republic of Indonesia by a woman of Millennial age. During this pandemic, two acts of terrorism triggered alarm bells, signalling the spread of extremism among Millennials.

Radicalism and terrorism pose significant dangers to Indonesians, particularly the younger generation. This danger is spreading not only in the physical world but increasingly in online. It is now thought that social media has become a vehicle for the transmission of extreme and intolerant beliefs, with the younger generation acting as both actors and targets. Extremist groups can customize their messages to specific target audiences using the

Internet, a tactic known as "narrowcasting," by focusing on more specific groups such as the younger generation in the process of transitioning (Torok, 2011).

This situation has worsened with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had an influence on global socio-economic changes and caused certain countries to hesitate in their response and protection of their citizens. Governments all across the world have created spaces and possibilities for violent nonstate actors to fill the hole left by their failure to respond to the coronavirus outbreak (Clarke, 2020). More especially, in offering protection against the emergence of dangerous terrorism trends that exploited security lapses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Across the social spectrum, militant extremist and terrorist movements are attempting to benefit from the COVID-19 situation (Bloom, 2020; UNITAR, 2020; IPAC, 2020). They see the outbreak as an attempt to enhance false narratives and propaganda in order to weaken public trust in the government, as well as to expand their popular support. Such radical messages and images could encourage resentment and urge individuals to organize attacks and commit acts of violence by stimulating interest of financial struggle and exclusion (UNITAR, 2020; the Habibie Center, 2020). Terrorist organisations could use events throughout the world to justify their own ideas and beliefs, increase their core base, and attract younger recruits as the crisis escalates (UNITAR, 2020).

The purpose of this article is to examine the Indonesian government's anti-terrorist strategies in light of the rise of digital-based terrorism propaganda among youths during the COVID 19 Pandemic. This article elaborates on the policy of Government Regulation Number 7 of 2019 in the second half, with an emphasis on the design of government counter-radicalization and de-radicalization initiatives. This article's third section highlights four policy weaknesses that prevent policymakers from anticipating the heightened vulnerability of youngsters to terrorism propaganda during the COVID-19 epidemic. Finally, this paper suggests three policy objectives that should help the Indonesian government enhance its efforts to prevent terrorist activities and terrorism propaganda among the younger population.

Policy Explanation

The Government Regulation No. 7 of 2019 on the Prevention of Criminal Acts of Terrorism and the Protection of Investigators, Public Prosecutors, Judges, and Community Officers is a technical policy to execute Law No. 5 of 2018 on the eradication of criminal acts of terrorism. The purpose of Government Regulation Number 7 of 2019 (hereafter referred to as the PP 7, 2019) is to prevent terrorist activities and to protect state officials involved in the process of preventing and combating terrorism. This article will only cover the policy implications of preventing terrorist activities. The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), which consists of three primary components, namely (1) National Preparedness; (2) Counter

Radicalization; and (3) Terrorism Prevention, is in charge of coordinating efforts to prevent acts of terrorism, according to PP 7, 2019. (3). Deradicalization.

The two components of methods to eradicate acts of terrorism which is stipulated by the PP 7, 2019, namely counter radicalization and deradicalization, are the focus of this article. Anti-radicalization efforts include: Counter-radicalization is a planned, integrated, systematic, and ongoing process aimed at preventing the spread of radical ideas of terrorism among people or groups of people who are vulnerable to being exposed to radical ideas of terrorism. With four primary criteria, counter radicalization is aimed at individuals or groups who are vulnerable to being persuaded by radical terrorism ideas. First, having access to information containing radical terrorism ideas; second, having a relationship with a person/group of people who are indicated to have a radical understanding of terrorism; third, having a narrow national understanding of terrorism that leads to a radical understanding of terrorism; and fourth, having economic, psychological, and/or cultural vulnerabilities that make them easily influenced by radical terrorism notions.

Counter narrative, counter propaganda, and counter ideology are the three strategies used in the counter radicalization program. Counter-narratives are implemented in a variety of ways, including compiling and disseminating the narrative of the message of peace through both electronic and non-electronic media; ongoing implementation of religious values that promoting peace; ongoing implementation of national values; and ongoing monitoring and mapping of content and distribution of radical understanding of terrorism narratives in both electronic and non-electronic media. Other activities in the form of increasing deterrence and community resilience based on the principles of local wisdom include research, study, and survey of radical understanding of terrorism; and other activities in the form of increasing deterrence and community resilience based on the principles of local wisdom.

Monitoring, analysis, and strategic study of the threat of spreading radical terrorism content; coaching and empowerment for cyber or community activists; and other forms of activity in the form of increasing community deterrence and resilience by prioritizing the principle of local wisdom are all part of the counter-propaganda program. The counter-ideological program entails mapping and strategically assessing the threat of radical terrorism ideology; collecting and processing data on the potential spread of radical terrorism ideology; strengthening national insight and Pancasila ideology; strengthening Pancasila ideology understanding for state civil apparatus, Indonesian National Armed Forces soldiers, and members of the Indonesian National Police; and various sorts of activities related to the concepts of local knowledge, such as enhancing community deterrence and resilience.

Deradicalization, which is a planned, integrated, systematic, and ongoing process that is carried out to eradicate or decrease and reverse the radical understanding of terrorism that has occurred, is another important component of the policy to prevent acts of terrorism as

specified in the PP 7, 2019. The deradicalization program is aimed at terrorism suspects, defendants, prisoners, and ex-terrorism convicts, as well as individuals or groups who have been inspired by radical terrorism ideas.

The deradicalization program involves four stages: (1) identification and assessment; (2) rehabilitation; (3) re-education; and (4) social reintegration for suspects, defendants, and convicts of terrorist crimes. The initial assessment is identified, and the follow-up assessment is identified during the identification and assessment phase. The identity of the suspect; psychological profile related to perception, motivation, identity, and level of exposure to radical notions of terrorism; involvement, role, and position in terrorist networks or groups; risk analysis and needs analysis; and recommendations for rehabilitation, re-education, or social reintegration were collected at the outset through interviews and observations. Furthermore, advanced phases are identified through direct interviews, observations, and clarifications in order to evaluate and track the progress of particular targets. The next step is to collect data on psychological profiles such as perceptions, motivations, identities, and levels of exposure to radical terrorism; involvement, role, and position in terrorist networks or groups; development of attitudes and behaviour; risk and needs analyses; and recommendations for rehabilitation, re-education, or social reintegration.

The second stage is rehabilitation, which entails individual therapy as well as group class meetings that cover topics such as psychology, religion, national insight, and rules and regulations. Academics, practitioners, religious leaders, community leaders, and law enforcement officers are all involved in the rehabilitation process. Public lectures, discussion, coaching and mentorship, counselling or socialization, and practice exercises are among the activities carried out at this stage.

Re-education is carried out in the third stage in the form of religious understanding, counselling on national insight and peace issues, conflict resolution knowledge, and character education. Academics, practitioners, religious leaders, community leaders, and law enforcement officers participate in this stage's activities, which include lectures, discussions, coaching and mentoring, counselling, and practice exercises.

Before they finish their detention period, terrorist convicts must complete social reintegration activities that include: increasing self-confidence to return to society so that they are no longer afraid or dependent on groups or networks; increased understanding in interacting with the community; increasing social capacity in the reintegration process; and/or improving skills to be able to support himself and his family. BNPT is currently collaborating with a variety of parties to carry out a variety of social reintegration preparation activities, including discussions, coaching and mentoring, counselling, socialization, skill education, job training and certification, entrepreneurship training, apprenticeship, and social activities.

In addition, the PP 7, 2019 controls the deradicalization program for ex-terrorists, individuals or groups of individuals who have been exposed to radical terrorism ideologies, which consists of three core programs: promoting national insight, nurturing religious insight, and entrepreneurship. State defence activities, protection of the Republic of Indonesia, state ideology, Pancasila practice and appreciation, insight into the archipelago, and reinforcement of national values are all part of the national insight development program.

Additionally, activities connected to religious tolerance, social harmony within the context of national unity and cohesion, and religious concord are all part of the development of religious understanding. Final. Entrepreneurship program in the areas of employment training, business collaboration, and capital provision in the form of mentoring, mentoring, and usage.

Deradicalization is carried out by identifying and evaluating ex-terrorists within thirty days of their release from prison. On the basis of intelligence information, people or groups of people who have been exposed to radical terrorism beliefs are identified and assessed. By involving relevant state institutions, academics, practitioners, religious leaders, and community leaders, the deradicalization program for ex-convicts of criminal acts of terrorism is carried out within a maximum of six months from the results of the identification and assessment and can be extended once for a maximum of six months based on the results of the BNPT assessment.

Policy Analysis

The Government Regulation Number 77 of 2019 concerning the Prevention of Terrorism Crimes and the Protection of Investigators, Public Prosecutors, Judges, and Correctional Officers is one of the government's anti-radicalization initiatives. The policy regulates the National Counterterrorism Agency's (BNPT) strategies to minimize terrorism and de-radicalization. The BNPT's de-radicalization program for terror offenders, on the other hand, has been criticized and deemed ineffectual. According to the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) (2020), the government's de-radicalization effort is failing, since 11 percent of former convicts return to being terrorists. Even IPAC says that the adoption of COVID 19 has strengthened terrorist networks. The National Cyber and Crypto Agency (Badan Siber dan Sandi Negara or BSSN) claimed the same thing, claiming that the pandemic has fuelled four times as much cyber-crime as previously (Kompas.com, 2020). More specifically, according to BNPT's study, 85 percent of the Millennial generation is sensitive to radicalism (ibid).

This occurrence demonstrates how the pandemic onslaught has immobilized nearly all social and economic sectors, as well as reduced government control of the threat of digital terrorism radicalization. This issue is being exploited by pro-terrorism intolerant groups to

expand their network by using the internet and social media to influence young people to understand intolerance and radicalism. As a result, the government and other stakeholders must work together to reduce Millennial radicalization in cyberspace in order to halt the spread of terrorism in the country.

Accordingly, the author identifies four critical elements that have enabled Millennials' extreme digitization tendency to grow during the pandemic Covid-19. First, the radical online programs have the potential to penetrate home learning. Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled all school activities in Indonesia to be conducted entirely at home. The teaching process is conducted entirely online at all levels of schooling. Not only have educational activities switched to virtual activities, but also corporate and government functions are slowly going to cyberspace. As a result of this situation, everyone is becoming increasingly acclimated to life in the virtual world. Meanwhile, internet is an open and vulnerable place susceptible to different cybercrimes, as well as intolerance and terrorism. The current state of all virtual activities makes it difficult for parents and families to monitor their children's online activities. Terrorist organisations then take advantage of this situation by setting up online radicalization classes and using the Zoom application to target Millennials and teenagers. This situation is reported by Media Indonesia (2020) as following:

> *"…Now that it's indoctrinated through teaching and it's remote, that's certainly a step further. So, it is necessary to watch out for the emergence of a generation of radical groups that are the result of distance doctrinal education through online classes."*

Second cause is the radical groups took advantage of the economy's deterioration during the pandemic. The epidemic of COVID-19 has slowed global and national economic activity. Restrictions on social and economic activities forced practically all firms to shut down their operations, resulting in a drop in the company's budget and the number of employees. As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the unemployment rate in Indonesia increased to 2.56 million persons out of 29.12 million working-age adults, according to BPS (Tempo, 2021). Intolerance and terrorism groups take advantage of the poor economic situations to target young families and young individuals who are unable to work owing to the pandemic. Terrorist support groups are active in building humanitarian relief centres, alternative and inexpensive education for the community, and giving alternative occupations for individuals who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic's impact, according to the Habibie Center (2021). In addition, the ISIS Brothers clearly stated that they would employ ISIS members and sympathizers who were fired from their jobs due to COVID-19. Not only that, they also accept people who have been fired from their jobs even though they are outside the ISIS group (the Habibie Center, 2021)

The third cause refers to the impact of social restrictions policy on houses of worship closure The limitation of religious activity is also influenced by the social restriction policy. This situation encourages intolerant groups to resist the government's policy of banning religious activities and to use it as a tool to radicalize people. Intolerant parties are using the COVID-19 epidemic as a calamity against governments and countries that have considered targeting and weakening Islamic groups in other countries, according to the IPAC report (2020) and the Habibie Center (2021). As a result, bigoted groups and terrorism can readily find supporters among those who believe the restriction of activities in places of worship is excessive and unfair. "Violent extremist groups have leveraged the momentum of the COVID-19 pandemic to improve internal consolidation, notably by bolstering narratives and recruitment techniques." ...ISIS-affiliated groups are utilizing social media to disseminate conspiracy theories regarding COVID-19's origins, with the goal of eroding public trust in the government while bolstering the legitimacy of the group's violent extremist ideology." (p. 3 of the Habibie Center's 2021 report)

The last issue that influences youth's digital radicalization is a lack of digital literacy, which makes them more vulnerable to digital radicalism. This is reinforced by statistics from the Indonesian digital literacy research (Kata Data, 2020), which demonstrates that Indonesian internet users have a low critical thinking capacity, with 30 percent to 60% of respondents admitting to have been exposed to hoaxes, particularly young online users. According to the same survey, 11% of respondents disseminated hoaxes because they didn't think it was vital to check the accuracy of the information they got. This study demonstrates that the Indonesian people lack the ability to recognize hoaxes and are hence vulnerable to spreading false material.

Policy Recommendations

By digitally altering practically all socio-economic activities, the COVID-19 epidemic has changed people's social and cultural behaviours. The Millennial generation's strong participation in the open internet world, as well as their vulnerability to numerous cybercrimes, make them targets for radical intolerance propaganda from terrorist network groups. Furthermore, the pandemic wreaks havoc on the economy and restricts religious activities, instilling widespread disdain for the government's inaction, which is subsequently exploited by radical intolerant terrorism networks to strengthen their networks via the internet.

The author proposes the following three policy proposals to restrict the aggressiveness of Millennial radicalization attacks in the internet environment during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1.   The Ministry of Education and Culture is expected to be able to optimize digital literacy through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) subjects, with a focus on

understanding the validation of the truth of information sources and the security of their online identity, in order to unravel the exposure of digital radicalism to young people. Not only students, but also teachers and parents, need to be digitally literate. As a result, it is advised that the Provincial and Regency/City Education Offices encourage parents to participate in supervising their children's internet activities. Making digital literacy a fundamental component of teacher education and training is also important.

2. The author suggests that the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Youth Services at the provincial and district/city levels enhance activities, campaigns, and dialogues on national education, tolerance, and multiculturalism in schools, particularly in schools with homogeneous students in terms of religion and ethnicity. The activity technique is supposed to reduce the military approach, which is incompatible with the Millennial generation's perspective, such as parading and physical exercises. By incorporating all creative young groups, activities are planned to be digitally oriented and in line with the interests of today's young generation.

3. Finally, the authors propose that the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) analyze the de-radicalization program by integrating more communities where terrorism convicts live with their families in order to better understand the impact of intolerant radicalization of terrorist networks. The government encourages community organizations to establish capacity in order to support efforts to reintegrate convicted criminals into society through a long-term, collaborative economic approach

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