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## **Social Media as An Incubator of Youth Terrorism In Indonesia: Hybrid Threat and Warfare**

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### **Abstract**

The presence of technology, such as social media in cyberspace brings its own benefits to the terrorist groups. Terrorist groups use social media to recruit, influence, rally and invite as many people as possible to join them. Adolescent has become terrorist groups' new target for their regeneration. The characteristics of adolescents who are looking for self-value and having an interest towards social media, makes them vulnerable to be targeted by terrorist groups. This research is a qualitative research with a case study method of four teenagers' terrorists. This study aims to analyze how social media acts as an incubator of terrorism among Indonesian teenagers and to analyze how this phenomenon can be categorized as part of Hybrid warfare. The analytical techniques in this study are documentation studies from the news that spread across social media. This research shows that terrorist groups through social media provide anxiety narratives, and provide a role for teenagers to contribute through the path of jihad. To overcome this, the Indonesia government needs to place cyber terrorism in the framework of Hybrid warfare so that the weaponry components and strategies used can be holistic and multidimensional.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Terrorism, Radicalism, Cyber Terrorism, Hybrid War

### **INTRODUCTION**

Terrorism has become an enemy of the world that knows no territorial or state boundaries. The term terrorism itself implies an act of war. In Islam, an act of war has occurred since the time of the Prophet Muhammad as an effort to protect and defend Islamic religion. Here, many people often mistakenly associate the ideology of terrorism with the doctrine of *jihad*. Most of terrorists usually refer to the verses in the Qur'an as their arguments to justify their actions, which have gradually shifted the meaning of *jihad*.<sup>1</sup> The Qur'an does mention verses about jihad and its derivation 41 times. However, they are often misinterpreted and misunderstood as a form of justifying or

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<sup>1</sup> Bunyamin. Aspek-Aspek Nilai Kebahasaan Jihad dalam Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Al-Mutsala: Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan*, March 2019, Vol.1 No. 1. p. 8.

allowing warfare which leads to violence and ferocity. In fact, the *holy war* stigma provoked by the Western world defines the word *jihad* as bloodshed.<sup>2</sup> What comes to mind after hearing the word terrorism is no longer a heroic act to eradicate injustice, but instead an evil behaviour synonymous with bloodshed and accusing Muslims as the perpetrators.

As the time goes by and the technology becomes more advanced, the context of warfare also develops, especially in terms of its strategy. NATO mentions that the hybrid warfare is a reflection of the efforts made by Russia on Ukraine to gain the superiority of western countries in many ways beyond the conventional boundaries. The strategy that it offers does not only involve physical or military power, but also associates military and non-military forces simultaneously or even non-military alone.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, such strategy has commonly known as *Hybrid Warfare*. The hybrid warfare exploits and takes advantage of any ways to find its enemy's weakness and achieve what it wants. It is assumed to be a new definition of war. It is no longer a part of the conventional war as a conflict according to the strategic experts in the West, which consequently disregards it from potentially bringing up a new model of war (Fajar, 2019). However, the Russia believes that the hybrid warfare (HW) is not considered as a new concept.<sup>4</sup>

One of militant groups that apply hybrid warfare in their actions is the terrorist group commonly called as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). With hybrid instruments, this group has succeeded in exploiting so many of its enemy's weaknesses that it has become widely known and continued to grow to this day.<sup>5</sup> The instruments include 1) the ISIS' social (civil) instrument which sees an ethnic and sectarian gap between the Sunni and Shia schools, that has been going on for a long time in Iraq and Syria, 2) information instrument by spreading propaganda and posting videos of violence in executing detainees through its affiliated media such as *Amaq*,<sup>6</sup> and 3) 'civil power instrument that comes from its sympathizers around the world, who agree with or are influenced by its ideas delivered through communication media such as the internet.

More and more acts of terrorism can happen anywhere, anytime, and to anyone.

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<sup>2</sup> Kamali, S. *HOWA (Re) Claiming the United States through (Racial) Holy War*. In *Homegrown Hate*. University of California Press, 2021. pp. 161-180.

<sup>3</sup> Lebo, D., & Anwar, S. Pemberdayaan Komunitas Siber Oleh Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Dari Perspektif Strategi Perang Semesta. *Strategi Perang Semesta*, 6 (1). 2021. p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> The Chiper Brief. (April 13, 2019) Maskirovka : Russia's Gray Zone Between Peace and War. <https://www.thecipherbrief.com/maskirova-russias-gray-zone-peace-war>. Accessed on June 5, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Poetri, D. Y. (2021). *Bentuk Perang Baru di Abad Ke 21 Studi Kasus: Perang Sipil di Liberia 1989-2003*. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains*, 2(2), pp. 205-214.

<sup>6</sup> Britannica. (April, 2019). *Islamic State in Iraq and The Levant*. Accessed on <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-State-in-Iraq-and-the-Levant>, June 5, 2020 at 18.45 (Western Indonesia Time)

The perpetrators also vary. They are not only certain groups or individuals, but also teenagers. For some terrorists, teenagers are a vital source of support as they can play different roles ranging from supporters, recruitment to combat.<sup>7</sup> The presence of teenagers in terrorist groups allows them to play an important role in recruiting other teenagers. Regardless of their distance from the battlefield, their direct participation in the terrorist groups can cause a significant security threat. In the future, teenagers who are recruited by terrorist groups can lead to major conflicts. The conflicts can grow the seeds of hatred in the next generations, and in turn they turn bigger and will never end.

Due to their characteristics as human beings who are looking for their identity and interest in something new, the teenagers become a vital subject to the regeneration, growth and development of terrorism in the world.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the rapid advancements in information technology make a person's reach in obtaining information seem borderless. In the meantime, the biggest threat to the existence of the Republic of Indonesian today is the threat to *Pancasila* as the state ideology, one of which is targeting the teenagers by manipulating information which leads them to wrongly interpret religious teachings, in order to achieve its interest, the Islamic caliphate. Terrorist movements in the modern era that involve teenagers to take a part will always be a threat to the state, where they continuously become the subjects to carry out their actions.

The existence of terrorism in the lives of teenagers does not only come from the family or the radicals around them, but also from themselves as individuals. The study has found that the terrorist groups such as the ISIS recruit them in different ways and contexts; deception, trafficking, kidnapping, recruitment by sympathizing family members, a make-believe that the group would protect the family or community, and forcible recruitment.<sup>9</sup> One source of radicalism that often happens to the teenagers is social media as a major risk factor due to the fact that they, on the one hand, are inseparable from it. On the other, they are very vulnerable as they are easily influenced for their curiosity and likeness on new things.

The social media as the focus of this study is the interactive social media which allows the flow of information and reciprocal communication or provides a platform for users to take an active role and modify information contents in real time, including Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and Telegram. This study aims at analysing how social media acts as an incubator of terrorism in the lives of teenagers in Indonesia, with a case

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<sup>7</sup> Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth*. American Enterprise Institute, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth*. American Enterprise Institute, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth*. American Enterprise Institute, 2019.

study on four teenage terrorists. In addition, it also analyses how such phenomenon is considered as cyber warfare which is part of the concept of hybrid warfare.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design with a case study method. The case study method is applied considering that the study only focuses on phenomena which are present in a limited context, despite the fact that the boundaries between the context and phenomena seem vague.<sup>10</sup> This method is taken as it can lead the researchers to gain a holistic and comprehensive understanding on the inter-relationships among various facts and dimensions of the case.<sup>11</sup> Yin says that the research applying case study method does not require an accurate or complete interpretation of an event.<sup>12</sup> The method aims at developing a framework where its researchers try to understand the complexity of social phenomena and to maintain the characteristics of organizational life cycle, social change and international relations.

To limit the research questions, this study only analyses how social media acts as an incubator of terrorism in the lives of teenagers in Indonesia. The case study here focuses on an act of terrorism committed by four teenagers; ZAI (14 years old), Abu Arkam/MZ (19 years old), RES (16 years old), SI. The four individuals are teenagers who have been involved in several acts of terror in Indonesia and have undergone radicalization through social media.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The term *Hybrid Warfare* was first introduced in William J. Nemeth's study entitled *Future War and Chechnya: A Case for Hybrid Warfare*.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, many academics and practitioners did not fully understand the concept of Hybrid warfare back then. In 2017, The International Consensus on Hybrid Warfare which was attended by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) declared that they did not have a standard definition of Hybrid Warfare, but they agreed that it would be a complex issue in the future.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Poerwandari, E. Kristi. Pendekatan kualitatif untuk penelitian perilaku manusia. LPSP3 Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Indonesia, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Poerwandari, E. Kristi. Pendekatan kualitatif untuk penelitian perilaku manusia. LPSP3 Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Indonesia, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Yin, K Robert, Case Study Research Design and Methods (pent. M. Djuazi Mudzakir), Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Nemeth, William J. Perang masa depan dan Chechnya: kasus perang hibrida . Diss. Monterey, California. Sekolah Pascasarjana Angkatan Laut, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Cullen, Patrick J., and Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud. "MCDC countering hybrid warfare project: Understanding hybrid warfare." A Multinational Capability Development Campaign project, London (2017).

In a simple term, Hybrid Warfare is a war that employs multiple instruments of force targeting the vulnerability of a country in order to achieve its strategic interests.<sup>15</sup> McCuen defines it as a war designed to intervene in a country using both physical and conceptual spectrums.<sup>16</sup> Its characteristic is the absence of direct military involvement. The attack takes place by exploiting the vulnerabilities of a country and synchronizing the Military, Political, Economic, Civil, and Information (MPECI) power into a real military force.<sup>17</sup>

In Hybrid warfare, the synchronized MPECI power is controlled and turns into a vertically or horizontally escalating-force. In other words, the power spectrum of each instrument can be increased or combined with one another. The use of the hybrid warfare (HW) gives freedom to each actor to choose one or several certain instruments simultaneously in order to escalate horizontally and vertically. This means the actor may choose an instrument according to his capabilities or depending on the weak point of the target.

The hybrid warfare users are classified into two actors, state actors and non-state actors.<sup>18</sup> Given the fact that not only countries have the capability to go to war, non-state actors show the same capability to do so. The objective of using this hybrid warfare is to accomplish an actor's interests under the general circumstances and conditions of deploying armed forces.<sup>19</sup> Here, the military force is said to be a supplementary or additional instrument to the hybrid warfare strategy.<sup>20</sup>

With the ambiguity, complexity and secrecy of Hybrid Warfare, a country needs to understand its concept and strategy in order to be able to identify and know if it is under attack. Some of its main characteristics include: 1) widely using MPECI instruments and techniques which do not involve traditional threats, 2) targeting social vulnerabilities that have never been thought of and have never been predicted, 3) synchronizing each instrument capable of escalating into non-military attack, 4) exploiting creativity, ambiguity, and invisible element (cyber world), 5) War does not physically happen, but its impact is visible when a country has experienced

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<sup>15</sup> Cullen, Patrick J., and Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud. "MCDC countering hybrid warfare project: Understanding hybrid warfare". A Multinational Capability Development Campaign project, London (2017).

<sup>16</sup> McCuen, John J. "Perang hibrida". *Tinjauan militer* 88.2 (2008): p. 107.

<sup>17</sup> Fajri, M. Bahtiar. "Strategi Pertahanan Maritim Indonesia di Tengah Dinamika Perang Hibrida Kawasan Laut China Selatan." *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* 17.1 (2020): pp. 59-78.

<sup>18</sup> Cullen, Patrick J., and Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud. "MCDC countering hybrid warfare project: Understanding hybrid warfare". A Multinational Capability Development Campaign project, London (2017).

<sup>19</sup> Monaghan, Andrew. "Perang dalam 'perang hibrida' Rusia." *Parameter* 45.4 (2015): p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Monaghan, Andrew. "Perang dalam 'perang hibrida' Rusia." *Parameter* 45.4 (2015): 65.

destruction.<sup>21</sup>

The hybrid warfare has now been taken seriously by state and non-state actors. It began to emerge during the US campaign against terrorism in 2001. In the recent years, the campaign that uses hybrid warfare has even been seen in several international issues, such as what happened between Russia and Ukraine in the Eastern Europe region and the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Middle East region.<sup>22</sup> In another case, the hybrid warfare also occurs as terrorism especially in the cyber world, known as cyber terrorism.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The involvement of teenagers in acts of terrorism basically happened in 2009, the suicide bombing that took place at the JW Marriot Hotel. This incident involved an 18-year-old teenager who was indoctrinated into a radical ideology by his parents.<sup>23</sup> In this case, the parents play a crucial role in indoctrinating their teenage son. He takes a subordinate position, whereas the parents are in the ordinate position. As a result, a power relationship between the parents and their son occurs.<sup>24</sup> Social media including Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and Telegram are able to change actors and patterns of indoctrination in the way that teenagers can see direct indoctrination by terrorist groups without involving their parents or other family members. The absence of monitoring and control from the surrounding environment on the use of social media allows them to access information without adequate filters. The interaction between them and members of terrorist groups even occurs in real time.

This study raises acts of terrorism committed by four teenagers: ZAI, Abu Arkam (MZ), RES, SI. The four individuals were teenagers who were involved in several acts of terrorism in Indonesia and experienced radicalization through social media. The 14-year-old ZAI, for example, was arrested along with his father, AT, as the suspected terrorist by Densus 88 in Jembrana, Bali.<sup>25</sup> Both were arrested for planning to commit an act of terrorism in Bali after intensely making a communication with

<sup>21</sup> Cullen, Patrick J., and Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud. "MCDC countering hybrid warfare project: Understanding hybrid warfare". A Multinational Capability Development Campaign project, London (2017).

<sup>22</sup> Fajri, M. Bahtiar. "Strategi Pertahanan Maritim Indonesia di Tengah Dinamika Perang Hibrida Kawasan Laut China Selatan." *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* 17.1 (2020): pp. 59-78.

<sup>23</sup> Lasmawati, Ariyani, Remaja dalam Terorisme, Pelaku atau Korban? Accessed on <https://m.harianterbit.com/read/116227/Remaja-Dalam-Terorisme-Pelaku-Atau-Korban>, May 29, 2020 at 13.34 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>24</sup> Lasmawati, Ariyani, Remaja dalam Terorisme, Pelaku atau Korban? Accessed on <https://m.harianterbit.com/read/116227/Remaja-Dalam-Terorisme-Pelaku-Atau-Korban>, May 29, 2020 at 13.34 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>25</sup> Mappapa, Pasti Liberti., & Gunawan, Deden, Medsos disorot jadi incubator terorisme yang sasar remaja. Accessed on <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4787676/medsos-disorot-jadi-inkubator-terorisme-yang-sasar-anak-muda> March 3, 2020 at 15.45 (Western Indonesia Time).

Syahrial Alamsyah a.k.a. Abu Rara, the man who stabbed Wiranto (former Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs).<sup>26</sup> According to Densus 88's investigation, both were in the "Menanti Al Mahdi/Waiting for Al Mahdi" group chat.<sup>27</sup> Another example of teenagers exposed to radicalism is MZ, a 19-year-old teenager from Berau, East Kalimantan. He was arrested on suspicion of having close ties to the JAD network, including Abu Hamzah, who was detained by the police. He was also suspected to actively communicate with the JAD network and willing to fight against anyone who opposes the ISIS.<sup>28</sup> He was caught red-handed to be planning a bank robbery for *jihad* capital and targeting police officers for his *lone wolf* action.<sup>29</sup>

In 2016, RES, who was only 16 years old, was arrested for allegedly joining a well-known terrorist group in Indonesia, Bahrum Naim.<sup>30</sup> According to the investigation, RES was known to be learning how to make poison smoke bomb through the internet.<sup>31</sup> He has been familiar with social media and has actively used social media platforms including Facebook since 5th grade.<sup>32</sup> From his Facebook account, he was found to have accessed a lot of information from hard-line Islamic group sites and have been finally persuaded to join the ISIS.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the 18-year-old IAH was involved in planning the bombing at the St. Joseph Church, Medan and stabbing the hand of a priest at the church.<sup>34</sup> He admitted that he felt inspired when he saw the news about the

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<sup>26</sup> Mappapa, Pasti Liberti., & Gunawan, Deden, Medsos disorot jadi incubator terorisme yang sasar remaja. Accessed on <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4787676/medsos-disorot-jadi-inkubator-terorisme-yang-sasar-anak-muda> March 3, 2020 at 15.45 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>27</sup> Fahlevi, Fahri, Ayah dan anak di Jembrana diduga berbaiat langsung ke pentolan Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi, accessed on <https://bali.tribunnews.com/2019/10/12/ayah-dan-anak-di-jembrana-diduga-berbaiat-langsung-ke-pentolan-isis-abu-bakar-al-baghdadi> March 3, 2020 at 15.05 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>28</sup> Wibisono, Sri Gunawan, Remaja Berau tersangkut kasus terorisme JAD Sibolga, accessed on <https://beritagar.id/artikel/berita/remaja-berau-tersangkut-kasus-terorisme-jad-sibolga>, March 5, 2020 at 09.45 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>29</sup> Wibisono, Sri Gunawan, Remaja Berau tersangkut kasus terorisme JAD Sibolga, accessed on <https://beritagar.id/artikel/berita/remaja-berau-tersangkut-kasus-terorisme-jad-sibolga>, March 5, 2020 at 09.45 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>30</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>31</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>32</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>33</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>34</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

terrorist attacks in France on the internet.<sup>35</sup> The Police investigation shows that he learned how to build a bomb from the internet.<sup>36</sup>

### **Youth Vulnerability to Radicalism-Terrorism Exposure**

The above actors of terrorism are individuals who have actively used internet. ZAI, MZ, RES, and IAH are in the age range of 14 to 19 years. At those ages, they are no longer children, but are also not considered as adults. In other words, the teenage group is an individual who is undergoing a phase of self-discovery, so they are very open to various types of information and curious about new things. At this phase, they also need a role model in their behaviour and social interaction that they can refer to when they grow into adults. For this reason, they are considerably the most vulnerable groups that can be easily recruited for terrorist networks. Such vulnerability is taken as an advantage by the ISIS to spread extremist ideas in order to millennialize terrorist groups. The ISIS attempts to share an opinion by providing a role for youth to contribute on *jihad*. IAH's case, for example, shows the mental and psychological condition of teenagers who are very vulnerable. By watching the terror attacks in France, he was even inspired to do the same thing in Indonesia.

The youth vulnerability to recruitment by terrorist groups is influenced by different factors: 1) geographical proximity to the conflict, 2) economic vulnerability, 3) perceptions on social or political marginalization, 4) permissive families and social networks, and 5) exposure to extremist propaganda.<sup>37</sup> Derden mentions six types of motivation for teenagers to join terrorist groups: 1) Group identity; 2) The ideological appeal of the group; 3) Real or perceived threats, including exclusion, complaint, or cultural threats; 4) the potential for economic gain or long-term economic stability; 5) fame, glory, or honour; and 6) Personal connections, including family and friend networks.<sup>38</sup>

### **Information Manipulation on Social Media**

The characteristics of teenagers who are vulnerable to exposure to information and environmental changes become a complicated issue when they find information that

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<sup>35</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>36</sup> Rappler, Menkopolhukam: Pelaku teror gereja di Medan terinspirasi pemimpin ISIS, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/144555-pelaku-teror-gereja-medan-terinspirasi-pemimpin-isis> March 4, 2020 at 16.57 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>37</sup> Darden, Jessica Trisko. Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth. American Enterprise Institute, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Darden, Jessica Trisko. Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of Youth. American Enterprise Institute, 2019.



has been manipulated by terrorist networks and posted on social media. The social media basically gives an impact on the terrorism to develop by using it to mobilize, recruit, influence and involve the youth in terrorism networks. By watching *Jihad Selfie*, an Acehnese teenager named Teuku Akbar Maulana (17 years) admits that the ISIS has its own way of approaching teenagers, one of which is through social media. He even almost joined as ISIS members.<sup>39</sup> The ISIS uses social media to spread extremism by manipulating information. Experts say that the information manipulation is affected by the speed of internet or social networks that did not exist before, and the crisis of confidence in a country's democracy.<sup>40</sup>

The information manipulation created by the ISIS began with a motion of no confidence in ISIS by countries that were expected to run the government according to the teachings in the Qur'an as a whole. This motion is then taken into account by exposing injustice, corruption, and tyranny experienced by Muslims. In turn, the manipulated narratives are massively posted on social media. The Internet accelerates the narratives to spread around the world. As the result, people can easily believe what they read, and finally decide to join a terrorist group. The study conducted by Schaukowitch confirms that the factors supporting ISIS' success in spreading terror include religious ideology, ability to rule a territory, and expertise in carrying out propaganda through digital literacy or narrative, social media and da'wah rhetoric.<sup>41</sup> The cases surrounding ZAI and MZ are the results of information manipulation created by ISIS which has successfully recruited and eventually involved them in acts of terror.

### **Computational Propaganda on Social Media**

In supporting the recruitment process, the ISIS carries out propaganda on internet social media by offering narratives that show the benefits to gain when individuals or groups join it. This is in line with what Simon says that propaganda through publication is like the oxygen for the terrorist groups.<sup>42</sup> In undergoing the propaganda, the terrorist groups such as the ISIS are very much capable of creating persuasive contents on different social media platforms including photos, videos, and electronic magazines. Besides posting articles and uploading videos, the ISIS also uses

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<sup>39</sup> Lubis, Uni, FAKTA: Pelaku tindak pidana terorisme berusia belia, accessed on <https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148572-fakta-pelaku-tindak-terorisme-masih-berusia-belia>, March 3, 2020 at 15.02 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>40</sup> Vilmer, J.-B. Jeangène., Escorcía, Alexandre., Guillaume, Marine., & Herrera, Janaina. (2018). Information Manipulation: A Challenge for Our Democracies, report by the Policy Planning Staff (CAPS) of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM) of the Ministry for the Armed Forces, Paris, August 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Schaukowitch, Mark, Words are Weapons: Inside ISIS's Rhetoric of Terror, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 104 (2), 231-234, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Simons, Greg, Brand ISIS: Interactions of the Tangible and Intangible Environments, 2018.

Twitter as a social media to recruit women and men, share videos and images to attract potential jihadists, and promote radical narratives. The ISIS group illustrates the beautiful life in Syria, on the one hand, and the terrible situation on the battlefield, on the other. Such narratives are posted on Twitter by the “Umm Network” which has more than 100 members and claims to be a foreign female jihadist.<sup>43</sup> The word “Umm” derives from Arabic word and is an honourable nickname for a mother figure. The contents shared by the Umm Network show extremism as a common way of life.

ISIS also frequently demonstrates propaganda techniques by providing material which is well written and ready to be published. Such publication contains daily life, exclusive interviews and pictures, and ensures that it is happening on social media. The ISIS supporters send out more than 90,000 tweets on daily basis to announce their cause.<sup>44</sup> Massive publication as propaganda does not only require the media as a means to share information, but also other aspects to ensure that the propaganda is carried out quickly, precisely, and according to the direction, and shows a much greater effect. To that end, the ISIS terrorist groups own financial resources and professional human resources. Both resources lead to having extraordinary computational propaganda skills.

Computational propaganda is basically disseminating information based on algorithms, automation, and precision of human calculations to manage and share propaganda content intentionally on social media platforms.<sup>45</sup> One example of the ISIS’ computational propaganda is its accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Despite the fact that the government has been aggressively shutting down radical accounts on social media, their existence does not seem to be disappeared. What happened to RES is proof of how computational propaganda carried out by terrorist groups can provoke a teenager to think radically and finally learn how to build poison smoke bomb from his friends’ accounts. After some network analysis is made up, these accounts are related to one another.

### **Use of Social Media to Express Opinions**

In the past, every individual must meet face to face to communicate due to the limitations of technology. With the rapid technology advancements, humans are increasingly dependent on social media to obtain information and to communicate. The

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<sup>43</sup> Hilburn, Matt, Perempuan jihadis gunakan twitter untuk mempromosikan ISI,. Accessed on <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/perempuan-jihadis-gunakan-twitter-untuk-promosikan-isis/2449868.html> March 5, 2020 at 19.09 (Western Indonesia Time).

<sup>44</sup> Praditiani, Sasha, Interpretasi wanita cadar pada tayangan propaganda kelompok ISIS. *Jurnal Visi Komunikasi*, 16 (2), pp. 112-121, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Woolley, Samuel C., and Philip N. Howard. "Automation, algorithms, and politics| political communication, computational propaganda, and autonomous agents—Introduction." *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 9.

media is used as a means of sharing and expressing ideas, opinions and thoughts. In the modern era, the media can work as a means of excessively preoccupying reputation in order to attract public opinion. For this reason, the public opinion is inseparable from the role of media. In the context of terrorism, during the *Jama'ah Islamiyah* (JI) era, terrorist groups used more direct or clandestine communication. The communication that existed between JI and its members and sympathizers is direct communication, including *halaqoh* (meetings) in certain places. Meanwhile, the way the JI communicated with the community or the state is in term of symbols, committing terrorist attacks.

In this digital era, social media plays a very important role in influencing and creating public opinion. When it succeeds in creating an opinion among a society, the opinion will transform into the attitudes and mentality of the society. New terrorist groups such as the ISIS are well aware of the important role of media in shaping public opinion. Therefore, they use social media to build the reputation of an Islamic State which is so safe, peaceful, and prosperous that many people show sympathy and are interested in joining them. In 2014 to 2016, the ISIS managed to attract sympathizers from various countries to come to Syria and Iraq (the land of Sham). This shows that it has succeeded in delivering its ideas, opinions, and thoughts to the international community. It has successfully shaped its opinions and has even made its sympathizers believe so considerably that they leave for the land of Sham.

### **Use of Social Media for Violence**

Cases involving violence are the main news material presented to the public by the media. In fact, news about violence can be found on almost all media platforms despite the fact that many critics argue violent contents are considered as exploitation of human suffering. The factors behind the media to tend to report violence are dramatized violence attracts audience attention, big cities have more crime and violence, the word “*evil*” is very well sold to the public, and public habits to use social media as a means to judge if an action is appropriate. The terrorist groups including ISIS use such factors as advantages and big opportunities to post videos of violence; killings, massacres, and wars to create fear for the international community.

According to Seale, emphasis on dangers raises concerns for the safety of their audience. In turn, such concerns are constructed and stimulate them to continue to consume social media, and finally bring fear.<sup>46</sup> When a child or teenager is often exposed to shows or readings with violent contents, the contents they consume can affect their attitudes and behaviours. In nature, social media is an audio-visual platform

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<sup>46</sup> Seale, Clive, *Media sosial and Health*. UK: SAGE Publications, 2002.

which allows them to interact with perpetrators of violence. Exposure to excessive violence will cause them to get accustomed with other forms of violence. Unsurprisingly, IAH (a teenager from Medan) felt inspired by the terrorist attack in France and decided to commit an act of terror at the St. Joseph Church, Medan, and stabbed one of the priests.

### **Use of Media for Political Purpose**

In practice, social media and terrorism have a mutually beneficial relationship to achieve their respective political goals. The ISIS group, for example, uses social media for political purpose to create and train independent terrorists (*lone wolves*) and to reach the goal of terror, which is to spread fear. It also uses social media to prove its existence and get recognition from the international community. In Indonesia, Social media tends to escalate to spread information about terrorism attacks, the Bali Bombing incident and the coverage of terrorist arrests that occurred in Sibolga, to say the least. This condition brings benefits for the terrorism actors who proudly assume that the social media supports their victory in spreading terror and serve as validation or recognition for their existence. Concerning the act of terror committed by teenagers, the post or information on social media causes them to believe and eventually decided to take the same action as a shortcut to fight for the injustice they experience. This can happen considering the ISIS uses social media to promote their social movements by representing the condition of people who have been oppressed, but do not get justice.

In the meantime, the political goal to gain by the media is to create watching behaviour. Emphasis on dangers raises concerns and triggers insecurity in the audience. If such concerns and insecurity have been made, that means the contents the media show have successfully stimulated them to continue watching and eventually cause an on-going fear.<sup>47</sup> Such condition often happens when the media presents news related to terrorism which attracts and arouses the curiosity of its audience to seek further information. Researchers agree that exposure to violence in the media leads to immediate and long-term negative impacts,<sup>48</sup> such as distrust in government for failing to protect its citizens.

### **Analysis of Cyber Terrorism as Part of Hybrid Warfare**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) identifies several hybrid threats which include cyber warfare, asymmetric conflict, global terrorism, piracy, transnational crime, demographic challenges, natural resource scarcity, restrictions on globalization

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<sup>47</sup> Seale, Clive, *Media sosial and Health*. UK: SAGE Publications, 2002.

<sup>48</sup> Burton, Graeme, *Media sosial and Society: Critical Perspective*. UK: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>49</sup> The term Hybrid warfare is basically introduced by the NATO to describe the latest operational attributes in Russia's attack manoeuvres on Ukraine. In the attack, Russia deployed military equipment and troops disguising as indigenous troops and Ukrainian separatists. It brought complexity with lethal force.<sup>50</sup> In general, Hybrid warfare is a military strategy which is a blend of traditional warfare, irregular warfare and the threat of cyber warfare. It can come in terms of information warfare, the use of biological and chemical weapons, improvised explosive devices, and nuclear attacks.

In nature, hybrid warfare is different from previous war concepts which focused on one or two specific instruments such as politics and the military. The concept of hybrid warfare involves all instruments owned by an actor. Here, mastery of technology is very crucial, particularly related to cyberspace, information, sophisticated weapons, and the use of airspace and outer space. The realm of the cyber world itself is the most prominent component in Hybrid warfare. One form of hybrid warfare is Cyber Warfare which is defined as a war that utilizes the internet network (cyber world) as a defence or an attack strategy on the opponent's information system.<sup>51</sup>

The phenomenon where social media becomes an incubator of terrorism among teenagers is considered as cyber terrorism or cyber warfare. It can also be said as Hybrid warfare for several reasons.

First, it uses a wider range of Military, Political, Economic, Civil and Information (MPECI) instruments that do not take the forms of traditional threats. Cyber terrorism is a development of traditional terrorism which, in the end, targets physical destruction using military instruments. However, in the process, it only utilizes information, political, economic and civil instruments. The information instrument, for example, happens on social media as a source of information for modern society and accessible to various groups. Meanwhile, the political instrument is undertaken by conducting online propaganda in order to delegitimize trust in the government and indoctrinate materials or contents related to the establishment of *khilafah* (caliphate). Further, economic instrument is also included in term of terrorism financing, where the collection and distribution of donations is made online. At last, the civil instrument is the main instrument that becomes the target of cyber terrorism. Here, the civil society is recruited by the terrorist groups who lead them to commit *lone wolf terrorism*. In several cases in Indonesia, the lone wolf terrorism tends to have common ground;

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<sup>49</sup> Bachmann, Sascha Dov, and Hakan Gunneriusson. "Terrorism and cyber-attacks as hybrid threats: Defining a comprehensive approach for countering 21st century threats to global risk and security." *The Journal on Terrorism and Security Analysis* (2014).

<sup>50</sup> Monaghan, Andrew. "The 'war' in Russia's 'hybrid warfare'." *Parameters* 45.4 (2015): 65.

<sup>51</sup> Fajar, Chairul, *Memasuki Era Hybrid Warfare: Fenomena Perubahan Lingkungan Strategis Bar*, Review International Relations, Volume 1, Nomor 1, 2019, 2019.

individuals/teenagers who commit the act of terror have been radicalized on social media before finally deciding to make it on their own.

Second, the phenomenon raised in this study is said to be hybrid warfare as it targets social vulnerability that has never been thought of or predicted. At first, many parties were unable to predict that social media would be a threat which can turn into an incubator to encourage an individual to commit acts of terror. In addition, the actors of terror have shifted. Not only adults become terrorists, but also teenagers who are emotionally vulnerable and do not have mental maturity.

Third, each instrument is synchronized in the way that they can escalate into a deadly non-military attack. In cyber terrorism, terrorist groups use the MPECI instruments and synchronize them with social vulnerabilities among Indonesian society to create an act of terror. In terms of casualties, the number of victims affected by the act is not as many as the one in the Bali Bombing or the 9/11 tragedy. However, the act is a non-military attack, targeting the ideology of the Indonesia's young generation. This is even more dangerous considering the more often the younger generation is radicalized, the weaker the foundation and power of the Indonesian nation will be.

Fourth, cyber terrorism exploits creativity, ambiguity, and invisible elements. Essentially, the cyber world is an invisible or unreal world. It is also known as the virtual world. Its unreality brings its own ambiguity as it is technically controlled by real humans, but the identities and images displayed are manipulated. Investigation and prevention efforts would be very difficult to make although they are made online. This means the efforts must be taken offline. For this reason, cyber terrorism is said to be hybrid warfare.

Fifth, the potential threat of cyber terrorism generally does not come in instance. The impact of the threat will only be seen when a country has suffered destruction. Similarly, the process of youth radicalization by terrorist groups on social media using sporadic strategies is very difficult to monitor and control. When the targeted youths are successfully reached out, the approach tends to be more personal which enables the indoctrination to get in easily. The groups perform the entire process clandestinely to ensure that the threat is invisible. The effect of the threat is only seen when the acts of terrorism including bombings or attacks committed by teenagers take place.

The above descriptions show information-based operations in the cyber world are the most important component in fighting against adversaries without involving physical weapons. Potential adversaries will usually adapt the traditional information operations to fit the Hybrid warfare which is intentionally designed to delay or disrupt the government's military response and policy-making processes. This is a new challenge for a government and nation. Cyber warfare is also regarded as an active

component in Hybrid warfare as it can result in disruption and damage to communications, infrastructure, command and control.

Referring to these facts, the Indonesian government is supposed to take cyber terrorism into account as a priority threat that must be immediately anticipated and addressed. The Indonesian government must start initiating and developing new strategies and establishing new units and commands to operate them. Although social media does not seem to be a real threat, it turns out to be an incubator of terrorism in Indonesia which targets the most vulnerable generation, teenagers.

In the context of national resilience, the young people are agents of change who will lead Indonesia to have a better future.

The national resilience depends on the power which is maintained in a country. A country with strong resilience is able to survive despite the fact that it faces different kinds of disturbances, threats, and internal and external obstacles. If, for example, teenagers who are supposed to fight for the development of the country are indoctrinated by terrorist groups, and even commit an act of terror that destroys the country itself. It is certainly a very serious threat.

To that end, the war against cyber terrorism is firmly declared as Hybrid Warfare which requires readiness and holistic strategies from all components of the nation. Given that cyber terrorism has complex and multidimensional characteristics, the concept of hybrid warfare is the right framework to overcome the threats it would cause. The success of Hybrid warfare mostly relies on the state-of-the-art technology which is able to provide accurate information and non-physical hideout and disguises in order to achieve the expected goals in the physical environment.

### **Hijack of Jihad**

Multiple factors behind the bombings and other acts of terror in different places in Indonesia include radical thinking, injustice, and most importantly a wrong understanding of *jihad*. The terrorist groups hijack the concept of a very sacred *jihad* and turn it into a fearful act of terror.<sup>52</sup>

A holistic interpretation is a must to understand the Qur'an. If, for example, it is interpreted narrowly and partially, it will lead to a dangerous understanding. It certainly mentions a verse about *jihad* and war against the unbelievers. However, the reason behind the verse being revealed is vital to comprehend. Any interpretation or understanding that leads to negativity certainly contradicts the universal value of Islam,

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<sup>52</sup> Arsyad, Yusri Muhammad. *Jihad, Perang Agama, dan Terorisme*. (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2017). p. 30.

which is *Rahmatan lil Alamin* (a mercy to all creations).<sup>53</sup>

In view of the permissibility of going to war in Islam, it is mentioned on one of the verses in the Qur'an (Al-Hajj verse 39) about the command of performing *jihad*, which says:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ  
لَقَدِيرٌ

*Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory.*

Muslim scholars agree that this is the first verse allowing Muslims to be well armed to fight and protect themselves. However, an act of war is permissible in Islam for several reasons: 1), the opposing side attacks first, and 2), the opposing side betrays a treaty and mutual agreement.

Accordingly, the context of war based on Islamic teachings only allows terminating those who are attacking. For this reason, those who are healthy, young and strong, let alone if they are sick, old, blind and neglected, cannot be killed as long as they do not get involved in the war. This is clearly on the contrary to the terrorist acts which generalize victims. They bomb a place without even knowing who are in it, and what is worse is to sacrifice themselves by justifying their act in the name of religion.<sup>54</sup>

*Jihad* has a broader meaning. In Arabic, it derives from the word *جهاد-يجهد-جهاد* which means effort. It is also interpreted as determination. In the context of war, *Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah* presents different meanings. Basically, *jihad* can take various forms, including the intention to prevent evil deeds, seeking knowledge and teaching it, being dutiful to parents, helping a widow and the poor, maintaining unity and integrity in order to create peace and harmony, and so on. In this regard, teenagers are the fittest individuals to carry out the aforementioned forms of *jihad*. Besides being in the golden age to find their identity, they are also agents of change to build a better human civilization with faith and knowledge.<sup>55</sup> In addition, they can perform *jihad* by studying the Qur'an and Hadith in order to fully understand them and prevent any misunderstanding and misinterpretation, particularly concerning acts of terrorism and radicalism.

<sup>53</sup> Bakry, Muammar. *Mujahid Versus Teroris*. (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2017). h. 24.

<sup>54</sup> Alvin Noor Sahab. "Mengukuhkan Moderasi Islam untuk Menyelesaikan Terorisme dan Hoax." *Al Aqidah (Jurnal Studi Islam)* 1.2 (2019): pp. 262-277.

<sup>55</sup> Kumalasari, I., Amin, M., Jaya, H., & Ningsih, R. *Edukasi Generasi Z (Digital) Dan Pola Kehidupan Baru Menghadapi Masa New Normal*. Abdi Dosen: Jurnal Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat, 5 (1). 2021, h. 59-71.



## CONCLUSION

The use of social media as an incubator of terrorism among teenagers is an undeniable fact. The terrorist groups have successfully exploited the teenagers to get involved in acts of terrorism by using the social media as a place to manipulate information, perform computational propaganda, indoctrinate, commit violence and gain political goals. The study shows that the phenomenon of youth radicalisation and terrorism on social media or commonly known as cyber terrorism is part of Hybrid Warfare. The teenagers become the target of recruitment by the terrorist groups for some reasons; they are undergoing a phase of searching for their identity, they are curious about new things, and they need a role model to reflect their behaviours. To those ends, they are vulnerable to exposure to radicalization and terrorism. To prevent them from the exposure, positive motivation and encouraging activities including studying the Qur'an and Hadith in-depth are needed, particularly in understanding terrorism, an act which is often indoctrinated and misled.

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