

From Clicks to Violence: A Study on the Role of Social Media in Radicalization and Terrorism

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Abstract. *This study aims to examine the role of social media in radicalization and terrorism. Social media has become an effective platform for extremist groups to spread their ideology, recruit members, and coordinate activities. The research highlights how extremist content is disseminated through social media, how these groups use the platforms to recruit and build communities, and how the narratives and propaganda they construct can influence individuals, especially those who are vulnerable. The impacts of radicalization through social media include changes in individual behavior and perspectives, social polarization, conflict, and an increased threat of terrorism. This study also discusses various prevention and countermeasures that can be implemented, such as counter-radicalization, deradicalization, and law enforcement.*

Keywords: *Media; Radicalization; Social; Terrorism.*

1. Introduction

Terrorism is regarded as a crime against humanity due to its severe and far-reaching consequences. (Jitariuc & Secrier, 2025) Unlike conventional crimes, terrorism transcends national boundaries and often involves both domestic and international networks. It is typically organized and can be rooted in radical ideologies such as political, religious, or social extremism. While terrorism and radicalism are distinct, they frequently overlap in motivation and effect. As a response, international and national communities have long implemented criminal policies to suppress terrorist activities and ensure public safety. (Law, 2024)

In Indonesia, terrorism is not only a threat to security but also a violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, freedom, and safety. These rights are enshrined in the 1945 Constitution, particularly after the amendments that expanded the scope of human rights protection in Articles 28A to 28J. In recognition of terrorism's growing

danger, the Indonesian government enacted Law No. 15 of 2003 to provide a stronger legal foundation for counterterrorism. However, the law has been criticized for lacking clarity in its definitions, especially regarding preparatory acts such as training and planning. It also lacks effective coordination between domestic and international law enforcement bodies.

To address these challenges, the Indonesian government established the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT). BNPT is responsible for planning and implementing strategies, policies, and programs related to terrorism prevention and counter-radicalization. The legal definition of terrorism under Indonesian law includes intentional acts of violence or threats that create widespread fear, cause mass suffering, and damage critical infrastructure. Despite legal updates, Indonesia continues to face recurring terrorist threats, suggesting that legal measures alone are insufficient. This situation highlights the importance of criminology as a complementary discipline to explore the root causes of terrorism beyond its legal dimensions.(Hartanto, 2023). Countries in the Mediterranean region have learned that hard-power measures alone are insufficient to address radicalization, prompting a growing focus on preventive, rehabilitative, and community-based CVE strategies (Vidino, 2018).

Over the past two decades, Indonesia has experienced several high-profile terrorist attacks, including the 2002 Bali bombings, the 2018 Surabaya church bombings, and attacks in Makassar and Jakarta. These events have deeply affected national security, disrupted public life, and had widespread social, political, and economic impacts. Moreover, the rise of social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram has provided new channels for terrorist propaganda and recruitment. According to Statista, by February 2025, 5.56 billion people (67.9% of the global population) use the internet, and 5.24 billion (63.9%) are active on social media.(Statista, 2025) This digital shift emphasizes the need for adaptive, multidimensional strategies in combating terrorism, combining legal, social, and technological approaches.

According to (Statista, 2025), Facebook was the first social networking site to surpass one billion registered users and now boasts over three billion monthly active users. Meta Platforms currently owns the four largest social media platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram, each with over one billion active monthly users. This rapid growth has significantly altered how people interact and how information is distributed. The transformation of communication through social media has also created new vulnerabilities, particularly in relation to radicalization and terrorism. Social media platforms offer an unfiltered and open environment where extremist ideologies can flourish. As a result, they have become essential tools for extremist groups to disseminate propaganda and influence individuals globally.

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in terrorist activities fueled by individual radicalization via social media.(KhosraviNik & Amer, 2023) These platforms dominate digital communication and have redefined how people perceive and engage with the world around them. Moreover, NIJ-sponsored studies emphasize that while social media facilitates radicalization through engagement, exploitation, and online risk, it should not be viewed as the sole or direct cause, but rather one of many converging factors influencing radicalization pathways (Aryaeinejad, & Scherer, 2024). They allow rapid and unchecked spread of information, including radical content, which can shape user beliefs in dangerous ways. One of the most concerning aspects of this phenomenon is the echo chamber effect created by social media algorithms. According to Ware (2023),

current trends reflect a 'third generation' of online radicalization where even minors are leading extremist cells through encrypted platforms, highlighting how modern extremism adapts to emerging digital environments. These algorithms amplify attention-grabbing content, including extremist material, and repeatedly expose users to similar viewpoints. This continuous exposure can lead individuals to adopt extremist ideologies and, in some cases, participate in violent acts of terrorism.(Jain & Vaidya, 2021)

Social media plays a central role in accelerating the process of self-radicalization, particularly among youth. (Prisgunanto et al., 2023)suggest that favorable attitudes toward political violence and terrorism may increase the likelihood of self-radicalization, often triggered by online content. Young users, who are typically in the process of exploring their identity and purpose, are especially vulnerable. (Putri & Wahyudi, 2019)also noted that terrorist organizations such as ISIS effectively use the internet to recruit individuals by spreading extremist propaganda. These organizations target individuals who may feel isolated, disenfranchised, or disillusioned, offering them a sense of belonging through ideological alignment. As such, the threat of radicalization through digital channels has become a critical area of concern for security agencies worldwide.

Emotion analysis of social media content has emerged as a promising method for identifying early signs of radicalization. By detecting emotional patterns and sentiments in user posts, authorities can better understand the psychological states and social dynamics leading to extremism. Research shows that people who feel a loss of meaning or purpose in life are more prone to seek identity through extremist beliefs. Radicalization is typically characterized by a shift in thinking, where individuals view the world in binary terms and see themselves as victims or saviors. This cognitive transformation often stems from exposure to extremist narratives and content that reinforce a sense of grievance or injustice. When supported by digital communities, such thought patterns can solidify into dangerous ideologies.

One reason extremist groups have found success on social media is their ability to build supportive virtual communities. These digital environments allow potential recruits to interact with like-minded individuals and receive direct communication from radical leaders. For example, ISIS has been known to effectively use platforms like Twitter and encrypted messaging apps to distribute content and recruit new members. Studies have shown that, during certain periods, up to 75% of terrorists in the United States relied on social media as their main tool for recruitment and communication.(Jones et al., 2021) In Indonesia, the socio-cultural diversity and history of inter-religious tension have made the country particularly vulnerable to radicalization. Terrorist attacks in Jakarta (2016), Surabaya (2018), Sibolga (2019), and Makassar (2021) were often linked to propaganda disseminated through digital platforms.

To counter these threats, the Indonesian government has intensified efforts to monitor and control radical content online. The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Digital, successfully blocked over 180,000 pieces of online content in 2024 that contained elements of terrorism, extremism, and radical ideology. Many of these materials originated from known terrorist networks such as ISIS, HTI, and JAD. At the same time, youth remain the most active users of social media, making them prime targets for radical narratives. Their exposure to extremist content can erode core values such as those rooted in Indonesia's national ideology, Pancasila. Agencies like Densus 88 have begun leveraging social media for

intelligence gathering, aiming to detect signs of radicalization early and develop strategies to mitigate the harmful effects of digital extremism.(Hitchcock, 2023)

This research aims to explore more deeply the role of social media in radicalization and terrorism. By understanding the mechanisms through which extremist ideologies are disseminated via digital platforms, this study seeks to identify more effective strategies to prevent radicalization and protect society from the threat of terrorism. Additionally, the research is intended to provide valuable insights for policymakers, academics, and the general public in their efforts to foster a safer and more tolerant environment.

2. Research Methods

This study adopts a doctrinal (juridical normative) research type with a qualitative approach, to comprehensively examine the role of social media in the process of radicalization and terrorism. The doctrinal approach is used to analyze the existing legal and regulatory framework related to the use of social media, the spread of extremist content, and counterterrorism. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to deeply explore the complexity of the social phenomenon of online radicalization, understand the meaning behind digital interactions, and capture the socio-political context that surrounds it, which is often not quantitatively measurable. The combination of these two approaches is considered most appropriate to answer the research question of how interactions on social media (social phenomena) relate to and are regulated by legal norms (doctrinal aspects).

The design of this research is descriptive-analytical. Qualitatively, this research will be descriptive, aiming to describe in detail how social media platforms are utilized in various stages of the radicalization process, from initial exposure to extremist ideology to mobilization towards violence. Doctrinally, this research is analytical, focusing on critical analysis of the effectiveness, challenges, and potential conflicts of norms in national laws and regulations (such as the ITE Law and the Anti-Terrorism Law) and their relevance to international legal standards in regulating online content and preventing the misuse of digital platforms for terrorism purposes. The integration of these two aspects will allow mapping of the interaction between online radicalization practices and existing legal responses.

The main data sources in this research consist of two types. For the qualitative component, primary data sources will include publicly available content on relevant social media platforms, reports from independent research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and security agencies on online radicalization trends, and documented secondary case studies of individuals or groups radicalized through social media. For the doctrinal component, data sources include primary legal materials such as laws and regulations (constitution, laws related to terrorism, information and electronic transactions, etc.), implementing regulations, relevant court decisions, and international conventions and agreements. Secondary legal materials such as legal doctrines, legal journals, textbooks, and legal expert opinions will also be used.

Data analysis will be conducted separately in the initial stage before being synthesized. Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns, key themes, and dominant narratives in online radical content and the interaction processes that occur. Discourse analysis can also be used to understand how language and symbols are used to build ideology and mobilize support. Doctrinal data will be analyzed using legal interpretation methods (legal hermeneutics), including grammatical,

systematic, and teleological (sociological) interpretations, to understand the meaning and implications of legal norms. Vertical and horizontal synchronization analysis will also be conducted to see the consistency between regulations. The final stage involves synthesizing the findings from both analyses to answer the research questions holistically, identifying gaps between social phenomena and legal responses.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Social Media Role on Radicalization

Social media has become an effective arena for extremist groups to spread their ideology, recruit members, and coordinate activities. This is due to the characteristics of social media that allow for rapid and widespread dissemination of information, as well as the anonymity that enables individuals to interact without revealing their true identities.

The dissemination of extremist ideology through social media has become one of the main strategies used by radical groups to expand their influence. Social media enables them to reach a broad audience quickly and relatively easily. One of the primary methods employed is uploading and sharing content designed to evoke emotions such as anger, fear, or even hope. These contents often have strong visual and narrative elements, including violent videos, manipulated images, or articles filled with disinformation. The goal is to create emotional appeal that can influence audience perceptions and attitudes.

According to a report by the (Juliswara, 2017), more than 90% of the content posted by extremist groups consists of propaganda. This form of propaganda is not merely about delivering messages—it is strategically crafted to shape opinions and reinforce the group's ideology. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube serve as fertile ground, as their algorithms tend to promote content that increases user engagement. Unfortunately, this often strengthens the spread of extremist content to users who have previously shown interest in similar topics. As a result, users may become trapped in an "echo chamber" where extremist views are reinforced repeatedly.

In addition to visual and narrative content, extremist groups also use symbols and language that are highly appealing to potential followers. They often exploit symbols with deep historical or cultural meaning to create a sense of identity and solidarity within the group. In some cases, they even create new symbols that are only understood by members of the group, fostering exclusivity and internal cohesion. The use of such symbols strengthens ideological and emotional bonds among members of the extremist community.

The language used by extremist groups also has its own distinct characteristics—it is emotional and provocative. Words like "struggle," "sacrifice," and "victory" are used to evoke a sense of heroism and purpose among followers. This language is deliberately chosen to create urgency and to push individuals to act in accordance with the group's teachings. In many cases, such rhetoric is used to convince individuals that they are part of a greater cause, even if it requires engaging in extreme actions.(Anas, 2020)

Moreover, they employ covert communication strategies such as "dog whistles," which are words or phrases that carry specific meanings for particular groups but are not easily understood by outsiders. This strategy is used to deliver hidden messages or to recruit new members discreetly. As a result, their communication becomes increasingly difficult

to track and anticipate by authorities. The combination of emotional, symbolic content and covert language strategies makes counter-radicalization efforts on social media a complex and evolving challenge.(Jati & Mamoto, 2021)

Social media provides extensive access to various demographic groups, allowing extremist groups to target vulnerable individuals. They often employ sophisticated marketing techniques, such as targeted ads and personalized content, to attract potential members. Research by (Hassan et al., 2022) shows that extremist groups frequently use these marketing strategies, including visually engaging content, messages tailored to individual interests, and coordinated campaigns across platforms. Youth are a primary target for recruitment, as they are in the process of searching for their identity, making them more susceptible to extremist groups offering them a "clear" life purpose.

Social media also enables extremist groups to build strong online communities where members can share information, experiences, and support. Platforms like Telegram and other encrypted messaging apps provide safe spaces for communication and coordination. These online communities not only strengthen bonds between members but also facilitate fundraising, attack planning, and the spread of propaganda. This makes it difficult for law enforcement to track and disrupt the activities of extremist groups. Within these groups, a process of brainwashing occurs, where individuals are continuously influenced and manipulated to adopt the group's ideology.

The narratives formed by extremist groups are often centered around stories of injustice, oppression, or existential threats. They portray themselves as heroes fighting against evil forces and invite others to join their cause. The narrative techniques they use typically involve emotional language, clear depictions of enemies, and promises of a better future. These narratives are designed to evoke empathy, anger, or fear in the audience, urging them to act in alignment with the extremist group's goals.

Powerful narratives can have a significant impact on individuals, particularly those who feel alienated, dissatisfied, or vulnerable to influence. Research by (Sarinastiti & Vardhani, 2018) shows that extremist narratives can shape how individuals view the world and encourage them to take extreme actions. Radicalization often occurs gradually, with individuals repeatedly exposed to extremist narratives and becoming increasingly isolated from differing viewpoints. Social media accelerates this process by enabling the rapid and widespread dissemination of extremist content. Additionally, extremist groups often target individuals who are experiencing an identity crisis or facing personal issues in their lives, making them more susceptible to radical ideologies.

3.2. Radicalization Effect Through Social Media

Radicalization through social media has emerged as a significant threat to individuals and society. With easy access to digital platforms and algorithms designed to amplify user engagement, extremist ideologies can spread rapidly and effectively. These ideologies influence individual behaviors and perspectives, fostering social polarization and conflict. Social media, by enabling quick and wide dissemination of extremist content, has become a key tool for radical groups to recruit members and incite violent actions.(Herlambang et al., 2023)

Radicalization through social media can result in profound changes in an individual's behavior and views. Continuous exposure to extremist content can erode moderate values, replacing them with rigid and intolerant beliefs. Vulnerable individuals, such as

those who feel marginalized or are in search of identity, are particularly at risk. They may find online communities that offer a sense of belonging and purpose, but at the cost of adopting potentially harmful views. Research by (Mazerolle et al., 2021) indicates that individuals exposed to extremist content on social media are more likely to engage in violent behavior, as such content often normalizes and even glorifies violence, presenting it as a justifiable action.

Social media algorithms play a significant role in radicalization by constantly presenting content that aligns with a user's views. This creates an unbalanced information environment where individuals are repeatedly exposed to similar perspectives, reinforcing their beliefs and isolating them from opposing viewpoints. These algorithms amplify the reach of extremist ideologies, making it easier for radical groups to influence individuals and shape their actions. As a result, social media becomes a tool for sustaining a one-sided narrative, deepening polarization and making it more challenging to counteract extremist influences.

Real-life examples demonstrate the significant impact of radicalization through social media. A notable case is Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the Boston Marathon bomber, who was exposed to extremist content on social media that motivated him to carry out the 2013 terrorist attack. This case highlights how social media can serve as a powerful tool for indoctrination, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Across various countries, similar incidents have occurred where individuals, influenced by radical content on social media, carried out lone or group attacks, emphasizing how dangerous social media can be as a platform for spreading harmful ideologies. (Raza Kolb, 2021)

Radicalization through social media can lead to significant social polarization. As individuals adopt extremist views, tensions arise between different societal groups, leading to conflict. Social media amplifies this by creating "echo chambers" where individuals are only exposed to information that aligns with their beliefs. This further entrenches their views and reduces their exposure to differing perspectives. According to research by (Măgureanu, 2003), this polarization can fuel conflicts and violence within communities, with extremist groups exploiting these tensions to recruit new members and mobilize action.

As social polarization deepens, societies become fragmented, making them more susceptible to social conflicts. The divided nature of society makes it easier for extremist groups to exploit existing tensions for recruitment and mobilization. Social media, by perpetuating these divides, accelerates the process, ensuring that conflicting ideologies continue to intensify. The resulting divisions create an environment ripe for conflict, as different groups become more entrenched in their beliefs, and dialogue between them becomes increasingly difficult.

Society often responds to radicalization with increased surveillance and preventive measures. However, such reactions can also lead to stigmatization of specific groups, exacerbating the situation. Overzealous actions and excessive monitoring may cause alienation and mistrust among targeted communities, potentially driving some individuals further into extremist groups. Research by (Smith, 2021) suggests that an overreaction to radicalization can create a vicious cycle, pushing individuals deeper into extremist circles. Therefore, it is crucial for society to respond to radicalization in a balanced manner, combining law enforcement actions with efforts to address underlying issues such as social inequality and lack of educational opportunities.

For counter-radicalization efforts to be effective, they must go beyond punitive measures. Programs should focus on building dialogue and understanding between different societal groups and promoting values of tolerance and inclusion. Addressing the root causes of radicalization, such as social and economic inequality, is also vital in preventing individuals from falling into extremist ideologies. By fostering a more inclusive and empathetic society, these programs can help reduce the appeal of radical ideologies and prevent further polarization and conflict.

Radicalization through social media has posed a growing threat to national security. (Jain & Vaidya, 2021) terrorist attacks inspired by extremist ideologies are becoming more frequent, with many being planned or promoted through social media platforms. This poses significant challenges for governments and security agencies tasked with monitoring and countering these threats. As social media continues to play a key role in the spread of radical ideologies, it has become a focal point for national security efforts aimed at preventing terrorist activities and protecting public safety.(Combs, 2022)

In response to the increasing threat of radicalization, many governments have taken steps to address the issue. This includes the development of policies and regulations aimed at monitoring and controlling the spread of extremist content on social media. However, such approaches often spark debates about the balance between security and freedom of expression ((Rusu & Secier, 2024). Governments must find a way to effectively combat radicalization without infringing upon civil liberties, ensuring that efforts to protect national security do not undermine fundamental rights.

3.3. The Role of the Indonesian Police in Combating the Threat of Terrorism

According to Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police, Chapter 3 outlines the duties and authorities of the police. Article 13, point (a), states that the main task of the police is to maintain public order and security. This condition is considered a crucial foundation for supporting national development and achieving national goals. Ensuring public safety, order, and law enforcement contributes to creating a peaceful society. This also involves empowering and developing community resilience to prevent and respond to unlawful acts. The police are expected to provide the best services to the public in order to fulfill this role effectively.

In line with maintaining national security, the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) is actively engaging different societal elements to counter radicalism. BNPT encourages counter-radicalization efforts and continues to collaborate with other government institutions and media to unify strategies against threats. Given recent developments in society, it is essential for BNPT and other institutions to prioritize cooperation with local governments, especially village administrations. Deploying personnel directly into communities can help detect suspicious activities early. This proactive involvement is seen as a necessary step in identifying and preventing deviant movements

To build a peaceful and secure nation, BNPT has formulated a terrorism prevention strategy. This strategy comprises planned actions and methods aimed at detecting and stopping potential terrorist acts. The goal of this approach is not only to respond to threats but also to prevent them from arising in the first place. BNPT's strategy emphasizes the importance of early detection and community awareness. It is carefully

designed to reduce opportunities for terrorist activities while encouraging public participation. These efforts are part of a broader plan to ensure national stability

According to BNPT Director Suhardi Alius, counterterrorism operations in Indonesia use two approaches: hard methods (legal prosecution) managed by the police, and soft methods (preventive actions) handled by BNPT. The soft approach includes efforts to reduce radicalization through humanitarian methods rather than repression. BNPT believes that preventive action is more effective in avoiding retaliation and further violence. Their preventive strategy includes deradicalization and anti-radicalization programs. These programs aim to re-integrate former radicals into society and prevent new individuals from being influenced by extremist ideologies. This dual approach highlights the importance of balance between law enforcement and community-based prevention.

1) Deradicalization

Deradicalization, as explained by Hamidin, the Director of Terrorism Prevention at BNPT, is a program designed to eliminate radical thoughts, primarily targeting terrorists both inside and outside of prison. The aim is to transform their radical mindset and help them become ordinary citizens, or at least neutralize their extremist ideology. According to the SETARA Institute, deradicalization involves early detection, prevention, and targeting various societal groups with tailored strategies. Its core purpose is not just to reduce radicalism or eliminate terrorism but also to strengthen the implementation of Indonesia's national principles. These include Pancasila, the Constitution, the concept of unity in diversity, and national integrity. This comprehensive approach supports the achievement of Indonesia's national vision and goals.

Law No. 5 of 2018, Article 43D, defines deradicalization as a structured, integrated, systematic, and continuous process aimed at eliminating or reducing radical terrorist ideologies. The program targets individuals such as suspects, defendants, convicts, inmates, former inmates, and those already exposed to radical views. Depending on the person's status, the deradicalization process includes different phases. For suspects or convicts, the stages are identification and assessment, rehabilitation, re-education, and social reintegration. Each phase is essential in determining the level of radicalism and how to effectively counter it. These processes help reduce the risk of reoffending and promote reintegration into society.

The first stage, identification and assessment, maps out an individual's involvement in radical networks. This determines their level of exposure to radical ideology (Martini, 2021). Next is rehabilitation, which aims to recover individuals and reduce their radical tendencies. The third phase, re-education, provides training and enlightenment to help them abandon extremist beliefs. The final step is social reintegration, which involves returning the individual to family and community life. These steps are critical in breaking the cycle of radicalism and fostering long-term societal harmony.

For former terrorism convicts or those already exposed to radical ideas, deradicalization includes national and religious awareness programs as well as entrepreneurship training. These programs are still based on prior identification and evaluation to tailor the right interventions. BNPT believes these activities help participants rebuild a new life with positive social roles. The goal is to strengthen their commitment to national values while giving them economic independence. This approach not only benefits the individuals but

also enhances community safety. It reflects the belief that education and empowerment are key to long-term prevention.(Akinyetun, 2021)

BNPT's deradicalization strategy, as stated by Director Irfan Idris, involves four main approaches: re-education, rehabilitation, resocialization, and reintegration. Re-education is preventive in nature and aims to enlighten the public about the dangers of radical ideologies. For terrorism inmates, it includes correcting distorted beliefs, such as the idea that suicide bombing is a holy war. Rehabilitation consists of personality development and self-sufficiency training. Former inmates are equipped with life skills to help them reintegrate into society and avoid returning to extremist behavior. Collaboration with various institutions supports this rehabilitation process.

Resocialization and reintegration help former convicts reconnect with their communities and adjust to civilian life. Deradicalization also involves academic programs in universities, such as public lectures and workshops, encouraging students to think critically and strengthen their nationalism. Despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully eliminating radical ideologies. Critics argue that the program often focuses only on changing behavior rather than eradicating the root doctrine of radicalism. There is a risk that individuals may appear reformed while still harboring extremist beliefs, potentially becoming dormant threats. This highlights the need for deeper, more comprehensive efforts in future deradicalization programs.

2) Anti Radicalization

The anti-radicalism program differs from deradicalization in that it focuses on individuals or groups who are vulnerable to radical terrorist ideology rather than those already radicalized. According to Article 43C of Law No. 5 of 2018, anti-radicalism is a planned, comprehensive, and sustainable effort led by BNPT and relevant government institutions. The goal is to curb the spread of terrorism by targeting at-risk individuals or groups through counter-narratives, counter-propaganda, and counter-ideologies. The internet has become a key medium for the spread of radical ideas, making digital strategies critical. In response, BNPT has launched a website promoting anti-radicalism content and trained individuals to combat radical narratives online. As part of this strategy, BNPT established 53 Peace Ambassadors across 10 provinces with a total of 660 members.

Indonesia began regulating terrorism following the Bali Bombings on October 12, 2002, which prompted the issuance of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law No. 1 of 2002. This regulation evolved into Law No. 15 of 2003, focusing on eradicating terrorism crimes. Additionally, the government formed BNPT in 2010 to centralize anti-terrorism efforts, coordinated by the Ministry of Politics, Law, and Security. Another important force is Densus 88, an elite anti-terror police unit established in 2003 to handle counter-terrorism operations. These institutions reflect the government's serious commitment to addressing terrorism. The coordinated efforts demonstrate Indonesia's approach to treating terrorism as an extraordinary crime.

Comparatively, Malaysia ranks lower in terrorism cases according to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index, despite being the early base for radical Islamic ideology in Southeast Asia. Following the 9/11 attacks, Malaysia implemented strict measures to control the spread of radical ideologies. Its Penal Code, enacted in 1936 and effective from 1976, contains detailed articles on terrorism in Chapter VI-A. Articles 130B to 130T-A outline preventive and punitive measures to counter terrorism effectively. Malaysia's approach

is considered more preventive and has helped reduce incidents. Their legal framework emphasizes both deterrence and legal punishment.(Drake, 2021)

From 2005 to 2009, Indonesia established several anti-terrorism policy guidelines. These include strengthening cooperation among government institutions and enhancing institutional capacity, especially in local regions. Other strategies include involving community organizations and reinforcing vulnerable public areas. Public education campaigns were also launched to raise awareness and promote protection from terrorism. Deradicalization programs were integrated to prevent recruitment and help rehabilitate captured terrorists. These policies aim to create a robust defense against terrorism at all levels of society.

Domestically, Indonesia's strategy involves both legal measures and community engagement. The government has connected with religious leaders, educators, and radicalized individuals to promote moderate understanding, especially about concepts like jihad. Anti-terrorism laws are enforced impartially to prevent negative stereotypes against specific groups. At the same time, the fight against terrorism also aims to protect national peace and public safety. Democratic values are upheld by allowing lawful public expression and participation. This approach blends legal, educational, and social elements to combat terrorism comprehensively.

BNPT also works with the younger generation to combat radicalism online by enlisting around 600 internet users, including bloggers and IT specialists. These digital volunteers help counteract radical content and promote peaceful narratives. BNPT also encourages youth involvement in digital and media literacy programs to improve their ability to recognize and reject misinformation and hate speech. This effort empowers youth to become agents of change in online spaces. Additionally, families play a vital role in protecting children from radicalization by monitoring their exposure and guiding them. Together, these actions aim to build resilience among young people against extremist ideologies.

Indonesia's counter-terrorism achievements include the arrests and deaths of major terrorist figures such as Dr. Azahari and Abu Dujana in 2005 and 2007. In later years, operations uncovered more terrorist networks, including the capture of 28 suspects in 2008 and investigations in various regions in 2009. The 2009 Jakarta hotel bombings led to the death of terrorist Nurdin M. These actions show that terrorism remains a persistent threat requiring ongoing vigilance. Counter-terrorism must be seen as a national mission involving all government agencies. Collaboration between law enforcement, civil society, religious leaders, and academics is essential. Efforts such as public seminars, educational publications, and national awareness campaigns are key to shifting public perception and reinforcing Indonesia's resilience against terrorism.

3) Utilization Of Social Media

The threat of terrorism in the modern era has transformed significantly, no longer limited to physical action in the field, but has also penetrated strongly into cyberspace. The Indonesian National Police (Polri), as the vanguard of law enforcement and domestic security, plays a vital role in eradicating this threat. The complexity of contemporary terrorism requires the Polri to not only be responsive to attacks, but also proactive in prevention and early detection, where the use of information technology, especially social media, is one of the main keys.(Borelli, 2023)

Social media has become a new ideological battleground, utilized by terrorist groups for various destructive purposes. In practice, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and others are used to spread radical propaganda, recruit new members, raise funds, plan attacks, and build communication networks between terrorist cells. The speed and wide reach of social media allow extremist narratives to spread quickly, targeting vulnerable individuals and creating a digital ecosystem that supports violence.

Facing this challenge, the Polri has used social media as an important tool for early detection and prevention. Through units such as the Cyber Crime Directorate (Ditipidsiber) and Densus 88 Anti-Terror, the National Police conduct routine cyber patrols. These activities include active monitoring of accounts, groups, and content suspected of spreading radicalism and terrorism. Identifying communication patterns, specific keywords, and online interaction networks are the first steps to map potential threats before they develop into real action.(Alexander & Alexander, 2021)

In terms of enforcement and investigation, social media provides a crucial digital footprint for the National Police. Conversation data, uploads, friend lists, location metadata (if available and legally permitted), and other online activities can be strong electronic evidence in the investigation process of a terrorism case. The National Police use digital forensic investigation techniques to collect, analyze, and secure evidence from social media platforms, helping to uncover the perpetrators' networks, motives, and broader attack plans.

In addition to detection and investigation, the National Police also actively uses social media to build counter-narratives and conduct public communication. Through official accounts on various platforms, the National Police disseminate accurate information about the dangers of terrorism, promote the values of tolerance and peace, and clarify hoaxes or disinformation deliberately spread by terrorist groups. This approach aims to reduce the appeal of extremist narratives and strengthen community resilience to violent ideologies.(KhosraviNik & Amer, 2023)

The use of social media by the National Police also includes efforts to engage the community in an applied manner. The National Police encourage public participation in reporting suspicious content or activities found on social media through the reporting channels provided. Public awareness campaigns about cybersecurity and the characteristics of radical content are also often disseminated through this platform. Collaboration with social media platform providers is also an important part of accelerating the process of handling (taking down) negative content and exchanging relevant information in accordance with the legal corridor.

Although the use of social media provides strategic advantages for the National Police in combating terrorism, challenges remain. Privacy issues, end-to-end encryption on some platforms, the speed of content dissemination, and the cross-border nature of the internet are obstacles that must be faced. Therefore, the Indonesian National Police continues to strive to improve the capacity of human resources, technology, as well as the legal framework and international cooperation to optimize the role of social media effectively and accountably in maintaining national security from the ever-evolving threat of terrorism.

The role of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) in eradicating the threat of terrorism is a crucial manifestation of the function of law as a tool of social control and social

engineering, as stated by Roscoe Pound. In (Roscoe Pound, 2017) view, law is not merely a passive rule, but an active instrument to balance various interests in society and direct them towards the desired social goals, in this case security and order. The eradication of terrorism by the Polri, with all its actions ranging from prevention to prosecution, inherently aims to control destructive behavior and engineer social conditions that are safer from the threat of extreme violence. In today's digital era, the implementation of this role of control and social engineering inevitably involves intensive use of social media.

Roscoe Pound's theory emphasizes that law functions to maximize the fulfillment of social interests with minimal friction and waste. In the context of terrorism, the Polri uses legal instruments (such as the Anti-Terrorism Law) as a basis for carrying out social control actions against individuals or groups that threaten the fundamental interests of society, namely the sense of security and the existence of the state. Preemptive (early prevention) and preventive (widespread prevention) actions carried out by the Police, such as detecting radicalism, are social engineering efforts to prevent the development of ideology and acts of terror. Legal action against perpetrators of terrorism is the most assertive form of social control to uphold norms and protect society.

The Police's adaptation to the modern threat landscape places social media as both an arena and a vital tool in carrying out these control and social engineering functions. Terrorist groups actively use social media for propaganda, recruitment, and coordination - a form of 'negative social engineering' that the Police want to compete with. Therefore, the Police apply the same platform as a control tool: conducting cyber patrols, monitoring the spread of radical content, and identifying individuals or networks that have the potential to pose a threat. This is the embodiment of Pound's theory adaptation, where instruments (law and its enforcement) must adapt to the medium (social media) where social interests (security) are threatened.

More specifically, the use of social media by the Police for prevention and counter-radicalization is a real example of social engineering in the digital realm. Through units such as the National Police Public Relations Division and the Cyber Directorate, the National Police disseminate counter-narratives that promote peace, tolerance, and nationalism. They also educate the public about the dangers of radicalism and how to identify dangerous content. These efforts aim to shape public perception and attitudes (engineering social awareness) to be more resistant to terrorist ideology, while also controlling the spread of radicalism online.

In terms of enforcement, social media is a powerful tool of social control in the investigation and law enforcement process. The digital traces left by perpetrators on social media—such as communications, posts, friendship networks, or location data—often become key evidence. The National Police use digital forensics technology to collect and analyze this data, enabling the identification of perpetrators, the dismantling of networks, and the prevention of further attacks. The use of this digital evidence in the legal process is a form of rule enforcement (control) made possible by the development of information technology, in line with Pound's view that the law must be effective in achieving its goals amidst social change.

4. Conclusion

Terrorism is a crime against humanity that often stems from radical ideologies rooted in social, political, or religious beliefs. The rise of social media has significantly contributed

to the spread of radicalization, enabling extremist groups to rapidly disseminate propaganda, recruit new members, and coordinate actions. By targeting vulnerable individuals—such as those who feel isolated or dissatisfied—these groups use emotionally charged narratives to build a strong sense of community and purpose, drawing people into extremist ideologies.

The role of the Indonesian National Police in combating terrorism is very relevant to the concept of law as a tool of control and social engineering. In carrying out this role in the contemporary era, the Indonesian National Police strategically utilizes social media as a primary tool, both for control (monitoring, investigation) and engineering (counter-narrative, public education). Although research shows effectiveness in certain aspects, especially intelligence and investigation, significant challenges related to measuring the impact of counter-narratives, encryption, and data volume remain. Therefore, the long-term success of the Indonesian National Police depends on its ability to continue to adapt, improve technological and analytical capacity, and balance security needs (social control) with respect for individual rights.

To effectively address the threat of radicalization and terrorism, a comprehensive and collaborative approach is essential. This includes implementing preventive strategies such as counter-radicalization and deradicalization programs, enforcing strict legal actions, and fostering cooperation between the government, relevant institutions, and society at large. Building digital literacy, promoting peaceful narratives, and involving communities in counter-extremism efforts are crucial steps in ensuring national security and social harmony.

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