

Understanding the Dynamic of Fake Accounts to Combat Hoax Dissemination

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Abstract

The prevalence of hoaxes in Indonesia is not a new phenomenon. Over the past three years, there has been a consistent increase in the dissemination of hoaxes across various platforms in the country. Furthermore, with the onset of the pandemic, the spread of hoaxes related to Covid-19 has become particularly rampant. In 2021 itself, the Ministry of Communications and Informatics identified and debunked a total of 723 hoaxes pertaining to Covid-19. This research paper aims to examine the current state of hoax dissemination in Indonesia and identify the key factors contributing to their spread. The study adopts a normative legal research approach, drawing on data derived from books, journals, relevant laws, and regulations. The findings reveal that social media platforms play a significant role in the proliferation of hoaxes throughout Indonesia. The presence of numerous anonymous or fake accounts facilitates the easy dissemination of hoaxes via

social media. Moreover, the lack of due diligence in verifying and fact-checking information creates a loophole that allows hoaxes to circulate within the community. In order to address this issue effectively, it is crucial to implement measures that target the root causes of hoax dissemination. This includes the development of stricter regulations and enforcement mechanisms to combat the creation and spread of hoaxes, particularly on social media platforms. By comprehensively understanding the dynamics and factors influencing the spread of hoaxes in Indonesia, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and the general public can work together to combat this pressing issue.

KEYWORDS: Government responds, Hoax, Social media.

Introduction

This paper examines the emerging technological issue in Indonesia by highlighting key legal instruments that underpin the dissemination of hoaxes through social media platforms. This issue become important since, the rapid advancement of information technology has revolutionized various aspects of human life,¹ particularly in the realm of communication and information exchange.² Even, In Indonesia, a country with a population of over 274.9 million, the internet and social media platforms have become integral to the lives of its citizens.^{3,4,5} However, along with the benefits of increased connectivity and accessibility, there are significant challenges that arise, including the widespread dissemination of hoaxes or fake news.

¹ Yeni Nuraeni and Arif Rahmat Hidayat, "Tinjauan Yuridis Penanganan Tindak Pidana Hoaks Corona Di Media Sosial Oleh Kepolisian Reublik Indonesia," *Journal Presumption of Law* 3, no. 1 (April 1, 2021): 103–23, <https://doi.org/10.31949/jpl.v3i1.987>.

² Banu Prasetyo and Umi Trisyanti, "Revolusi Industri 4.0 Dan Tantangan Perubahan Sosial," *IPTEK Journal of Proceedings Series*, no. 5 (2018): 22–27, <http://dx.doi.org/10.12962/j23546026.y2018i5.4417>.

³ Supadiyanto Supadiyanto and Sudaru Murti, "Social Media Portraits and YouTubers during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," *Technium Education and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2022): 35–47, <https://doi.org/10.47577/teh.v2i1.6815>.

⁴ Ilham Fajri, Mochamad Whilky Rizkyanfi, and Rizma Ismaya, "The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions With Brand Awareness As An Intervening Variables In Praketa Coffee Shop Purwokerto," *The Journal Gastronomy Tourism* 8, no. 2 (2021): 97–110.

⁵ Hanifah Putri Elisa, Mahendra Fakhri, and Mahir Pradana, "The Moderating Effect of Social Media Use in Impulsive Buying of Personal Protective Equipments During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 2062094, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2062094>.

The prevalence of information and electronic transactions in Indonesia is evident, with a substantial portion of the population already utilizing the internet and social media platforms. These platforms have transformed traditional modes of interaction and information dissemination, facilitating digital exchanges and instant access to a vast array of information.⁶ Nonetheless, the unfiltered nature of these platforms poses a significant problem: the rapid spread of hoaxes among the public. Hoaxes, or fake news, have been a long-standing issue even before the advent of information technology. However, the ease of disseminating false information through the internet and social media has exacerbated the problem. In Indonesia alone, over 700,000 websites are dedicated to spreading hoaxes, and more than 50% of the population has been exposed to such misinformation.⁷ Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram have emerged as the primary sources of hoax information.⁸

The lax regulations governing social media usage in Indonesia contribute to the proliferation of hoaxes. The anonymity provided by fake accounts allows individuals to spread misinformation without fear of accountability.^{9,10} Studies have revealed a significant number of fake accounts on platforms like Instagram, with 95 million out of 1 billion accounts worldwide being identified as fake.¹¹ Another research study revealed that 46% of 300 respondents admitted to having secondary accounts.¹² The increasing presence of fake

⁶ Sholahuddin Al-Fatih and Zaka Aditya, "Hoax and The Principle of Legal Certainty in Indonesian Legal System," in *Proceedings of the Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Business, Law And Pedagogy, ICBLP 2019, 13-15 February 2019, Sidoarjo, Indonesia* (Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Business, Law And Pedagogy, ICBLP 2019, 13-15 February 2019, Sidoarjo, Indonesia, Sidoarjo, Indonesia: EAI, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.13-2-2019.2286165>.

⁷ Lukman Hakim, Achluddin Ibnu Rochim, and Banu Prasetyo, "Hoax Dalam Ilustrasi Jean Baudrillard," *RELASI: Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi* 2, no. 02 (2022): 40–48.

⁸ Valerii L. Muzykant et al., "Fake News on COVID-19 in Indonesia," in *Pandemic Communication and Resilience*, ed. David M. Berube, Risk, Systems and Decisions (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 363–78, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77344-1_22.

⁹ Dio Putra, "Analisis Framing Pemberitaan Hoaks Jatuhnya Pesawat Sriwijaya Air Sji-182 Pada Portal Berita Media Online," *Diakom: Jurnal Media Dan Komunikasi* 4, no. 2 (December 23, 2021): 139–50, <https://doi.org/10.17933/diakom.v4i2.249>.

¹⁰ Arry Wirawan, Lisa Mery, and Sandi Pajri, "Penegakan Hukum Proses Identifikasi Dan Profiling Pelaku Hoaks Di Media Sosial," *PETITUM* 9, no. 1 (2021): 41–50, <https://doi.org/10.36090/jh.v9i1.993>.

¹¹ Jihan Akhidatussolihah, Ana Fitriana Poerana, and Fardiah Oktariani Lubis, "Dramaturgi Media Sosial: Fenomena Penggunaan Fake Account Instagram Pada Penggemar K-POP Perempuan Di Karawang," *PROMEDIA (Public Relation Dan Media Komunikasi)* 7, no. 1 (June 30, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.52447/promedia.v7i1.4370>.

¹² Raina Arundati Putri, Triyono Lukmantoro, and Nurul Hasfi, "Pengelolaan Manajemen

accounts has amplified the dissemination of hoaxes, posing a critical concern given Indonesia's high social media usage rate.¹³ Furthermore, the lack of awareness among social media users regarding the authenticity and credibility of shared information further exacerbates the spread of hoaxes.¹⁴

While previous research has explored the issue of hoaxes and fake news, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific role of fake accounts in facilitating the dissemination of hoaxes through social media platforms. This study aims to address this gap by analysing Indonesian policies and laws related to hoaxes dissemination, with a particular focus on the utilization of fake accounts. By understanding the existing legal framework and its limitations, it becomes possible to propose recommendations and strategies to mitigate the spread of hoaxes and improve law enforcement in combating this issue. In the following sections, this paper will examine the current state of hoaxes dissemination through social media platforms in Indonesia, analyse the legal instruments and policies governing this issue, and discuss the implications of fake accounts in the spread of hoaxes. Furthermore, the study will identify the limitations of the existing legal framework and propose potential solutions to address the challenges posed by hoaxes and fake news.

Overall, understanding the dynamics between fake accounts, hoaxes dissemination, and the legal landscape in Indonesia is crucial for effectively combating the negative consequences of rapid technological advancements. By highlighting the gap in existing research and outlining the objectives of this study, this paper sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of the issue at hand.

The method of the research employed is normative legal research with qualitative approach in order to find the phenomenon of fake accounts and hoaxes/fake news. Through the normative legal research, it is aimed to find and analyse several related laws to the problem concerned. The data related to the phenomenon of fake accounts and hoaxes/fake news was obtained from literature study, analyzed through in-depth analysis, and presented in a descriptive-structured manner. The literature that are being analyzed consist of

Privasi Dalam Penggunaan Akun Finsta (Fake Instagram)," *Interaksi Online* 10, no. 3 (2022): 355–67.

¹³ Zaida Orth et al., "Applying Qualitative Methods to Investigate Social Actions for Justice Using Social Media: Illustrations From Facebook," *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 2 (April 2020): 205630512091992, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120919926>.

¹⁴ Ruth Stewart et al., "The Importance of Social Media Users' Responses in Tackling Digital COVID-19 Misinformation in Africa," *Digital Health* 8 (January 2022): 205520762210850, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076221085070>.

books, journals, and research results, including magazine and news that are related to the present topic.

Hoaxes or Fake News?

Hoax is basically fake news. This statement, while succinct, oversimplifies the complexity of hoaxes. Hoax can be defined as a deliberately fabricated piece of information or news that is intended to deceive others.¹⁵ Hoaxes have become a prevalent issue in contemporary society, with the rise of social media and digital communication facilitating their dissemination to millions of people worldwide. Due to the major impact of online media such as online forums and social media, many events, such as online activism, petitions, and hoaxes in such online platforms, also involve strong motivations for achieving some political purpose.

Hoaxes possess distinct characteristics that distinguish them from reliable information.¹⁶ Firstly, they often evoke feelings of anxiety, hatred, and hostility among individuals who come across them.¹⁷ Secondly, the source of the news or information in a hoax is typically unclear, lacking transparency and credibility.¹⁸ Lastly, hoaxes circulating on social media platforms tend to be unverified and unbalanced, presenting biased and sensationalized media reports that target specific groups or individuals. These hoaxes are often driven by ideological motivations and employ provocative language, deliberately distorting facts and concealing relevant data. It is important to recognize these traits in order to identify and combat the spread of hoaxes effectively, promoting the dissemination of accurate and unbiased information.¹⁹

As hoaxes become more sophisticated, their ability to deceive

¹⁵ Cristina Pulido et al., "A New Application of Social Impact in Social Media for Overcoming Fake News in Health," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 7 (April 3, 2020): 2430, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17072430>.

¹⁶ Liliana María Gutiérrez-Coba, Patricia Coba-Gutiérrez, and Javier Andrés Gómez-Díaz, "Fake News about Covid-19: A Comparative Analysis of Six Lberoamerican Countries," *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, no. 78 (2020): 237–64, <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2020-1476>.

¹⁷ Melisa Arisanty and Gunawan Wiradharma, "The Acceptance and Resharing Behavior of Hoax Information on Social Media," *Jurnal Studi Sosial Dan Politik* 4, no. 2 (2020): 87–99, <https://doi.org/10.19109/jssp.v4i2.6609>.

¹⁸ Yusa Djuyandi, Mustabsyrotul Ummah Mustofa, and Mochamad Difa Satrio Wicaksono, "Hoax and Its Effects on Indonesia's Elections," *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* 15, no. 2 (2022): 590–600, <https://doi.org/10.2478/bjlp-2022-001036>.

¹⁹ Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, Juli Agung Pramono, and Anis Mashdurohatun, "Criminal Sanctions against Hate Speech (Hoax) Actors in Indonesian Positive Law and From the Perspective of Islamic Law," n.d.

and influence people also increases. Wang, Chih Chien have identified three types of fake news: exposed fraudulent journalistic writing, humorous fakes, and large-scale hoaxes.²⁰ According to João Baptista and Anabela Gradim, fake news consists of two words, namely news and lies.²¹ News is a report events (facts) or opinions that are actual (current), interesting and important.²² Legally, fake news is news in which there is content that is not in accordance with the truth or actual conditions (*materielle waarheid*).²³

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary elaborates on the purpose of hoaxes, characterizing them as deliberate attempts “to trick into believing or accepting as genuine something false and often preposterous”.²⁴ This definition encapsulates the deceptive nature of hoaxes, which are crafted with the intention of misleading individuals into believing falsehoods or accepting implausible scenarios as factual. Hoaxes often exploit vulnerabilities in human cognition, such as trust and curiosity, to propagate misinformation and manipulate perceptions. By understanding the essence of hoaxes as described by Merriam-Webster, one gains insight into the insidious tactics employed by those who perpetrate such deceitful acts.

Fake news means news that cannot be believed to be true, thus, this news can mislead the minds of its readers. Lying means not being in accordance with what happened. In terms of the terms, fake news is the result of news that is manipulated through a news manipulated process. Fake news, including news fabrications, hoaxes, satire, and others are considered to be fake news. While fake news has been a part of media history for decades, its prevalence and impact have increased due to the rise of social media and the ease with which news can be disseminated to a vast

²⁰ Chih-Chien Wang, “Fake News and Related Concepts: Definitions and Recent Research Development,” *Contemporary Management Research* 16, no. 3 (September 12, 2020): 145–74, <https://doi.org/10.7903/cmr.20677>.

²¹ Karishnu Poddar and KS Umadevi, “Comparison of Various Machine Learning Models for Accurate Detection of Fake News,” vol. 1 (2019 Innovations in Power and Advanced Computing Technologies (i-PACT), IEEE, 2019), 1–5.

²² Edson C Tandoc Jr, Zheng Wei Lim, and Richard Ling, “Defining ‘Fake News’ A Typology of Scholarly Definitions,” *Digital Journalism* 6, no. 2 (2018): 137–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143>.

²³ João Baptista and Anabela Gradim, “A Working Definition of Fake News,” *Encyclopedia* 2, no. 1 (March 21, 2022): 632–45, <https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia2010043>.

²⁴ Muhammad Khalil Gunawan, Adi Wijaya, and Abd Hadid Idrus, “Handling of Hoax Messages from the Legal Perspective: A Comparative Study Between Indonesia and Singapore,” *International Journal of Global Community* 1, no. 2-July (2018): 125–40.

audience with just one click.²⁵ According to Pierri and Ceri, the term "fake news" can refer to different categories of false information including propaganda, misinformation, hoaxes, and more.²⁶ Hoaxes, in particular, are deliberately created to mislead the public into believing something that is untrue.²⁷

In the digital age, hoaxes have become a common form of fake news that is intended to deceive people by presenting false information as if it were true.²⁸ Due to the vast amount of information that is now available online and through social media, it can be challenging to differentiate between credible news sources and hoaxes. Furthermore, hoaxes can take many forms such as fabricated stories, manipulated images or videos, prank posts on social media and fake messages from supposed trusted sources. The impact of hoaxes on individuals and society can be severe, leading to a loss of trust in the media, confusion around important issues, and potentially harmful reactions or decisions.²⁹

Hoaxes and Social Media

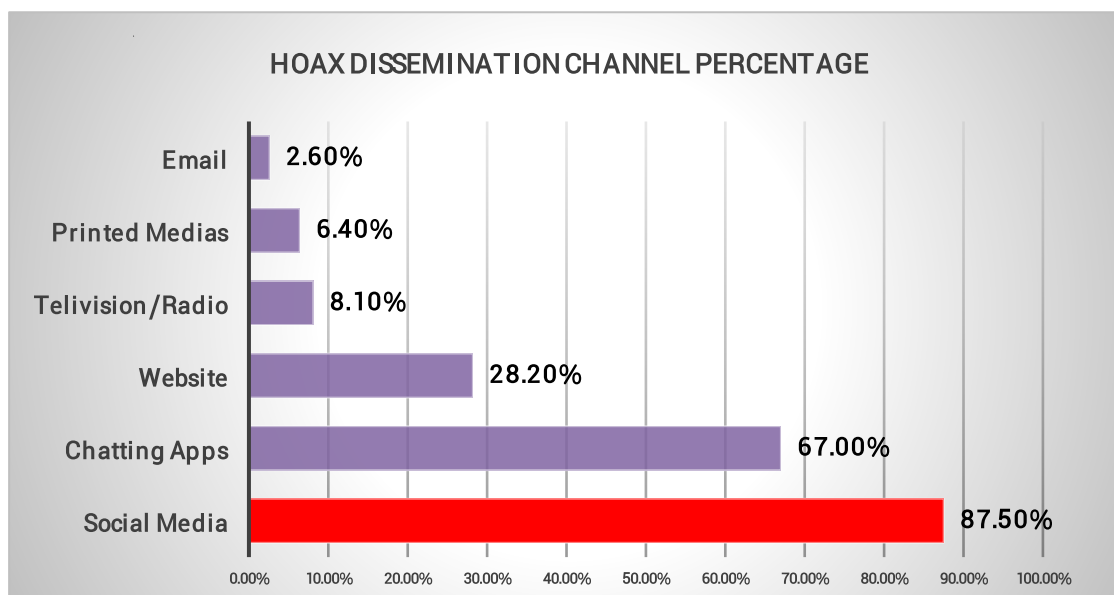
²⁵ Pulido et al., "A New Application of Social Impact in Social Media for Overcoming Fake News in Health."

²⁶ Robert Brian Smith, Mark Perry, and Nucharee Nuchkoom Smith, "'Fake News' in Asean: Legislative Responses," *Journal of ASEAN Studies* 9, no. 2 (2021): 117–37, <https://doi.org/10.21512/JAS.V9I2.7506>.

²⁷ Smith, Perry, and Smith.

²⁸ Doli Witro, "Maqashid Syari'ah as a Filter of Hoax Through Al-Quran Perspective," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 18, no. 2 (December 27, 2020): 187, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v18i2.1133>.

²⁹ Fera Belinda and Maria Puspitasari, "Hoaks and Resistance to Government Motion Case Study KAMI (Koalisi Aksi Menyelamatkan Indonesia)," *Journal of Sosial Science* 2, no. 2 (March 25, 2021): 139–43, <https://doi.org/10.46799/jsss.v2i2.108>.



Source: Anissa Rahmadhany, Anggi Aldila Safitri, and Irwansyah Irwansyah, "Fenomena Penyebaran Hoax Dan Hate Speech Pada Media Sosial," *Jurnal Teknologi Dan Sistem Informasi Bisnis* 3, no. 1 (2021): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.47233/jteksis.v3i1.182>.

Dissemination of hoaxes can be done in many ways or medias, but social media is the most hoax dissemination channel. The above chart shows that the primary platform for the dissemination of hoax news is social media, accounting for 87.50% of cases. Following that, approximately 67% of hoax news is spread through chat applications, while websites contribute to 28.20% of hoax news. Print media accounts for 6.40%, email for 2.60%, and television and radio for 8.1% of hoax news distribution.³⁰

The widespread utilization of social media, along with its convenience and rapidity in sharing information, contributes to making it the predominant platform for spreading fake news. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and Line have enabled hoaxes to spread on an unprecedented scale.³¹

Anindya Novyan Bakrie, the President Director of VIVA Media Group revealed that social media is responsible for the dissemination of 92.4% of hoax information, as indicated by a survey of 1,116 individuals in Indonesia.³² Additional data supporting this notion comes from a study conducted by Dailysocial.id Research, indicating that social media serves as the primary

³⁰ Anissa Rahmadhany, Anggi Aldila Safitri, and Irwansyah Irwansyah, "Fenomena Penyebaran Hoax Dan Hate Speech Pada Media Sosial," *Jurnal Teknologi Dan Sistem Informasi Bisnis* 3, no. 1 (2021): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.47233/jteksis.v3i1.182>.

³¹ Ibegbulem Obioma Hilary and Olannye-Onkonofua Dumebi, "Social Media as a Tool for Misinformation and Disinformation Management," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (August 24, 2021): 496–505, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5nS1.1435>.

³² Arisanty and Wiradharma, "The Acceptance and Resharing Behavior of Hoax Information on Social Media."

medium for spreading misinformation. The majority of false information can be found on popular platforms such as Facebook (82.25%), WhatsApp (56.55%), and Instagram (29.48%).³³ Actually, social media has the potential to be utilized as a tool to prevent violence, but conversely, it can also serve as a platform for individuals involved in riots, terrorism, and criminal activities to advance their objectives.³⁴ Wawan Purwanto, the Director of Information and Communication at the State Intelligence Agency (BIN), has stated that the majority of social media content in Indonesia is comprised of false or hoax information, leading people to be easily swayed by news. He noted that hoax information accounts for 60% of social media content in Indonesia, highlighting the extensive spread of such misinformation on these platforms.³⁵

From the data concerning the dissemination of hoaxes, it can be inferred that social media is the primary channel for spreading such misinformation. Social media is favoured as a platform for spreading hoaxes due to its extensive audience encompassing diverse demographics. Furthermore, the ease of using social media, combined with limited public education on technology and social media, contributes to the proliferation of hoaxes. Additionally, the anonymity offered by fake accounts enables the anonymous spread of hoaxes on these platforms.

In today's digital age, individuals could effortlessly generate false online personas known as Fake Accounts on social media. These accounts enable people to engage, express their opinions, and participate in online activities while maintaining anonymity and concealing their true identities from others. By utilizing fake accounts, individuals feel liberated to freely express their thoughts, ideas, and actions within the realm of cyberspace without the need to disclose their personal information.³⁶ The presence of fake accounts poses a significant challenge for law enforcement agencies when addressing the issue of hoax propagation through

³³ Randi Eka, "Laporan DailySocial: Distribusi Hoax Di Media Sosial 2018." *Dailysocial. Id*" (Agustus, 2018).

³⁴ Antony Lee, "Online Hoaxes, Existential Threat, and Internet Shutdown: A Case Study of Securitization Dynamics in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities* 10, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 17–34, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jissh.v10i1.156>.

³⁵ Ambaranie Nadia Kemala Movanita, "'BIN_ 60 Persen Konten Media Sosial Adalah Informasi Hoaks,'" *Kompas*, March 15, 2018, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/03/15/06475551/bin-60-persen-konten-media-sosial-adalah-informasi-hoaks>.

³⁶ Agie Rinaldy Maizuly, Bambang Hartono, and Indah Satria, "Penerapan Sanksi Pidana Terhadap Pelaku Tindak Pidana Manipulasi Dan Penciptaan Melalui Akun Media Sosial Facebook," *Ius Civile: Refleksi Penegakan Hukum Dan Keadilan* 6, no. 1 (2022): 12–25, <https://doi.org/10.35308/jic.v6i1.3794>.

social media. Identifying the individuals behind these accounts proves to be difficult, thereby hindering effective law enforcement efforts against those spreading hoaxes using fake identities on social media platforms.³⁷

The utilization of fake accounts for spreading hoaxes or engaging in other illicit activities has become widespread. Perpetrators not only impersonate or present themselves as ordinary individuals through these accounts, but they also go to the extent of imitating high-ranking officials such as regents or even the president. An example of this is the case of a fake account impersonating Regent of Blora, Arief Rohman, which then contacted several individuals, making false promises of financial aid for the construction of mosques and Islamic boarding schools.³⁸ Even though the perpetrator still in the process of tracking by the police, Arif Rohman has made a statement to ignore any financial aid offer from social media. He clearly stated that there is no financial aid offered through social media. Moreover, the Police as well inviting the society to report to the Police once they are being a victim of this kind of hoax.³⁹

In a different context, the presence of fake accounts was observed even in the case of the President of the United States, Joe Biden. It was found that nearly half of his 22.2 million Twitter followers were comprised of fake accounts.^{40,41}

Apart from fraud and fake followers, the utilization of fake accounts is frequently employed to disseminate hoaxes and promote hate speech through social media platforms. As what has been done by a Mario, a man from Ambon, Maluku, who utilized a fabricated Facebook account under the name "Wai Kalewa" to spread hoaxes and engage in hate speech. Posts from Wae Kalewa

³⁷ Nur Cahyo Ari Prasetyo and Sri Endah Wahyuningsih, "The Handling of Hoax/False Information in the Legal Jurisdiction Area," *Law Development Journal* 3, no. 3 (2021): 564–72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/ldj.3.3.564-572>.

³⁸ Achmad Niam Jamil, "Hati-Hati! Akun Palsu Mengaku Bupati Blora Gentayangan Di Medsos," *detikJateng*, January 2, 2023, <https://www.detik.com/jateng/berita/d-6495109/hati-hati-akun-palsu-mengaku-bupati-blora-gentayangan-di-medsos>.

³⁹ Fajar, "Hati-Hati Penipuan Mengatasnamakan Akun Bupati Blora Palsu," *Klikwarta.Com*, March 1, 2023, <https://www.klikwarta.com/index.php/hati-hati-penipuan-mengatasnamakan-akun-bupati-blora-palsu>.

⁴⁰ Darragh Roche, "Half of Joe Biden's Twitter Followers Are Fake, Audit Reveals," *NEWSWEEK*, May 17, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/half-joe-biden-twitter-followers-are-fake-audit-elon-musk-1707244>.

⁴¹ Jack Hobbs, "Audit Finds Half of Joe Biden's Twitter Followers Are Fake," *New York Post*, May 17, 2022, <https://nypost.com/2022/05/17/half-of-joe-bidens-twitter-followers-are-fake-audit-reveals/#:~:text=Nearly%20half%20of%20President%20Biden%27s,followers%2C%20a%20according%20to%20Newsweek>.

were successfully detected by the Maluku Regional Police cyber team while conducting surveillance on the Facebook social media platform. The circulation of hoax on social media platforms significantly impacts the stability of public order and security, often leading to conflicts among different community groups. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals to exercise caution and verify the news they receive before drawing conclusions or perpetuating its spread.⁴²

As social media platforms continue to become more pervasive in our daily lives, it is crucial that we pay closer attention to the information we receive from these sources. Hoaxes have a real impact on our society, and their spread can jeopardize public health, communal harmony or even threaten national security.⁴³ Therefore, it is important to scrutinize any information we receive from social media platforms and verify its authenticity before disseminating it further.

In scrutinizing the news, it is important to employ various strategies to discern real news from fake news and exercise caution. Firstly, evaluate the credibility and reputation of the news source by considering their track record of accurate and unbiased reporting. Rely on well-known and established sources that have a history of journalistic integrity. Secondly, cross-reference information from multiple sources to verify its accuracy. Authentic news stories are usually reported by several reputable sources, while suspicious stories may lack corroboration or be confined to obscure websites. Thirdly, employ fact-checking tools or websites to verify the claims made in news articles. Fact-checkers provide evidence-based evaluations and help identify exaggerated or misleading information.

Additionally, assess the objectivity of the news article, as genuine news presents information in a balanced and unbiased manner. Look for articles that provide multiple perspectives and cite reliable sources. Consider the expertise and qualifications of the article's author, as authentic news articles are often written by journalists or subject-matter experts with verifiable credentials. Apply critical thinking skills, questioning motives, analysing evidence, and being cautious of stories that evoke strong emotions without

⁴² Christ Belseran and Ade Kurniawan, "Polisi Tangkap Pelaku Penyebar Ujaran Kebencian Saat Konflik Maluku Tengah Di Marauke Papua," March 2, 2022, <https://www.tvonenews.com/daerah/sulawesi/29847-polisi-tangkap-pelaku-penyebar-ujaran-kebencian-saat-konflik-maluku-tengah-di-marauke-papua?page=2>.

⁴³ Aditya Yuli Sulistyawan and Sekar Anggun Gading Pinilih, "The Reality of Spreading Hoaxes on Social Media: A Sociolegal Approach," in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Indonesian Legal Studies (ICILS 2019)* (Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Indonesian Legal Studies (ICILS 2019), Semarang, Indonesia: Atlantis Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.2991/icils-19.2019.20>.

substantial supporting facts. Pay attention to publication dates and context, as fake news may lack current or relevant information.

Finally, exercise caution when encountering news on social media platforms, as fake news spreads rapidly through these networks. Verify information with trusted sources before sharing or reposting it. By employing these strategies, individuals can navigate the news landscape more effectively and make informed judgments about the information they encounter. By employing these strategies, individuals can better navigate the information landscape, identify real news, and avoid falling victim to the spread of fake news.

Furthermore, aside from scrutinizing the news, fake accounts can also be identified through various methods or criteria. Firstly, examine the profile information provided by the account. Fake accounts typically have incomplete or nonsensical details, and inconsistencies may arise in the profile picture, username, bio, and other personal information. For instance, the profile picture might be a stock image or a photo of a celebrity, the username could be a random string of characters, and the bio might contain vague or irrelevant information.⁴⁴ Additionally, fake accounts often have very few posts, followers, or interactions, which can further signal their inauthenticity. Analyzing the activity patterns of the account can also be revealing; fake accounts may post content at irregular intervals or engage in spam-like behavior. By paying attention to these details, one can more effectively identify and avoid fake accounts.

Secondly, monitor the account's activity for suspicious behaviour. Fake accounts often engage in excessive posting, liking, or following, and may partake in spamming or promote dubious content. These accounts might post an unusually high volume of content in a short period, like or follow numerous other accounts indiscriminately, and leave generic or irrelevant comments on posts. Thirdly, assess the account's connections or friends list. Fake accounts tend to have a low number of connections or an imbalanced ratio of followers to following, with the account following many users but having very few followers in return. They often have limited genuine interactions with other users, such as meaningful comments or conversations. By carefully evaluating

⁴⁴ Kai Shu et al., "The Role of User Profiles for Fake News Detection," 2019, 436–39, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3341161.3342927>.

these aspects, it becomes easier to identify and flag fake accounts.

Fourthly, evaluate the content shared by the account. Fake accounts usually lack personal photos or original posts, relying instead on generic or recycled content sourced from elsewhere. This content often appears impersonal, with a noticeable absence of genuine, original material that reflects personal experiences or thoughts. Fifthly, interact with the account to gauge its responsiveness. Fake accounts often employ automated responses or generic comments that do not directly relate to the conversation at hand. For example, they may respond with vague or off-topic replies, indicating that there is no real person behind the account. By engaging in a conversation and observing the quality and relevance of the responses, it becomes easier to discern whether the account is genuine or fake.

Additionally, conduct a reverse image search on the profile picture. Fake accounts frequently utilize stolen or stock images, which can be identified through a reverse image search tool. This can help determine if the image has been used elsewhere on the internet, indicating that the profile picture is not original or authentic. Lastly, pay attention to the account's language proficiency, as fake accounts often display poor spelling and grammar in their posts or comments, containing frequent errors. These linguistic inconsistencies can be a strong indicator of inauthenticity. By utilizing these methods—examining profile information, monitoring account activity, assessing connections, evaluating content, interacting with the account, conducting reverse image searches, and scrutinizing language proficiency, it becomes possible to identify and recognize fake accounts more effectively.

Those two preventive actions can be undertaken by the society to mitigate the spread of hoaxes and fake news. Conducting a reverse image search on profile pictures and scrutinizing language proficiency are useful steps in identifying fake accounts. Even though it is important to note that these methods are not fool proof, and additional investigation may be necessary to confirm the authenticity of an account and the news. For instance, cross-referencing information from multiple credible sources and seeking verification from trusted entities can further help ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information being shared. By combining these strategies, individuals can play a crucial role in

reducing the proliferation of false information.

The Role of Fake Accounts

A. Definition and Characteristics

The identification of fake accounts on social media platforms is a critical area of research, particularly in the context of combating misinformation and hoaxes. Fake accounts are typically defined as profiles that do not represent real individuals or entities, often created with the intent to deceive, or manipulate users. This section will delve into the definition and characteristics of fake accounts, drawing on various scholarly sources to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Fake accounts are generally understood as profiles that are either entirely fabricated or impersonate real individuals without their consent. These accounts can be created for various purposes, including spreading misinformation, engaging in fraudulent activities, or manipulating public opinion.⁴⁵ The motivations behind creating fake accounts often include political gain, financial fraud, or social engineering, where the aim is to influence or mislead users.

One of the primary characteristics of fake accounts is the presence of inconsistencies in profile information. This includes generic usernames, lack of personal photos, or the use of stock images instead of real photographs.⁴⁶ Research indicates that fake accounts often have minimal personal details and may not engage in typical social interactions, such as posting personal updates or interacting with friends.⁴⁷ In addition, Behavioral Patterns are also a characteristic of fake accounts. Fake accounts exhibit distinct behavioral patterns that differ from genuine users. For instance, they may engage in high-frequency posting, often sharing the same content across multiple platforms without original commentary. Additionally, these accounts frequently follow many other accounts

⁴⁵ Kuntarto Kuntarto, Rindha Widyaningsih, and Muhamad Riza Chamadi, "The Hoax of SARA (Tribe, Religion, Race, and Intergroup) as a Threat to the Ideology of Pancasila Resilience," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 9, no. 2 (May 30, 2021): 413, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v9i2.539>.

⁴⁶ Gus Nanang Syaifuddiin et al., "Hoax Identification of Indonesian Tweeters Using Ensemble Classifier," *Journal of Information Systems and Telecommunication (JIST)* 11, no. 42 (June 10, 2023): 94–101, <https://doi.org/10.52547/jist.33532.11.42.94>.

⁴⁷ Nur Elyta Febriyanty, M. Amin Hariyadi, and Cahyo Crysdiyan, "Hoax Detection News Using Naïve Bayes and Support Vector Machine Algorithm," *International Journal of Advances in Data and Information Systems* 4, no. 2 (October 6, 2023): 191–200, <https://doi.org/10.25008/ijadis.v4i2.1306>.

while having few followers themselves, indicating a strategy aimed at amplifying specific messages rather than fostering genuine social connections.⁴⁸

Other characteristics can also be seen in Content Sharing. The content shared by fake accounts often includes sensationalized or misleading information, particularly related to political events, health crises, or social issues.⁴⁹ Studies have shown that these accounts are more likely to disseminate hoaxes or fake news, especially during critical periods such as elections or public emergencies.⁵⁰ The content is often designed to provoke emotional responses, thereby increasing engagement and visibility.

The Use of automation is also part of the characteristics of fake accounts, many fake accounts are operated by automated systems or bots, which can generate and share content at a scale that human users cannot match. These automated accounts can rapidly disseminate misinformation, making it challenging for users to discern credible information from falsehoods.⁵¹ Studies has shown that the use of machine learning algorithms can help identify such automated behaviors, thereby aiding in the detection of fake accounts.⁵²

Therefore, understanding the definition and characteristics of fake accounts is essential for developing effective strategies to combat misinformation and hoaxes on social media. By recognizing the signs of fake accounts, users and platforms can better protect themselves from the negative impacts of misinformation. Future research should continue to explore the evolving tactics used by those who create fake accounts, as well as the technological advancements that can aid in their detection and mitigation.

B. Mechanisms of Influence

⁴⁸ Kuntarto, Widyaningsih, and Chamadi, "The Hoax of SARA (Tribe, Religion, Race, and Intergroup) as a Threat to the Ideology of Pancasila Resilience."

⁴⁹ Elvira Calvo-Gutiérrez and Carles Marín-Lladó, "Combatting Fake News: A Global Priority Post COVID-19," *Societies* 13, no. 7 (July 5, 2023): 160, <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13070160>.

⁵⁰ Pratiwi Utami, "Hoax in Modern Politics," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 22, no. 2 (January 4, 2019): 85, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.34614>.

⁵¹ Victor Fitrizal Auli et al., "Controlling Perpetrators of Spreading Fake News in the Southern Sumatra Regional Police," *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi (Indonesian Journal of Communications Studies)* 8, no. 1 (March 28, 2024): 127–34, <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v8i1.6843>.

⁵² Priyanka Kondeti et al., "Fake Account Detection Using Machine Learning," in *Lecture Notes on Data Engineering and Communications Technologies*, vol. 53, 2021, 791–802, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-5258-8_73.

The mechanisms through which fake accounts contribute to the spread of hoaxes and manipulate public opinion are complex and multifaceted. This phenomenon is increasingly relevant in the digital age, where social media platforms serve as primary channels for information dissemination. Below, I will explore the various mechanisms of influence that fake accounts employ, supported by relevant literature.

Fake accounts, particularly those operated by bots, play a significant role in amplifying misinformation. These accounts can generate and disseminate content at an unprecedented scale, often sharing the same misleading information across multiple platforms. Research indicates that social bots can effectively increase the visibility of low-credibility content, thereby shaping public discourse.⁵³ For instance, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the propagation of fake news was notably influenced by automated accounts that spread false narratives, impacting voter perceptions and decisions.⁵⁴ The sheer volume of shares and interactions generated by these accounts can create an illusion of legitimacy, leading users to accept false information as credible.

Fake accounts often operate within coordinated networks designed to manipulate public opinion strategically. This phenomenon, known as a Sybil attack, involves creating multiple fake accounts to amplify a particular message or agenda.⁵⁵ By clustering together, these accounts can create a feedback loop that reinforces specific narratives, making them appear more popular or widely accepted than they truly are. This manipulation can significantly affect public sentiment, especially on contentious issues such as politics or social movements.⁵⁶ The ability to target specific user groups further enhances the effectiveness of these campaigns, as they can tailor messages to resonate with

⁵³ Chengcheng Shao et al., "The Spread of Low-Credibility Content by Social Bots," *Nature Communications* 9, no. 1 (November 20, 2018): 4787, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-06930-7>.

⁵⁴ Fawaz Khaled Alarfaj and Jawad Abbas Khan, "Deep Dive into Fake News Detection: Feature-Centric Classification with Ensemble and Deep Learning Methods," *Algorithms* 16, no. 11 (November 3, 2023): 507, <https://doi.org/10.3390/a16110507>.

⁵⁵ Muhammad Al-Qurishi et al., "SybilTrap: A Graph-Based Semi-Supervised Sybil Defense Scheme for Online Social Networks," *Concurrency and Computation: Practice and Experience* 30, no. 5 (March 10, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpe.4276>.

⁵⁶ Blerina Gjerazi and Pranvera Skana, "Impact of Politically Motivated Fake News on Public Opinion: A Case Study of Deliberate Dissemination of Disinformation," *Balkan Social Science Review* 22, no. 22 (2023): 365–82, <https://doi.org/10.46763/BSSR232222365g>; Elisabetta Ferrari, "Sincerely Fake: Exploring User-Generated Political Fakes and Networked Publics," *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 4 (October 22, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120963824>.

demographics.⁵⁷

The content shared by fake accounts is often designed to provoke strong emotional responses, leveraging cognitive biases to influence public opinion. Research suggests that emotionally charged content is more likely to be shared, regardless of its veracity.⁵⁸ Fake accounts exploit this tendency by disseminating sensationalized or polarizing information that elicits fear, anger, or outrage. This emotional manipulation can lead to increased engagement and further dissemination of misinformation, creating a cycle of influence that is difficult to break.⁵⁹ The psychological impact of such content can distort users' perceptions of reality, leading to polarized opinions and heightened social tensions.⁶⁰

The prevalence of fake accounts and the misinformation they spread contribute to a broader erosion of trust in legitimate information sources. As users encounter increasing amounts of false information, they may become sceptical of all news, including credible reporting.⁶¹ This phenomenon can lead to a general decline in public trust in media institutions and expert opinions, making it easier for fake news to thrive. The manipulation of public opinion through fake accounts not only affects individual beliefs but can also undermine democratic processes and societal cohesion.⁶²

Fake accounts often exploit social dynamics inherent in online interactions. By mimicking the behaviour of real users such as liking, sharing, and commenting these accounts can blend into social networks, making their influence less detectable.⁶³ This ability to

⁵⁷ Onur Varol et al., "Online Human-Bot Interactions: Detection, Estimation, and Characterization," *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* 11, no. 1 (May 3, 2017): 280–89, <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v11i1.14871>.

⁵⁸ Alberto Acerbi, "Cognitive Attraction and Online Misinformation," *Palgrave Communications* 5, no. 1 (February 12, 2019): 15, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0224-y>.

⁵⁹ Youssef Taher, Adelmoutalib Moussaoui, and Fouad Moussaoui, "Automatic Fake News Detection Based on Deep Learning, FastText and News Title," *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications* 13, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.14569/IJACSA.2022.0130118>.

⁶⁰ Deddy Satria M and Hairunnisa, "The Phenomenon of Fake News (Hoax) in Mass Communication: Causes, Impacts, and Solutions," *Open Access Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 3 (May 25, 2023): 980–88, <https://doi.org/10.37275/oaijss.v6i3.161>.

⁶¹ Timothy Moses et al., "Enhancing Fake News Identification in Social Media through Ensemble Learning Methods," *International Journal of Applied Information Systems* 12, no. 41 (September 20, 2023): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.5120/ijais2023451949>.

⁶² Ankur Gupta et al., "Combating Fake News: Stakeholder Interventions and Potential Solutions," *IEEE Access* 10 (2022): 78268–89, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2022.3193670>.

⁶³ Varol et al., "Online Human-Bot Interactions: Detection, Estimation, and

masquerade as legitimate users allows fake accounts to engage in discussions and spread misinformation more effectively. Additionally, the social proof phenomenon, where individuals are influenced by the actions of others, can further amplify the reach of fake news when it appears to be endorsed by many accounts.⁶⁴

The mechanisms of influence employed by fake accounts are diverse and sophisticated, leveraging technological capabilities and psychological insights to spread hoaxes and manipulate public opinion. Therefore, understanding these mechanisms is also crucial for developing effective strategies to combat misinformation and protect the integrity of public discourse in the digital age.

C. Case Study

Case Study 1: The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

One of the most prominent examples of fake accounts influencing public opinion occurred during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Allcott and conducted a comprehensive analysis of the role of social media in the election, revealing that fake news stories circulated widely, particularly those favoring Donald Trump. Their study indicated that approximately 14% of Americans considered social media their most important source of election news, highlighting the significant impact of these platforms on public perception. The researchers found that fake news stories were shared extensively on social media, with many of these stories being fabricated or misleading.⁶⁵ This phenomenon was facilitated by the presence of automated accounts, or bots, which amplified the reach of these false narratives.⁶⁶ The study concluded that the spread of fake news during the election not only influenced individual voter behavior but also contributed to broader societal polarization, as users gravitated towards information that confirmed their pre-existing beliefs.

Case Study 2: Health-related Hoaxes during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online media functioned as the primary source of information for the public. However, the

Characterization.”

⁶⁴ Shao et al., “The Spread of Low-Credibility Content by Social Bots.”

⁶⁵ Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow, “Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31, no. 2 (May 1, 2017): 211–36, <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211>.

⁶⁶ Shao et al., “The Spread of Low-Credibility Content by Social Bots.”

widespread circulation of unverified content made the public highly susceptible to misinformation and undue influence. This period also witnessed a significant increase in health-related hoaxes, often disseminated by fake accounts on social media platforms.⁶⁷ Ufarte-Ruiz et al. examined various initiatives aimed at fact-checking misinformation related to the healthcare crisis. Their findings underscored the importance of public service values in combating hoaxes, as misinformation jeopardized public health efforts and the credibility of health institutions. Fake accounts played a crucial role in disseminating false information about COVID-19 treatments, vaccine efficacy, and preventive measures. These accounts often shared sensationalized content that elicited strong emotional reactions, further amplifying the misinformation. The study highlighted the need for collaborative efforts between fact-checkers, social media platforms, and public health organizations to mitigate the impact of fake accounts on public health communication.⁶⁸

Challenges in addressing fake accounts and hoax dissemination.

In Indonesia, the proliferation of social media has significantly transformed the landscape of communication, presenting both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the realm of misinformation and the management of fake accounts. The rapid growth of social media usage, with millions of Indonesians engaging daily on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, has created a fertile ground for the dissemination of hoaxes and the proliferation of fake accounts.⁶⁹ This environment complicates the efforts of social media platforms, governments, and civil society organizations to combat misinformation effectively.

One of the primary challenges faced by social media platforms is the sheer volume of content generated by users. With a

⁶⁷ Sholahuddin Al-Fatih and Zaka Firma Aditya, "The Beginning of the Human Rights 5th Generation: A Lesson from Covid-19 Outbreak in Indonesia," *Jambe Law Journal* 7, no. 1 (July 20, 2024): 59–90, <https://doi.org/10.22437/home.v7i1.339>.

⁶⁸ María José Ufarte-Ruiz, Belén Galletero-Campos, and Ana María López-Cepeda, "Fact-Checking, a Public Service Value in the Face of the Hoaxes of the Healthcare Crisis," *Tripodos* 1, no. 47 (February 5, 2021): 87–104, <https://doi.org/10.51698/tripodos.2020.47p87-104>.

⁶⁹ Rd. Heri Solehudin, A. Ifayani Haanurat, and Sahay Amrita Tollentino, "Instagram to Sharia Economics: Impact and Benefits of Digital Literacy and Indonesia's Sharia Economy," *AMCA Journal of Community Development* 4, no. 1 (February 4, 2024): 27–33, <https://doi.org/10.51773/ajcd.v4i1.158>.

population exceeding 270 million and a substantial number of active internet users, the task of monitoring and moderating content becomes increasingly daunting.⁷⁰ Platforms often rely on algorithms to detect and manage misinformation, but these systems can be flawed, leading to either the over-censorship of legitimate content or the failure to flag harmful misinformation. The dynamic nature of social media also means that misinformation can spread rapidly before any corrective measures can be implemented, further complicating the response efforts.⁷¹

Social media platforms also face the challenge of balancing the regulation of content while respecting users' rights to free speech. Overly aggressive moderation can lead to accusations of censorship, while insufficient action can allow harmful misinformation to proliferate.⁷² This delicate balance complicates the implementation of effective policies to combat fake news.

Nevertheless, the Governments also face their own set of challenges in addressing misinformation. The regulatory framework surrounding digital content is often inadequate, leading to difficulties in enforcing laws against the spread of false information. Moreover, the political landscape in Indonesia can influence how misinformation is addressed, with some government actions perceived as attempts to suppress dissent rather than genuine efforts to protect public discourse. This perception can lead to a lack of trust in governmental initiatives aimed at combating misinformation, making it harder for authorities to engage effectively with the public on these issues.⁷³

Governments often struggle to create effective legislation that addresses the complexities of fake news and misinformation. Existing laws may not adequately cover the nuances of digital communication, making it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable.⁷⁴ Additionally, the rapid pace of technological change

⁷⁰ Eni Maryani, Detta Rahmawan, and Siti Karlinah, "The Implications of Social Media on Local Media Business: Case Studies in Palembang, Manado and Bandung," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 36, no. 1 (March 31, 2020): 317–33, <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2020-3601-18>.

⁷¹ Maryani, Rahmawan, and Karlinah.

⁷² Ka Chung Ng, Jie Tang, and Dongwon Lee, "The Effect of Platform Intervention Policies on Fake News Dissemination and Survival: An Empirical Examination," in *Fake News on the Internet* (London: Routledge, 2023), 6–38, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003433934-2>.

⁷³ Syaifudin Zuhri, "Islam, (Un)Civil Society and Challenges for Democratisation in Indonesia," *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat* 19, no. 2 (December 30, 2022): 286–302, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajpif.v19i2.6488>.

⁷⁴ Gjerazi and Skana, "Impact of Politically Motivated Fake News on Public Opinion: A

can outstrip legislative processes, leaving gaps in regulation.⁷⁵

Besides of that, civil society organizations also play a crucial role in combating misinformation, yet they often operate with limited resources and face challenges in reaching broader audiences. These organizations strive to promote digital literacy and critical thinking among the populace, which are essential skills for navigating the complex digital landscape. However, their efforts can be undermined by the pervasive nature of misinformation and the rapid evolution of social media platforms, which can outpace educational initiatives. Additionally, the diverse cultural and linguistic landscape of Indonesia complicates the dissemination of accurate information, as messages may not resonate equally across different communities.⁷⁶

Promoting media literacy among the public is a critical challenge for civil society organizations. Many individuals lack the skills to critically evaluate information sources, making them more susceptible to misinformation.⁷⁷ Developing effective educational programs that resonate with diverse audiences is a complex task that requires ongoing effort and innovation. Civil society organizations must also navigate the digital landscape, which is constantly evolving. The rise of new social media platforms and communication channels can complicate efforts to reach audiences and disseminate accurate information.⁷⁸ Adapting to these changes while maintaining a consistent message is a significant challenge.

The interplay between these three entities, social media platforms, governments, and civil society organizations creates a complex web of challenges in addressing fake accounts and misinformation. Effective strategies must involve collaboration among these stakeholders, leveraging the strengths of each to create a more resilient information ecosystem. For instance, social media platforms could enhance their algorithms with input from civil society organizations to better identify and manage misinformation,

Case Study of Deliberate Dissemination of Disinformation.”

⁷⁵ Gupta et al., “Combating Fake News: Stakeholder Interventions and Potential Solutions.”

⁷⁶ Mona Nasery, Ofir Turel, and Yufei Yuan, “Combating Fake News on Social Media: A Framework, Review, and Future Opportunities,” *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* 53, no. 1 (2023): 833–76, <https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.05335>.

⁷⁷ Lance E. Mason, Dan Krutka, and Jeremy Stoddard, “Media Literacy, Democracy, and the Challenge of Fake News,” *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 10, no. 2 (2018): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2018-10-2-1>.

⁷⁸ Aelita Skarzauskiene, Monika Maciuliene, and Ornela Ramasauskaite, “The Digital Media in Lithuania: Combating Disinformation and Fake News,” *Acta Informatica Pragensia* 9, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 74–91, <https://doi.org/10.18267/j.aip.134>.

while governments could support initiatives that promote digital literacy. Ultimately, addressing the challenges of misinformation in Indonesia requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges the complexities of the digital landscape and the diverse needs of its users.

Government's Responds

The social media has different views for everyone who reads it, sometimes when we are wrong in writing messages via social media it will result in differences of opinion or perception for everyone who sees and reads the news or uploads.⁷⁹ Social media is one means of socializing the community through the internet. Just like a means of socialization in the real world, in social media everyone has the freedom to express themselves through aspirations, opinions, inputs which are usually called "comments", in addition to providing comments, users can also upload and downloading various images and sounds.⁸⁰

Those make the issue of fake news and hoaxes being spread across social media platforms has become a growing concern. The Indonesian government has not been immune to the impact of this phenomenon and has taken steps to address it. In general, the development of hoax news in Indonesia is widely spread through social media rather than mass media. However, the development of hoax in one of these media will significantly affect the increase in the development of hoax news in other media. In other words, the increasing development of hoax news on social media will lead to an increase in the development of hoax news in the mass media, and vice versa.⁸¹

Hoax or fake news is usually generated by a person or group of people, or robots that pretend to be real media sites, but are fake or misleading accounts designed to deceive the public. When the activities of spreading fake news are carried out sporadically, organized, and systematically, fake news becomes a dis-information campaign that can potentially disrupt campaigns and state

⁷⁹ Uddagiri Sirisha and Bolem Sai Chandana, "Aspect Based Sentiment & Emotion Analysis with ROBERTa, LSTM," *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications* 13, no. 11 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.14569/IJACSA.2022.0131189>.

⁸⁰ Natasya Serepina Parhusip, "Hukum Pidana Dan Kaitannya Dengan Penggunaan Media Sosial," *To-Ra* 1, no. 1 (May 15, 2015): 67, <https://doi.org/10.33541/tora.v1i1.1097>.

⁸¹ Christopher Andreas et al., "Analisis Hubungan Media Sosial Dan Media Massa Dalam Penyebaran Berita Hoaks Berdasarkan Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square," *MUST: Journal of Mathematics Education, Science and Technology* 6, no. 1 (July 30, 2021): 81, <https://doi.org/10.30651/must.v6i1.8816>.

governance.⁸² The issue of fake accounts become a big challenge for the Indonesian government in tackling the spread of hoaxes in Indonesia. Identifying the individuals behind these accounts proves to be difficult, thereby hindering effective law enforcement efforts against those spreading hoaxes using fake identities on social media platforms.⁸³

The results of a recent study revealed that text (written news/information) was the most widely accepted type of Covid-19 hoax by respondents, followed by images (photos), videos (moving images) and audio.⁸⁴ One of the measures taken by the Indonesian government is to establish an information security program and policy known as cyber security law, aimed at managing this circumstance. Moreover, the government has intensified its efforts to combat fake news by increasing police patrols and cracking down on perpetrators who spread false information about Covid-19.⁸⁵

The AIS (Automatic Identification System), team under the Directorate of Content Control, Directorate General of Informatics Applications, Ministry of Communication and Informatics, works hard for 24 hours a day to identify and formulate clarifications on hoaxes circulating in the community. Every day, through the official website of the Ministry of Communication and Information⁸⁶, the public can access these hoax reports.⁸⁷ Initially, the government believed that the spread of the hoax could be prevented by blocking a number of problematic internet sites.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, those rises pros and cons, according to Dhyta Caturani, Activist from Purple Code, blocking online sites was not the right way to prevent the spread of fake news or hoaxes.⁸⁹ Moreover, hoax which circulating

⁸² Risna Nurlatun, Herman Nayoan, and Fanley Pangemanan, "Upaya Pemerintah Dalam Mengatasi Penyebaran Berita Palsu (Hoax) Di Media Sosial (Studi Kasus Dinas Kominfo Kota Manado)," *Governance* 1, no. 2 (2021).

⁸³ Prasetyo and Wahyuningsih, "The Handling of Hoax/False Information in the Legal Jurisdiction Area."

⁸⁴ Christiany Juditha, "People Behavior Related to the Spread of Covid-19's Hoax," *Journal Pekommas* 5, no. 2 (October 19, 2020): 105, <https://doi.org/10.30818/jpkm.2020.2050201>.

⁸⁵ Ika Saptarini et al., "Stigma during COVID-19 Pandemic among Healthcare Workers in Greater Jakarta Metropolitan Area: A Cross-Sectional Online Study," *Health Science Journal of Indonesia* 12, no. 1 (July 19, 2021): 6–13, <https://doi.org/10.22435/hsji.v12i1.4754>.

⁸⁶ See <https://komin.fo/inihoaks>

⁸⁷ Kemenkominfo Republik Indonesia, "Sanksi Menanti Penyebar Hoaks Saat Pandemi," April 24, 2020, <https://www.kominfo.go.id/content/detail/26140/sanksi-menanti-penyebar-hoaks-saat-pandemi/0/artikel>.

⁸⁸ Kurniawan Hari Siswoko, "Kebijakan Pemerintah Menangkal Penyebaran Berita Palsu Atau 'Hoax,'" *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, Dan Seni* 1, no. 1 (May 10, 2017): 13, <https://doi.org/10.24912/jmishumsen.v1i1.330>.

⁸⁹ Purwanto, "Blokir Situs Online Dianggap Bukan Solusi Cegah Hoax," January 14,

in private messaging applications is a challenge the government because it is more difficult to track down. The data collected also comes from reports of WhatsApp users who reported hoax findings to Mafindo (*Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia*).⁹⁰

Beside of that, controlling and eradicating hoaxes can be done in various ways, including through literacy campaigns, fact-checking initiatives, and the establishment of punitive measures to prevent its spread.⁹¹ In addition to these initiatives, the Indonesian government has banned individuals or groups that are known to have a history of spreading hoaxes from publishing content on social media. Furthermore, the Indonesian government has emphasized the importance of verifying information before sharing it by providing credible sources of information such as reputable media outlets whose validity has been verified.⁹² Moreover, these efforts are complemented by academic research on fake news and hoaxes conducted by scholars and experts in the field. These measures taken by the Indonesian government can be seen as a proactive and significant step in managing the spread of fake news and hoaxes. It is crucial to note that such initiatives require continued support and adaptations as trends in the spread of fake news continue to change. In summary, the Indonesian government has taken multi-faceted and comprehensive measures to address the issue of fake news and hoaxes in Indonesia. These efforts are aimed at protecting the public from misinformation and preserving trust in credible sources of information. Unfortunately, in line with the article 1 (3) of 1945 Constitution which clearly mention Indonesia is a rule of law state, therefore all government action must be based on existing legislation.⁹³

2017, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/836071/blokir-situs-online-dianggap-bukan-solusi-cegah-hoax>.

⁹⁰ Wahyunanda Kusuma Pertiwi, "Jumlah Hoaks Di Indonesia Meningkat, Terbanyak Menyebar Lewat Facebook," November 20, 2020, <https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2020/11/20/07385057/jumlah-hoaks-di-indonesia-meningkat-terbanyak-menyebarkan-lewat-facebook?page=all>.

⁹¹ Arwendria Arwendria and Ariska Oktavia, "Upaya Pemerintah Indonesia Mengendalikan Berita Palsu," *Baca: Jurnal Dokumentasi Dan Informasi* 40, no. 2 (May 16, 2019): 195, <https://doi.org/10.14203/j.baca.v40i2.484>.

⁹² W Syaputri et al., "Internet (Social Media) and Its Relationship with Hoax and Fake News in the 2019 Presidential Election," *Proceedings of the 1st Paris Van Java International Seminar on Health, Economics, Social Science and Humanities (PVJ-ISHESSH 2020)* 535 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210304.163>.

⁹³ Bambang Satriya, "Membangun Negara Hukum Di Era Pemerintahan Presiden Joko Widodo," *Jurnal Panorama Hukum* 1, no. 2 (November 28, 2016): 43, <https://doi.org/10.21067/jph.v1i2.1415>.

Related Law Regarding Hoaxes

The problem of overcoming crime in society, of course, cannot be separated from the context of penal policy. Penal policy can be interpreted as a rational effort to tackle crime by using the criminal law.⁹⁴ Is the issue of spreading hoaxes are crime? The current law has great definitional, interpretational, and technical difficulties when the government applies the law to the issue of spreading hoaxes. In addition, the ease of using social media, even using a fake account, combined with limited public education on technology and social media, contributes to the proliferation of hoaxes in Indonesia.

Indonesia does not have any specific regulation on Hoaxes. Currently, Indonesia only has Law Number 11 of 2008 which has amended to Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Electronic and Transaction Information. This law is particularly relevant in the context of spreading hoaxes, which has become a major problem around the world. The Indonesian government has taken a firm stance by enforcing this law to prevent the spread of hoaxes and misinformation on social media platforms, particularly during elections and other sensitive periods.⁹⁵ Additionally, the law places a responsibility on business actors who offer products through electronic systems to provide accurate and complete information about their offerings under Article 9 of the law. Moreover, Article 28 of the law states that anyone who intentionally generates or spreads false news in electronic media can be given sanctions such as imprisonment for up to six years and a fine of up to one billion rupiah.

Meanwhile, the issue of using fake accounts to spread the Hoaxes also actually been regulated in this Law. Article 35 mention that "Any Person who knowingly and without authority or unlawfully manipulates, creates, alters, deletes, tampers with Electronic Information and/or Electronic Records with the intent that such Electronic Information and/or Electronic Records would seem to be authentic data.". In addition, the Criminal Code also regulates the same thing in article 378 which states "Whoever with intent to benefit himself or others unlawfully, by using a false name or false dignity, by deceit or by a series of lies moves another person to give something to him, or to give a debt or write off a receivable, shall be punished with fraud with imprisonment for not more than 4 years".

⁹⁴ Arief Barda Nawawi, *Bunga Rampai Kebijakan Hukum Pidana* (Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti, 1996).

⁹⁵ Syaputri et al., "Internet (Social Media) and Its Relationship with Hoax and Fake News in the 2019 Presidential Election."

Basically, the two articles above regulate fraud, but these articles can ensnare hoax spreaders who use fake accounts because they have fulfilled the elements of fraud. According to Dudung Mulyadi in his writing said that the realm of fraud has two elements, namely objective elements and subjective elements. The objective element, namely persuading or moving others with a means of persuasion or mobilization, using a false name, using false circumstances, a series of false words, and deception so that someone surrenders something, makes debts and writes off receivables. While the subjective element with the intention to benefit oneself or others unlawfully.⁹⁶ Currently, the introduction of Law No. 19 of 2016 demonstrates that Indonesia recognizes the grave impact fake news and hoaxes can have on society. Despite the enactment of this law, hoax is still being widely circulated online, which highlights the need for greater awareness of digital literacy and media ethics. This Law is the only significant legal framework that addresses the issue of hoaxes in Indonesia. This law not only emphasizes the importance of accurate information dissemination but also holds people accountable for spreading false news through electronic media. Furthermore, it promotes the development of a more reliable and trustworthy online community in Indonesia. The strict enforcement of the law and imposition of penalties on hoax spreaders can serve as a deterrent to others who might be tempted to share false information online.

However, some argue that this Law may be perceived as a significant restriction of freedom of expression as one of the fundamental human right of the people.⁹⁷ There are concerns that the legislation could be exploited as a tool for government censorship and control over the dissemination of information online.⁹⁸ Additionally, the inherent difficulty in precisely defining what constitutes fake news or hoaxes could lead to subjective and biased interpretations, resulting in inconsistent enforcement of the law. In conclusion, while there are legitimate and serious concerns about

⁹⁶ Dudung Mulyadi, "Unsur-Unsur Penipuan Dalam Pasal 378 Kuhp Dikaitkan Dengan Jual Beli Tanah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Galuh Justisi* 5, no. 2 (2017): 206, <https://doi.org/10.25157/jigj.v5i2.798>.

⁹⁷ Siti Fatimah, Jamal Wiwoho, and Isharyanto Isharyanto, "Global Perspectives on Freedom of Expression in Environmental Governance: Legal Implications and Challenges," *Jambe Law Journal* 7, no. 2 (December 30, 2024): 481–507, <https://doi.org/10.22437/home.v7i2.456>.

⁹⁸ Fadilah Raskasih, "Batasan Kebebasan Berpendapat Melalui Media Elektronik Dalam Perspektif HAM Dikaitkan Dengan Tindak Pidana Menurut UU ITE," *Jurnal Equitable* 5, no. 2 (April 30, 2021): 147–67, <https://doi.org/10.37859/jeq.v5i2.2462>.

the potential misuse of laws regulating online content in Indonesia, it is essential to acknowledge that the unchecked proliferation of hoaxes and fake news online can have severe far-reaching consequences for society. Therefore, balancing the imperative to protect free expression with the necessity of curbing the spread of misinformation is a complex but crucial endeavor that requires careful consideration and implementation.

Furthermore, there are limitations related to enforcing these laws on electronic platforms like WhatsApp. The information disseminated through these platforms can spread quickly and easily without any verification or fact-checking by authorities.⁹⁹ Therefore, despite having legal measures in place, it is crucial to increase public awareness and promote media literacy to curb the spread of hoaxes on social media. The media can play a critical role in reducing the spread of hoaxes and misleading information about current events.¹⁰⁰ This can be achieved by conducting thorough research before publishing news, verifying sources of information and fact-checking claims.

Conclusion

Hoaxes are a serious problem in Indonesia and this phenomenon continues to increase along with technological developments and the use of social media. Hoaxes can cause public distrust of the government and other institutions and have an impact on the stability and security of the country. The spread of hoaxes on social media is influenced by the ease of accessing social media, including the ease of creating fake accounts and combined the minimal monitoring of circulating content. As a solution, extra efforts are needed from various parties, both from the government, non-governmental organizations, and the public to overcome this problem. In the legal and policy context, Indonesia has established several regulations regarding hoaxes and other

⁹⁹ Febriansyah Febriansyah and Nani Nurani Muksin, "Hoax Distribution in Social Media After Ratification of Omnibus Law," *Jurnal ASPIKOM* 6, no. 2 (July 25, 2021): 315, <https://doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v6i2.871>.

¹⁰⁰ Nathan A Silver et al., "Charming E-Cigarette Users with Distorted Science: A Survey Examining Social Media Platform Use, Nicotine-Related Misinformation and Attitudes Towards the Tobacco Industry," *BMJ Open* 12, no. 6 (June 2022): e057027, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-057027>.

policies. More complex than that, the government should also focus on the issue of fake accounts. The ease with which someone creates fake accounts is the reason someone dares to spread fake news or hoaxes. Nevertheless, those will raise pros and cons, which can be seen as freedom of expression and opinion. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a balance between protecting freedom of expression and limiting the spread of hoaxes. This can only be achieved through collaborative efforts between lawmakers, law enforcement agencies and online platforms, working together to create regulatory frameworks that protect citizens while promoting responsible online behaviour.

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