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**Title:** Social Media, Hoax, and Threats against Diversity in Indonesia

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Decision	Major Revision

# **Social Media, Hoax, and Threats against Diversity in Indonesia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The issues of social media spreading hoax news are increasingly worrisome in the diverse society life in Indonesia. It is obvious that various conflicts have been triggered by hoax news filled with prejudice, hatred and negative information. Besides, the prevalence of hoaxes has increased simultaneously with political democracy in Indonesia. For the reason of freedom of communication as being the rights of the people, messages are often interpreted unilaterally to serve a given interest. This research aims to obtain an overview of the hoax which threatens the diversity as well as the effective strategy and communication pattern to counter it. To gain holistic view of hoaxes on social media, this research employed qualitative research method. This research found that hoaxes dominate the social media information traffic and it threatens the national diversity which is perceived differently by the social media users and the society. Another finding there is a need for a strategy and communication pattern to counter hoaxes which threatens the nation unity.

## **KEYWORD :**

Hoax; freedom to communicate; social media; effective communication; plural society

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

At the end of the political reform era in 1998, Indonesia started to enjoy communication democracy on the mass media and other means used to disseminate information. Then there was no censure nor restriction on journalism and dissemination of information to the public. Besides, the Conventional mass media or mainstream media becomes a source of information with exciting content which upholds state power in its development tasks. The Mass media moved progressively to become the source of public reference. The information dissemination model is not a form of submission towards the regime rather it provides factual information on the state of the society. Amidst the struggle for freedom to communicate, there is a high expectation towards the mainstream mass media as one of the foundations of democracy and national diversity.

However, all the leverages that the mainstream mass media had to support political democracy seem to have lost its meaning. The overflow of information and mainstream mass media journalism could not satisfy the public needs. Even in terms of media ownership bureaucracy, the people saw mainstream media journalism, including the digital online news portal of conventional media, to be no longer objective and exist to serve the interests of certain groups. As a result, the level of public trust continues to deteriorate. The people, segmented by their social, economic, political and psycho-demographic status, revert to social media, which is deemed able to fulfill their needs for information.

The attempts to seek news from alternative sources with the support of communication technology continued to increase. Several regulations which support communication freedom was issued to encourage people to seek, obtain, and use information according to the needs. 1945 Constitution of Republic of Indonesia Article 28F states “every person has the right to communicate and obtain information to develop themselves and their social environment, and to seek, obtain, own, store, process and deliver information through various available outlets”.

With the support of regulations on freedom of information and communication technology, the attempts to seek and use information is through Internet-based social media. As the result, the social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram become very familiar to the people. Based on data from the Internet Service Provider Association, the number of Internet users in Indonesia up to 2016 has reached to 132.7 million and 67.8 percent regularly accessed the social media on their smartphone (Kompas, 2017, May 2).

Social media is used without time, geographic, sociocultural and other psychographic constraints. The hindrances are usually related to the use of technology. As a new popular media, the social media has advantages in its flexibility. As stated by Flew (2002:11-22) “It offers digitization, convergence, interaction and network development in creating and delivering messages”. The ability to build interactive network has enabled social media

users to have the necessary choices of information and control it to their heart's content. "The transmission speed and interactivity are advantages of a new rapidly developing media". (Karjaluoto, 2008: 2).

The fast and wide message delivery coverage is undeniable. Despite the fact that the weight of disseminated information cannot be accounted for, the speed of message delivery without verification according to facts turns it into a hoax with adverse effects on the Indonesian plurality. In this digital era, social media's status as a means to disseminate information cannot be ignored. However, social media's work system does not implement effective filters for verification of news which soon became fertile grounds for hoaxes.

Based on such description, the subject of this research is the impact of hoaxes on social media which is being the negative side of freedom to communicate, hoaxes as a threat to national plurality and the communication strategy required to counter hoaxes. The purpose of this research is to identify and describe in a comprehensive way the impact of hoaxes on social media which threatens the social plurality and communication strategy to be used for countering hoaxes in a plural society.

Some researches on social media have been carried out, as done by Anna Sophie Kümpel, Veronika Karnowski, and Till Keyling (2014) with the topic of the relationship between users, content, and network of reporters. It was reiterated that social media is very accessible for sharing information and journalism interests. Social media also provides individuals and organizations the ease of posting various contents for publications. Another finding by Gadi Wolfsfeld, Elad Segev, and Tamir Sheafer amidst the Arab Spring movement (2013) showed that social media were used for collective actions and its demonstration in the Arabic countries is widely referred to as Arab Spring. The role of social media in a collective action is deeply associated with the political nuance. Then, a significant increase in the use of social media is more prominent during protests.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Some literature are used to support the discussion of the examined issues. It includes concepts and theories related to social media hoaxes in terms of communication democratization, social media as a new flexible media and effective communication strategy in a plural society. This exposure is expected to support comprehensive discussion. As such, the result of research was not only based on information from the document, rather related to the theoretical reference in accordance with the subject of research.

### ***Hoaxes and Freedom to Communicate***

"A hoax is a falsified information meant to mislead the readers". (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017: 213). The purpose of the hoax is to distort the truth or mix facts with fiction in order to mislead the message recipient for personal gains. Hoaxes may lead to fear, confusion and unnecessary widespread panic. However, sometimes this condition is preferable to the message recipients. These hoaxes are found to increase along with the freedom to communicate as one of the democratic foundations of a state.

Freedom to communicate is often associated with freedom of the press as the constitutional rights or legal protection of media and publication materials without government intervention or censure. "Free media role is one of the characteristics of a democratic government". (Urofsky, 2001:2). In Law number 40/1999 regarding Press, each citizen is guaranteed the basic rights of freedom of the press. The press must not be censored, banned or restricted. The third section even states that in order to ensure the freedom of the press, the national press has right to seek, obtain and disseminate ideas and information. The fourth section states that journalists have their right to not prove its public liability.

### ***Flexibility of Social Media***

"Social media is a communication network by using text, video, blog, photo and updated status on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and so on in the form of accessible online conversation". (Alejandro, 2010:1). In addition, Schottmuller states that social media as a communication channel or a tool used to store, accumulate, share, discuss or deliver information in an online community. (<https://www.marketingprofsu.com/>).

"Social media involve mobile and web technology to create an interactive platform where individuals and communities share, create, discuss and modify their user contents". (Kietzmann, et.al. 2014:241). Interactivity is highly sought after by the user since communication would run smoothly and the relevant parties would be able to build a meaning in an object.

### ***The Effective Communication and Plural Community***

According to Goyer, "effective communication is possible if the response provided by the message recipient is identical". (Tubb and Moss, 2014:22). In a plural society, effective message delivery is possible through communication between cultures or between groups with different values, attitudes, and faiths. Communication strategy in social plurality includes: understanding one's self, using the same language in communication and interaction, taking time, calculating setting, improving communication skills, growing feedback, developing empathy, paying attention to similarities and ethical responsibility (Samovar, Porter and Jain, 1981).

“A plural society is established from various existing ethnic communities which were directly or indirectly forced to unite under the regime of a national system” (Suparlan, 2001:2). Emile Durkheim stated that “the increase in social plurality became the characteristics of the process of developing the society from traditional into modern”. (Giddens, 1986:92). Modernity sees history as a river flowing towards the sea of human freedom and a movement towards a better life (Mohamad, 2016).

The image of plurality in Indonesia can be seen from the three hundred ethnicities or ethnic groups and approximately two hundred fifty local dialects. Each ethnicity has its own cultural identity and often its own language. The differences in ethnicity are related to the different values, attitude, and faith in their daily lives. (Geertz, 1981:1). Jean Martin believes that social plurality is the best option for any society, group or individual. In addition, Susanto (2016:5) stated “Social plurality, heterogeneity and diversity are the most relevant path to a just and prosperous society”.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach to obtain the comprehensive picture of the research topic. The qualitative research can interpret an issue based on text or writing printed in the documents. The document recording is carried out to test information in a kind of texts, writings or symbols as analysis materials for specific matters that support the research (Neuman, 2000: 34).

The Information examined in the research is news reporting from online media, print media and other sources reporting conflicts of fake news. Therefore, it does not analyze information with the fake news content. The news reporting is not restricted to the time of accidents but related to Indonesia's condition directly or indirectly.

From the data of the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Communication and Informatics, there are 800,000 websites in Indonesia have been identified as the spreaders of fake information (<https://kominfo.go.id>). In January 2017, there were 5,070 public complaints on the fake news content concerning Jakarta Regional Head Election (<http://cnnindonesia.com>).

The total news reported in print and online media are not used as the standards of adequacy to analyze the data. The main cause to support the research analysis is the news reporting that becomes public opinion and describes the fake news threatening the diversity of Indonesian society.

Furthermore, data on the diversity and threats were interpreted comprehensively which relates to other facts that occur in the analysis process. It is in line with the basis of qualitative research that applies the interpretative method and it involves many methods in analyzing the research problems (Mulyana, 2008:5). Moreover, the qualitative research is also based on the social context to understand the existing social world (Neuman, 2000:157-158). All the subject being studied and collected data were from an empirical data and case study, personal experience, introspection, the journey of life, interviews, text of observation results, interactional history and visual data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2009:2). Finally, the subject and empirical evidence in the research were focused on texts or writing in online and printing media related to the experiences of individuals, groups or society in relation to fake news threatening the diversity.

The technique of data analysis was done through some stages: the data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1992:16-19). Data and information from print and online were collected on the basis of categories and the interest of analysis. Moreover, the unrequired data were separated or filtered. Then, the comprehensive analysis of the good data was presented and drawn in the conclusion.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The result of this research is reviewed in three sub-discussions according to the purpose of the research. The first is the scale of influence of hoaxes on social media in the state of freedom to communicate. The second discussion focuses on the hoaxes disseminated by social media as a threat to plurality. The third discussion, on the other hand is associated with communication strategy against the hoaxes on social media which divides the Indonesian plurality.

#### ***The Influence of Hoaxes on the Social Media: Negative Side of Freedom to Communicate***

The spread of hoaxes on the social media by individuals, groups or multi entities in the society must be stopped. The development of hoaxes as a deliberately misleading information to the readers is very dangerous to a diverse and plural society. According to Macnamara, “the number of people who consume news on social media has increased significantly over the years compared to those who rely on mainstream media”. (Macnamara, 2014:6). The dissemination of information and hoaxes are with the potentials of dividing the plurality of the Indonesian society. Related to this, a number of cases caused by hoax have been reported by Kompas Newspaper (2017, May 4<sup>th</sup>). In Indramayu, West Java, the people of Ilir, Parean Girang and Bulak villages attacked the Curug village in

Kandanghaur district (January 10, 2017). The incident was sparked by a Facebook post stating that Ato, an Iilr villager, died after being ganged by Curug villagers. Ato instead died from a single accident. In Jakarta, there was a rally to withdraw funds from the bank due to rumors that would-be a riot on 25 November 2016.

In Batam, Riau Islands, a fake photograph was circulating with rumors that there has been a riot and arson in Batam city. As the impact, this hoax resulted in the decreased number of tourists from Singapore. Another incident occurred in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, when the masses attacked a number of Buddhist shrines in Tanjung Balai on 29 July 2016, after being provoked by hoaxes in the social media. Furthermore, there are still many other hoaxes developments in the social media which resulted in conflicts and mass riots.

The spread of hoaxes in the form of text, video, blog, photo, an updated status on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and so on through online conversations is a bad example of message dissemination which disregards social diversity. From the aspect of media literacy, the hoaxes spread show the lack of public knowledge on the threat hoaxes poses to the national plurality. As a worrisome development amidst competition between groups of interest, the social media is used to disseminate hoaxes to build public trust. Surely, there is a violation of the message delivery ethics which prioritizes destructive messages and the lack of empathy towards people outside their group.

This is despite the fact that in the message distribution ethics, an aspect to be accounted for is the production of an accurate, balanced and good-willed news. One of the guides to disseminating message which can be used as a reference is the Indonesian Journalism Ethics Code. This guide is mainly for mainstream mass media journalists, but it should also be understood by the social media users to avoid hoaxes, false accusations, sadistic and pornographic contents. (Press Council - Dewan Pers, May 12, 2017).

To make it ironic, amidst the scientific and technological progress, the conventional media is facing tough difficulties. Then, the hoax phenomenon has garnered world attention, it not only occurs exclusively in Indonesia. "There have been many members of the society victimized by hoaxes across the internet. It could be that a news perceived as factual is actually a hoax". (Prasetya, 2017:xvii). Therefore, it is only reasonable that recommendations of anti-hoax literature should be included in the national curriculum. Because, It is important to defend the society as early as possible against the flood of hoaxes on the social media. (Kompas, 2017, May 2). The recommendation would be beneficial if it is carried out wholeheartedly. Then, the question remains on whether the political elites and groups of interest will stop utilizing the differences of values, behavior, and faith as a means to gain support. It is undeniable that the power players and their network have tried to take control of various government bureaucracies in Indonesia. This has the potentials of annulling anti-hoax education with the purpose of building an informed society within the framework of plurality.

From the socio-cultural perspective, the Indonesian society has a multi-active cultural character which includes the love of social life and performing various tasks in a single time frame. (West dan Turner, 2013). When communicating, there is a curious tendency of wanting to absorb open or private information which should not be disseminated in a public forum. As a message recipient, the society often ignores accuracy and validity of information obtained (Susanto, 2013). Sahidah stated 'hoax tends to be bad news. The general public is expected not to disseminate hoaxes at will. However, in reality, without thorough observation, some people instead enjoy the hoaxes for fulfilling their negative expectations of an individual or institution victimized by the hoax'. (Tempo Magazine 2017, April 2).

Basically, in a competitive situation, people often choose to ignore the accuracy of messages on the social media. They do not care if the hoax causes hatred, pluralism, communalism, ethnocentrism, sub-nationalism and any integralist ideas which disfavor plurality. Hoaxes fully dominate the social media. Based on the "Kompas" Poll, the dominant content of information/news on the social media at the moment were as follows: 44.7% were hoaxes, 26.5% were accurate and 20.7% were inaccurate while the respondents who did not know or answer are 8.1%. (Kompas, 2017, May 15).

The attempts to produce hoaxes continue to increase due to its easy process. Then, various information to complete the lies may be obtained from the internet 'big data' with engineering and editing without any meaningful difficulties. By using smartphone, users can obtain data in the form of text, photograph, video, audio, map and other formats (Kompas, 2017 May 4). The abundance of information on the social media has negative content and makes the plural life in Indonesia prone to conflicts among groups. "Therefore, the social media is not only a rapid but always a positive source of information. Then, Inaccuracy must be considered as a critique against the weakness". (Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley, 2012 : 11).

The hoaxes which colored the social media do not take into account the Republic of Indonesia provisions of the Law, number 11 of 2008 regarding Electronic Transactions and information. The law regulates the actions that are banned in the use of electronic data. For example, the distribution of information containing insults, discreditation, hoaxes or inciting hatred or hostility based on ethnicity, religion, race and social class. Furthermore, Law number 14 of 2008 regarding Public Information Transparency has also been violated. There is a ban on dissemination of

information which endangers safety and security as well as other actions which brings disadvantage to the state and the society as individuals or groups.

### ***Hoax as a Threat to the Indonesian Plurality***

The threat of plurality in Indonesia increased simultaneously with the social media disseminating hoaxes. This is, despite the fact that plurality must be maintained since it has become the character of development from a traditional to a modern or more prosperous society. Hoaxes in a plural society contain prejudice and lack the empathy towards other groups with a different perception, value, behavior, and faith. As a result, there's an avoidance behavior against the disliked groups. Discriminatory acts which marginalize certain groups for being different. Antilocution discusses the negative side of another party. Then, physical violence assault in an emotional state. The most worrisome is extermination as an individual or mass-driven act of eliminating a disfavored group. (Samovar, Porter & Jain, 1981).

The prevalence of hoaxes on the social media is a real example of the complexity of information contained on its negative side. It is of course not aligned with the principle of freedom to communicate and the media as a characteristic of a democratic government, even though the 1998 political reform has the purpose of creating informed democratization for the state and nation.

Various institutions or groups have stated that they are against any hoax which threatens the plurality. A formal institution against hoaxes has been established by the name of Jaringan Wartawan Anti Hoax or JAWAH (Anti-Hoax Journalist Network). It must be reiterated that false information has become a national concern. Because, the spread of hoaxes on the social media has caused anxiety and divisiveness among the society. Therefore, all stakeholders and the press community must encounter the hoaxes problem. To provide best solution, they must refresh the public space with factual, refreshing and hopeful information and news. Besides, the stakeholders is expected to restore ethics and morality as a basis for communicating with the media (JAWAH, 2017).

Furthermore, Anti-hoax news network was launched by the Vice President of Republic of Indonesia Jusuf Kalla on 28 April 2017 in order to prevent the increasing number of hoaxes dividing the plural society. It is revealed that there are around three hundred ethnicities or groups of specific sociocultural identities associated with values, attitude, and beliefs in their daily lives.

When handling hoaxes, priorities must be given to the national and local public interests they are those with public anxiety-inducing content. The result of hoax verification is formulated in a redaction in accordance with the professional standards for journalism. With the support of the anti-hoax institutions, groups, and individuals, the society is expected to cohabitate peacefully.

However, it's never easy to instill an attitude of anti-hoax, because it may potentially hamper communication and interactions between different groups. It is so easy nowadays to find a social media which reveals ethnocentric, the lack of trust, prejudice, stereotype, lack of empathy and personal withdrawal from a disliked group, and the gap of power which challenges communication between different groups or cultures (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2005). Such attitude and behavior may potentially disrupt the pluralism of a country. This conclusion is supported by the result of a survey by Masyarakat Telekomunikasi in February 2017. The types of hoaxes received by the social media users are as follows: Socio-political news regarding local leader and government election: 91.8%, news on differences of ethnicity, religion, race and social class: 88.6%, health hoaxes: 41.2%. Meanwhile, other hoaxes comprise less than 30% of all hoaxes. (Kompas, 2017, May 15).

In facing hoaxes, social media users show different types of actions. According to Max Weber, there are 4 (four) social behaviors as follows: (1) Instrumental Rationale Action (Zwerk Rational): rational people judge and ponder on an action that can be taken to achieve a certain purpose. (2) Value Rational Action (Werk Rational): an ideal action which presides over all others and take nothing into consideration. This social action prioritizes social and religious values. (3) Affectual Action: a social action dominated by feelings or emotion without any intellectual reflection or conscientious planning. (4) Traditional Action: an action which includes good behavior threshold under the influence of tradition and customs. (Giddens, 1986).

Essentially, hoaxes in the media, which disseminate hatred against different groups, may prove divisive against diversity. However, social media users vary in their behavior against hoaxes, as described in the following table.

**Table 1. Types of Social Actions, Behavior, and Interests**

No	Type of Social Actions	Attitude towards Hoax	Interest
1	Zwerk Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing and forwarding hoaxes to the people.</li> <li>• Clarifying hoaxes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking and obtaining group support</li> <li>• Providing an understanding in order to obtain public support</li> </ul>
2	Werk Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejecting hoaxes by not publishing them.</li> <li>• Creating a true, factual message for publications</li> </ul>	Providing accurate information to the public or different society groups.
3	Affectual Action	Forwarding messages without taking into account its accuracy	Providing emotional support to its group
4	Traditional Action	Forwarding or stopping hoaxes is also made possible by the behavior of a venerated traditional figure	Supporting its group

Source: Result of Qualitative Data Processing

The actions taken by social media users against hoaxes vary greatly. They are not necessarily associated with the person's social, economic and political status. Neither are they connected with one's position as a government elite official, politician, non-government organization nor the public in general. When receiving a hoax, a social media user may take either a positive or a negative action which has an impact on the Indonesian pluralism.

However, the issue stands that hoaxes which spread prejudice and hatred and highlight social differences are much more prevalent, therefore resulting in a larger threat against pluralism. This condition is worsened by the hoax tellers 'hiding behind the idea of freedom of press and communication as ensured by the state. In other words, they do not feel guilty for interpreting an issue in an integralist manner for the sake of an individual or a specific group's interest.

### ***Strategy and Pattern of Communication Against Hoax Domination***

In a plural society with differences in perception, value, behavior, and beliefs, communication often has the potential of hampering a harmonious relationship especially when it is ridden with false news containing negative messages about the attitude, behavior, and characteristics of a different group. Essentially, hoaxes which trigger the conflict are simple issues in regard to the differences in daily behavior up to the crucial issue of differences in values and beliefs of a certain individual or group.

There have been many attempts to counter hoaxes by the public or organized groups who care about the ethics of news publication according to freedom to communicate Fanpage Indonesian Hoaxes Community. The Facebook social network has tens of thousands of users who can make inquiries and clarify various information and news. (Facebook, 2017, May). On the Turn back, Hoax.id domain managed by Masyarakat Indonesia Anti Hoax (Anti-Hoax Indonesian Society), collects various false information and accusations for public reference database to verify various types of information. (<https://www.turnbackhoax.id/>).

Gudanghoax.com was established by information technology activists on 31 October 2016. It has since become a public reference for issues, rumors, gossips and hoax news. The latest data released by the daring Turnbackhoax.id page on 1 January 2017 up to 2 February 2017 shows that 1,656 complaints have been received on hoaxes, false accusations for 47,132 times by 13,915 internet users (Kupang.Tribune, 2017, May 14)

The availability of a source of information which disseminates a good and factual message is expected to minimize the domination of hoaxes spread by irresponsible parties. Within the frame of communication democracy, the freedom to seek, obtain and use information is a basic public right protected by the constitution. It must, therefore, be carried out properly to give the maximum benefits in the attempt to maintain the Indonesian pluralism and tolerance. By disseminating factual news on the social media, the people will feel safe and they will be able to relate to different groups. On a national scale, pluralism becomes an enjoyable fact and a drive towards welfare.

In reality, social media as a new media supported by the communication technology has many benefits to support the actualization of a just, plural society. Social media can also build a high-quality interactive communication

between different groups to create a harmonious relationship and receive constructive public opinion to preserve national plurality.

Some attempts to maintain the communication quality: (1) *Openness* is the willingness to respond to a positive information. (2) *Empathy*, which involves putting one's self in another person's shoes. (3) *Supportiveness*, which is creating a supportive environment through good communication (4) *Positiveness*, which is creating the positive feeling of encouraging others to participate constructively. (5) *Equality*, by appreciating people who are involved in communication for the sake of equality. (Devito, 1988).

Based on such opinion, substantially, the ideal communication to maintain pluralism must prioritize equality, interactivity, and transparency without prejudice. Communication pattern which is not interactive, unidirectional/linear and full of partial messages will instead create communication gap within the society. (Susanto, 2016). From the perspective of communication between groups, the state officials, political elites, and public figures must carry out communication between different groups including: knowing yourself, using similar language, taking the time to reduce emotion, calculating setting when communicating, growing feedback, developing empathy and focusing on the common aspects of different cultures and ethical responsibilities in communicating. (Samovar and Porter, 1988).

If the communication between different groups is carried out by all stakeholders by taking into account the aforementioned factors, an effective communication to maintain pluralism may be achieved. The Message sender on the social media has obtained the desired response. On the other hand, the message recipient feels comfortable to obtain information which does not disrupt the community's values, behavior, and beliefs.

The Message transmission on social media must be carried out with good intentions, empathic and in a language easily comprehensible by our plural society. The message must be delivered under an ethical responsibility to create an integrative communication to obtain feedback which supports the needs for peaceful cohabitation. In terms of equality, an ideal communication between different groups would establish a common understanding without institutionalized prejudice.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Hoaxes dominate the social media content with flexibility in delivering messages to the general public. The social media has developed simultaneously with the increase in the use of communication technology on all layers of the society, not limited by the sociocultural, economic and political factors. On the other hand, the conventional mass media as a source of information which spreads the news through factual verification is increasingly marginalized. In facing hoax influence on the social media, the users should understand the ethics of information dissemination according to the applicable laws. Furthermore, conventional mass media must be able to compete by upgrading its speed and flexibility of message delivery and at the same time maintain a proper news publication method.

Hoaxes in the social media contain hatred against groups of different values, behavior, and beliefs, having no regard for any threat against national pluralism, despite the fact that the developing freedom to communicate wishes to achieve communication democratization this is based on the civilized dissemination of information to maintain tolerance in the Indonesian pluralism. However, it turns out that social media users feel no remorse for spreading the hoax. They constantly take cover in the freedom to communicate in terms of seeking, obtaining and using information. Social media users and organs within the government should not be carried away with publications of hoaxes. However, factual clarifications against hoaxes threaten national pluralism.

Furthermore, strategy and pattern of communication against hoaxes are not yet carried out optimally. Various groups of society and the government may even be caught in the dissemination of information on the social media which may have a negative impact on pluralism. This condition is made possible by the lies packaged in differences of values, behavior, and beliefs on the social media which are used to obtain support in the competition between groups of specific interests, despite the fact that all stakeholders must assume responsibility over communication to maintain national pluralism. The communication strategy and pattern is used to prevent conflicts based on differences of value, behavior, and beliefs of individuals and groups within the society or the government; with the hopes of establishing effective communication on the social media to avoid prejudice and other negative actions which potentially divide the plural society.

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# Social Media, Hoax, and Threats against Diversity in Indonesia

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## Abstract

Issues of social media spreading hoax news are increasingly worrisome in the diverse society life in Indonesia. Various conflicts have been triggered by hoax news filled with prejudice, hatred and negative information on another. Prevalence of hoaxes has increased in alignment with political democracy in Indonesia. For reasons of freedom of communication being the rights of the people, messages are often interpreted unilaterally to serve a given interest. Purpose of this research is to obtain an overview of the hoax which threatens the diversity as well as the effective strategy and communication pattern to counter it. This research makes use of the qualitative method to obtain a hollistic view of hoaxes on social media which threatens the national diversity. Research found that hoaxes dominate the social media information traffic and are a threat to the national diversity which is perceived differently by the social media users and the society. Another finding is the dire need for a strategy and communication pattern to counter hoaxes which divide the nation.

**Keywords:** Hoax; freedom to communicate; social media; effective communication; plural society

## Introduction

At the dawn of the political reform era in 1998, Indonesia started to enjoy communication democracy on the mass media and other means used to disseminate information. There was no censure nor restriction on journalism and dissemination of information to the public. Conventional mass media or mainstream media becomes a source of information with exciting content which upholds state power in its development tasks. Mass media moved progressively to become the source of public reference. The information dissemination model is not a form of submission towards the regime, rather,

it provides factual information on the state of the society. Amidst the struggle for freedom to communicate, there's a high expectation towards the mainstream mass media as one of the foundations of democracy and national diversity.

However, all the leverages that the mainstream mass media had to support political democracy seem to have lost its meaning. The overflow of information and mainstream mass media journalism could not satisfy the public needs. Even in terms of media ownership bureaucracy, the people saw mainstream media journalism, including the digital online news portal of conventional media, to be no longer objective and exist to serve the interests of certain groups. As a result, the level of public trust continues to deteriorate. The people, segmented by their social, economic, political and psycho-demographic status, revert to social media, which is deemed able to fulfill their needs for information.

The attempts to seek news from alternative sources with the support of communication technology continued to increase. Several regulations which support communication freedom was issued to encourage people to seek, obtain, and use information according to the needs. 1945 Constitution of Republic of Indonesia Article 28F states that “every person is entitled to communicate and obtain information to develop themselves and their social environment, and to seek, obtain, own, store, process and deliver information through various available outlets”.

With the support of regulations on freedom of information and communication technology, the attempts to seek and use information through Internet-based social media. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram become very familiar to the people. Based on data from the Internet Service Provider Association, the number of Internet users in Indonesia up to 2016 has reached 132.7 million and 67.8 percent regularly accessed it on their smartphone (Kompas, 2017, May 2).

Social media is used without time, geographic, sociocultural and other psychographic constraints. The hindrances are usually related to the use of technology.

As a new popular media, the social media has advantages in its flexibility. “It offers digitization, convergence, interaction and network development in creating and delivering messages”. (Flew, 2002:11-22). The ability to build interactive network has enabled social media users to have the necessary choices of information and control it to their heart’s content. “The delivery speed and interactivity are advantages of a new rapidly developing media”. (Karjaluoto, 2008: 2).

The fast and wide message delivery coverage is undeniable. Despite the fact that the weight of disseminated information cannot be accounted for, the speed of message delivery without verification according to facts turns it into a hoax with adverse effects on the Indonesian plurality. In this digital era, social media’s status as a means to disseminate information cannot be ignored. Furthermore, social media’s work system does not implement effective filters for verification of news, which soon became fertile grounds for hoaxes.

Based on such description, the subject of this research is the impact of hoaxes on social media being the negative side of freedom to communicate, hoaxes as a threat to national plurality and the communication strategy required to counter hoaxes. The purpose of this research is to identify and describe in a comprehensive manner the impact of hoaxes on social media which threatens the social plurality and communication strategy to be used for countering hoaxes in a plural society.

Research on social media has been carried out by Anna Sophie Kümpel, Veronika Karnowski, and Till Keyling (2014) with the topic of the relationship between users, content, and network of reporters. It was reiterated that social media is very accessible for sharing information and journalism interests. Social media also provides individuals and organizations the ease of posting various contents for publications. Another finding by Gadi Wolfsfeld, Elad Segev, and Tamir Sheafer amidst the Arab Spring movement (2013) stated that social media were used for collective actions and its demonstration in the Arabic countries is widely referred to as Arab Spring. The role of social media in a

collective action is deeply associated with the political nuance. A significant increase in the use of social media is more prominent during protests.

## Literature Review

Various **literature** are used to support discussion of the examined issues. They include concepts and theories related to social media hoaxes in terms of communication democratization, social media as a new flexible media and effective communication strategy in a plural society. This exposure is expected to support comprehensive discussion. As such, the result of research is not only based on information from the document, rather related to the theoretical reference in accordance with the subject of research.

## Hoaxes and Freedom to Communicate

“A hoax is a falsified information meant to mislead the readers”. (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017: 213). The purpose of the hoax is to distort the truth or mix facts with fiction in order to mislead the message recipient for personal gains. Hoaxes may lead to fear, confusion and unnecessary widespread panic. However, sometimes this condition is preferable to the message recipients. Hoaxes increase along with the freedom to communicate as one of the **democratic** foundations of a state.

Freedom to communicate is often associated with freedom of the press as the constitutional rights or legal protection of media and publication materials without government intervention or censure. “Free media role is one of the characteristics of a democratic government“. (Urofsky, 2001:2). In Law number 40/1999 regarding Press, each citizen is guaranteed the basic rights of freedom of the press. The press must not be censured, banned or restricted. The third section even states that in order to ensure the freedom of the press, the national press is entitled to seek, obtain and disseminate ideas and information. The fourth section states that journalists are entitled to not prove its public liability.

### **Flexibility of Social Media**

“Social media is a communication network by text, video, blog, photo and status update on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn etc. in the form of accessible online conservation”. (Alejandro, 2010:1). Meanwhile, Schottmuller states that social media as a communication channel or a tool used to store, accumulate, share, discuss or deliver information in an online community. (<https://www.marketingprofsu.com/>).

“Social media makes use of mobile and web technology to create an interactive platform where individuals and communities share, create, discuss and modify user contents”. (Kietzmann, et.al. 2014:241). Interactivity is highly sought after by the user since communication would run smoothly and the relevant parties would be able to build a meaning in an object.

### **Effective Communication and Plural Community**

According to Goyer, “effective communication is possible if the response provided by the message recipient is identical”. (Tubb and Moss, 20114:22). In a plural society, effective message delivery is possible through communication between cultures or between groups with different values, attitudes, and faiths. Communication strategy in social plurality includes: understanding one’s self, using the same language in communication and interaction, taking time, calculating setting, improving communication skills, growing feedback, developing empathy, paying attention to similarities and ethical responsibility. (Samovar, Porter and Jain, 1981).

“A plural society is established from various existing ethnic communities which were directly or indirectly forced to unite under the regime of a national system” (Suparlan, 2001:2). Emilie Durkheim stated that “the increase in social plurality became the characteristics of the process of developing the society from traditional into modern”. (Giddens, 1986:92). Modernity saw history as a river flowing towards the sea of human freedom, a movement towards a better life. (Mohamad, 2016).

The image of plurality in Indonesia can be seen from the three hundred ethnicities or ethnic groups and approximately two hundred fifty local dialects. Each ethnicity has its

own cultural identity and often its own language. The differences in ethnicity are related to the different values, attitude, and faith in their daily lives. (Geertz, 1981:1). Jean Martin believes that social plurality is the best option for any society, group or individual. “Social plurality, heterogeneity and diversity are the most relevant path to a just and prosperous society”. (Susanto, 2016:5).

## **Research Methodology**

This research uses a qualitative approach to obtain the comprehensive picture of the research topic. The qualitative research can interpret an issue based on text or writing printed in the documents. The document recording is carried out to test information in a kind of texts, writings or symbols as analysis materials for specific matters that support the research. (Neuman, 2000: 34).

Information tested in the research is news reporting from online media, print media and other sources reporting conflicts of fake news. Therefore, it does not analyze information with the content of fake news. The news reporting is not restricted to the time of accidents but related to Indonesia's condition directly or indirectly.

The data of the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Communication and Informatics, there are 800,000 websites in Indonesia having been identified as the spreaders of fake information (<https://kominform.go.id>). In January 2017, there were 5,070 public complaints on the content of fake news concerning Jakarta Regional Head Election (<http://cnnindonesia.com>).

Total news reporting in print and online media are not used as the standards of adequacy to analyze the data. The main cause to support the research analysis is the news reporting that becomes public opinion and describes the fake news threatening the diversity of Indonesian society.

Furthermore, data on the diversity and threat will be interpreted comprehensively. These have to relate to other facts that occur in the analysis process. It is in line with the basis of qualitative research that applies the interpretative method and involves many methods in analyzing the research problems (Mulyana, 2008:5). Moreover, the qualitative



research is also based on the social context to understand the existing social world (Neuman, 2000:157-158). All the studied and collected data on the subject came from an empirical data and case study, personal experience, introspection, the journey of life, interviews, text of observation results, interactional history and visual data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2009:2). Finally, the subject and empirical evidence in the research will be focused on texts or writing in online and printing media relating to the experiences of individuals, groups or society in relation to fake news threatening the diversity.

The technique of data analysis uses three ways of activities: the data reduction, data presentation, and drawing **conclusions** (Miles & Huberman, 1992:16-19). Data and information from print and online are collected on the basis of categories and the interest of analysis. Moreover, the unrequired data will be separated or wasted away. Moreover, the comprehensive analysis of the good data will be presented and drawn the conclusion.

## **Result of Research and Discussion**

The research result is reviewed in three sub-discussions, according to the purpose of the research. The first is the scale of influence of hoaxes on social media in the state of freedom to communicate. The second discussion focuses on the hoaxes disseminated by social media as a threat to plurality. The third discussion, on the other hand, is associated with communication strategy against the hoaxes on social media which divides the Indonesian plurality.

### **Influence of Hoaxes on the Social Media: Negative Side of Freedom to Communicate.**

The spread of hoaxes on the social media by individuals, groups or various entities in the society must be stopped. The development of hoaxes as a deliberately misleading information to the readers is very dangerous to a diverse, plural society. According to Macnamara, “the number of people who consume news on social media has increased significantly over the years compared to those who rely on mainstream media”.

(Macnamara, 2014:6). The dissemination of information and hoaxes with the potentials of dividing the plurality of the Indonesian society. A number of cases caused by hoax have been reported by Kompas Newspaper (2017, May 4<sup>th</sup>). In Indramayu, West Java, the people of Ilir, Parean Girang and Bulak villages attacked the Curug village in Kandanghaur district (January 10, 2017). The incident was sparked by a Facebook post saying that Ato, an Ilir villager, died after being ganged by Curug villagers. Ato instead died from a single accident. In Jakarta, there was a rally to withdraw funds from the bank en masse due to rumors of a would-be riot on 25 November 2016.

In Batam, Riau Islands, a fake photograph was circulating with rumors that there has been a riot and arson in Batam city. This hoax resulted in the decreased number of tourists from Singapore. Another incident occurred in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, when the masses attacked a number of Buddhist shrines in Tanjung Balai on 29 July 2016, after being provoked by hoaxes in the social media. Furthermore, there are many other hoaxes developments in the social media which resulted in conflicts and mass riots.

The spread of hoaxes in the form of text, video, blog, photo, a status update on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn etc. through online conversations is a bad example of message dissemination which disregards social diversity. From the aspect of media literacy, the hoaxes spread show the lack of public knowledge on the threat hoaxes poses to the national plurality. As a worrisome development amidst competition between groups of interest, the social media is used to disseminate hoaxes to build public trust. Surely, there is a violation of the message delivery ethics which prioritizes destructive messages and the lack of empathy towards people outside their group.

This is despite the fact that in the message distribution ethics, an aspect to be accounted for is the production of an accurate, balanced and good-willed news. One of the guides to disseminating message which can be used as a reference is the Indonesian Journalism Ethics Code. This guide is mainly for mainstream mass media journalists, but should also be understood by the social media users to avoid hoaxes, false accusations, sadistic and pornographic contents. (Press Council - Dewan Pers, May 12, 2017).

It's truly ironic that amidst the scientific and technological progress, the conventional media is facing tough difficulties. The hoax phenomenon has garnered world attention, it's not only exclusively in Indonesia. "There have been many members of the society victimized by hoaxes across the internet. It could very well be that a news perceived as factual is actually a hoax". (Prasetya, 2017:xvii). Therefore, it's only reasonable that recommendations of anti-hoax literature should be included in the national curriculum. It's important to defend the society as early as possible against the flood of hoaxes on the social media. (Kompas, 2017, May 2). The recommendation would be beneficial if carried out wholeheartedly. The question remains on whether the political elites and groups of interest will stop making use of the differences of values, behavior, and faith as a means to gain support. It is undeniable that the power players and their network have tried to take control of various government bureaucracies in Indonesia. This has the potentials of annulling anti-hoax education with the purpose of building an informed society within the framework of plurality.

From the socio-cultural perspective, the Indonesian society has a multi-active cultural character. Multi-active character includes the love of social life and performing various tasks in a single time frame. (West dan Turner, 2013). When communicating, there is a curious tendency of wanting to absorb an open or private information which should not be disseminated in a public forum. As a message recipient, the society often ignores accuracy and validity of information obtained. (Susanto, 2013). Sahidah is of the following opinion, 'hoax tends to be bad news. The general public is expected not to disseminate hoaxes at will. However, in reality, without thorough observation, some people instead enjoy the hoaxes for fulfilling their negative expectations of an individual or institution victimized by the hoax'. (Tempo Magazine 2017, April 2).

Basically, in a competitive situation, people often choose to ignore the accuracy of messages on the social media. They do not care if the hoax causes hatred, pluralism, communalism, ethnocentrism, sub-nationalism and any integralist ideas which disfavor plurality. Hoaxes indeed dominate the social media. Based on the "Kompas" Poll, the dominant content of information/news on the social media at the moment is as follows:

44.7% are hoaxes, 26.5% are accurate and 20.7% are inaccurate, whereas respondents who answered that they do not know/did not answer are 8.1%. (Kompas, 2017, May 15).

Attempts to produce hoaxes continue to increase due to its easy process. Various **informations** to complete the lies may be obtained from the internet ‘big data’ with engineering and editing without any meaningful difficulties. With the smartphone, users can obtain data in the form of text, photograph, video, audio, map and other formats (Kompas, 2017 May 4). The abundance of information on the social media has negative content and makes the plural life in Indonesia prone to conflicts between groups. “Therefore, the social media is not only a rapid but always a positive source of information. Inaccuracy must be considered as a critique against the weakness”. (Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley, 2012 : 11).

The hoaxes which colored the social media, do not take into account the Republic of Indonesia provisions of the Law, number 11 of 2008 regarding Electronic Transactions and information. The law regulates the actions that are banned in the use of electronic data. For example, distribution of information containing insults, discreditation, hoaxes or inciting hatred or hostility based on ethnicity, religion, race and social class. Furthermore, Law number 14 of 2008 regarding Public Information Transparency has also been violated. There’s a ban on dissemination of information which **endangers** safety and security as well as other actions which disadvantage the state and the society as individuals or groups.

### **Hoax as a Threat to **the** Indonesian Plurality**

The threat of plurality in Indonesia increased along with the social media disseminating hoaxes. This is, despite the fact that plurality must be maintained since it has become the character of development from a traditional to a modern, more prosperous society. Hoaxes in a plural society contain prejudice and lack the empathy towards other groups with a different perception, value, behavior, and faith. As a result, there’s an avoidance behavior against disliked groups. Discriminatory acts which

marginalize certain groups for being different. Antilocution which discusses the negative side of another party. Violent physical assault in an emotional state. The most worrisome is extermination as an individual or mass-driven act of eliminating a disfavored group. (Samovar, Porter & Jain, 1981).

The prevalence of hoaxes on the social media is a real example of the complexity of information contained on its negative side. It is of course not aligned with the principle of freedom to communicate and the media as a characteristic of a democratic government, even though the 1998 political reform has the purpose of creating informed democratization for the state and nation.

Various institutions or groups have stated that they are against any hoax which threatens the plurality. A formal institution against hoaxes has been established by the name of Jaringan Wartawan Anti Hoax or JAWAH (Anti-Hoax Journalist Network). It must be reiterated that false information has become a national concern. The spread of hoaxes on the social media has caused anxiety and divisiveness among the society. Therefore, all stakeholders and the press community must come together in the face of hoaxes. They must refresh the public space with factual, refreshing and hopeful information and news. All stakeholders must be expected to restore ethics and morality as a basis for communicating with the media (JAWAH, 2017).

Anti-hoax news network was launched by the Vice President of Republic of Indonesia Jusuf Kalla on 28 April 2017 in order to prevent the increasing number of hoaxes dividing the plural society. There are around three hundred ethnicities or groups of specific sociocultural identities associated with values, attitude, and beliefs in their daily lives.

When handling hoaxes, priorities must be given to the national and local public interests, namely those with public anxiety-inducing content. The result of hoax verification is formulated in a redaction in accordance with the professional standards for

journalism. With the support of the anti-hoax institutions, groups, and individuals, the society is expected to cohabitate peacefully.

However, it's never easy to instill an attitude of anti-hoax, because it may potentially hamper communication and interactions between different groups. It's so easy these days to find a social media, which reveals ethnocentric, the lack of trust, prejudice, stereotype, lack of empathy and personal withdrawal from a disliked group, and the gap of power which challenges communication between different groups or cultures (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2005). Such attitude and behavior may potentially disrupt the pluralism of a country. This conclusion is supported by the result of a survey by Masyarakat Telekomunikasi in February 2017. The types of hoaxes received by the social media users are as follows: Socio-political news regarding local leader and government election: 91.8%, news on differences of ethnicity, religion, race and social class: 88.6%, health hoaxes: 41.2%. While other hoaxes comprise less than 30% of all hoaxes. (Kompas, 2017, May 15).

In the face of hoaxes, social media users show different types of actions. According to Max Weber, there are 4 (four) social behaviors as follows: (1) Instrumental Rational Action (Zweck Rational): rational people judge and ponder on an action that can be taken to achieve a certain purpose. (2) Value Rational Action (Wert Rational): an ideal action which presides over all others and take nothing into consideration. This social action prioritizes social and religious values. (3) Affectual Action: a social action dominated by feelings or emotion without any intellectual reflection or conscientious planning. (4) Traditional Action: an action which includes good behavior threshold under the influence of tradition and customs. (Giddens, 1986).

Essentially, hoaxes in the media, which disseminate hatred against different groups may prove divisive against diversity. However, social media users vary in their behavior against hoaxes, as described in the following table.

Types of Social Actions, Behavior, and Interests

No	Type of Social Actions	Attitude towards Hoax	Interest
1	Zwerk Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing and forwarding hoaxes to the people.</li> <li>• Clarifying hoaxes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking and obtaining group support</li> <li>• Providing an understanding in order to obtain public support</li> </ul>
2	Werk Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejecting hoaxes by not publishing them.</li> <li>• Creating a true, factual message for publications</li> </ul>	Providing accurate information to the public or different society groups.
3	Affectual Action	Forwarding messages without taking into account its accuracy	Providing emotional support to its group
4	Traditional Action	Forwarding or stopping hoaxes is also made possible by the behavior of a venerated traditional figure	Supporting its group

Source: Result of Qualitative Data Processing

The actions taken by social media users against hoaxes vary greatly. They are not necessarily associated with the person's social, economic and political status. Neither are they connected with one's position as a government elite official, politician, non-government organization nor the public in general. When receiving a hoax, a social media user may take either a positive or a negative action which has an impact on the Indonesian pluralism.

However, the issue stands that hoaxes which spread prejudice and hatred and highlight social differences are much more prevalent, therefore resulting in a larger threat against pluralism. This condition is made worse by the hoax tellers' hiding behind the idea of freedom of press and communication as ensured by the state. In other words, they do not feel guilty for interpreting an issue in an integralist manner for the sake of an individual or a specific group's interest.

### **Strategy and Pattern of Communication Against Hoax Domination**

In a plural society with differences in perception, value, behavior, and beliefs, communication often has the potential of hampering a harmonious relationship, especially when it's ridden with false news containing negative messages about the attitude, behavior, and characteristics of a different group. Essentially, hoaxes which trigger the conflict are simple issues regarding the differences in daily behavior up to the crucial issue of differences in values and beliefs of a certain individual or group.

There have been many attempts to counter hoaxes by the public or organized groups who care about the ethics of news publication according to freedom to communicate. Fanpage Indonesian Hoaxes Community. The Facebook social network has tens of thousands of users who can make inquiries and clarify various information and news. (Facebook, 2017, May). On the Turnback Hoax.id domain managed by Masyarakat Indonesia Anti Hoax (Anti-Hoax Indonesian Society), collecting various false information and accusations for public reference database to verify various types of information. (<https://www.turnbackhoax.id/>).

Gudanghoax.com was established by information technology activists on 31 October 2016. It has since become a public reference for issues, rumors, gossips and hoax news. The latest data released by the daring Turnbackhoax.id page on 1 January 2017 up to 2 February 2017 shows that 1,656 complaints have been received on hoaxes, false accusations for 47,132 times by 13,915 internet users (Kupang.Tribune, 2017, May 14)



The availability of a source of information which disseminates a good and factual message is expected to minimize the domination of hoaxes spread by irresponsible parties. Within the frame of communication democracy, the freedom to seek, obtain and use information is a basic public right protected by the constitution. It must, therefore, be carried out properly to give the maximum benefits in the attempt to maintain the Indonesian pluralism and tolerance. By disseminating factual news on the social media, the people will feel safe and will be able to relate to different groups. On a national scale, pluralism becomes an enjoyable fact and a drive towards welfare.

In reality, social media as a new media supported by the communication technology has many benefits to support the actualization of a just, plural society. Social media can also build a high-quality interactive communication between different groups to create a harmonious relationship and receive constructive public opinion to preserve national plurality.

Attempts to maintain the communication quality: (1) *Openness* is the willingness to respond to a positive information. (2) *Empathy*, which involves putting one's self in another person's shoes. (3) *Supportiveness*, which is creating a supportive environment through good communication (4) *Positiveness*, which is creating the positive feeling of encouraging others to participate constructively. (5) *Equality*, by appreciating people who are involved in communication for the sake of equality. (Devito, 1988).

Based on such opinion, substantially the ideal communication to maintain pluralism must prioritize equality, interactivity, and transparency without prejudice. Communication pattern which is not interactive, unidirectional/linear and full of partial messages will instead create communication gap within the society. (Susanto, 2016). From the perspective of communication between groups, the state officials, political elites, and public figures must carry out communication between different groups. Including: knowing yourself, using similar language, taking the time to reduce emotion, calculating setting when communicating, growing feedback, developing empathy and

focusing on the common aspects of different cultures and ethical responsibilities in communicating. (Samovar and Porter, 1988).

If the communication between different groups is carried out by all stakeholders by taking into account the aforementioned factors, an effective communication to maintain pluralism may be achieved. Message sender on the social media has obtained the desired response. On the other hand, the message recipient feels comfortable to obtain information which does not disrupt the community's values, behavior, and beliefs.

Message delivery on social media must be carried out with good intentions, empathic and in a language easily comprehensible by our plural society. The message must be delivered under an ethical responsibility to create an integrative communication to obtain feedback which supports the needs for peaceful cohabitation. In terms of equality, an ideal communication between different groups would establish a common understanding without institutionalized prejudice.

## Closing

Hoaxes dominate the social media content with flexibility in delivering messages to the general public. The social media has developed along with the increase in the use of communication technology on all layers of the society, not limited by the sociocultural, economic and political factors. On the other hand, the conventional mass media as a source of information which spreads the news through factual verification is increasingly marginalized. In the face of hoax influence on the social media, the users should understand the ethics of information dissemination according to the applicable laws. Furthermore, conventional mass media must be able to compete by upgrading its speed and flexibility of message delivery and at the same time maintain a proper news publication method.

Hoaxes in the social media contain hatred against groups of different values, behavior, and beliefs, having no regard for any threat against national pluralism, despite the fact that the developing freedom to communicate wishes to achieve communication

democratization. Based on the civilized dissemination of information to maintain tolerance in the Indonesian pluralism. However, it turns out that social media users feel no remorse for spreading the hoax. They constantly take cover in the freedom to communicate in terms of seeking, obtaining and using information. Social media users and organs within the government should not be carried away with publications of hoaxes. However, factual clarifications against hoaxes which threaten national pluralism.

Strategy and pattern of communication against hoaxes are not yet carried out optimally. Various groups of society and the government may even be caught in the dissemination of information on the social media which may have a negative impact on pluralism. This condition is made possible by the lies packaged in differences of values, behavior, and beliefs on the social media which are used to obtain support in the competition between groups of specific interests, despite the fact that all stakeholders must assume responsibility over communication to maintain national pluralism. The communication strategy and pattern is used to prevent conflicts based on differences of value, behavior, and beliefs of individuals and groups within the society or the government; with the hopes of establishing effective communication on the social media to avoid prejudice and other negative actions which potentially divide the plural society.

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# Social Media, Hoax, and Threats against Diversity in Indonesia

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## Abstract

~~The issue of social media spreading hoax news is increasingly worrisome in the diverse society life in Indonesia. Issues of social media spreading hoax news are increasingly worrisome in the diverse society life in Indonesia.~~ Various conflicts have been triggered by hoax news filled with prejudice, hatred and negative information on another. ~~The prevalence of hoaxes has increased in alignment with political democracy in Indonesia. Prevalence of hoaxes has increased in alignment with political democracy in Indonesia.~~ For reasons of freedom of communication being the rights of the people, messages are often interpreted unilaterally to serve a given interest. ~~The purpose of this research is to obtain an overview of hoax which threatens the diversity as well as the effective strategy and communication pattern to counter it. Purpose of this research is to obtain an overview of the hoax which threatens the diversity as well as the effective strategy and communication pattern to counter it.~~ This research makes use of qualitative method to obtain a hollistic view of hoaxes on social media which threatens the national diversity. ~~This research makes use of the qualitative method to obtain a hollistic view of hoaxes on social media which threatens the national diversity. The research found that hoaxes dominate the social media information traffic and is a threat against national diversity which is perceived differently by the social media users and the society. Research found that hoaxes dominate the social media information traffic and are a threat to the national diversity which is perceived differently by the social media users and the society.~~ Another finding is the dire need for a strategy and communication pattern to counter hoaxes which divide the nation.

**Keywords:** Hoax; freedom to communicate; social media; effective communication; plural society

## Introduction

At the dawn of the political reform era in 1998, Indonesia started to enjoy communication democracy on the mass media and other means used to disseminate

information. ~~There was no censure nor restriction on journalism and dissemination information to the public. There was no censure nor restriction on journalism and dissemination of information to the public.~~ Conventional mass media or mainstream media becomes a source of information with exciting content which upholds state power in its development tasks. Mass media moved progressively to become the source of public reference. ~~The information dissemination model is not a form of submission towards the regime, instead providing factual information on the state of the society. The information dissemination model is not a form of submission towards the regime, rather, it provides factual information on the state of the society.~~ Amidst the struggle for freedom to communicate, there's a high expectation towards the mainstream mass media as one of the foundations of democracy and national diversity.

However, all the leverages that the mainstream mass media had to support political democracy seem to have lost its meaning. The overflow of information and mainstream mass media journalism could not satisfy the public needs. Even in terms of media ownership bureaucracy, the people saw mainstream media journalism, including the digital online news portal of ~~conventional~~ conventional media, to be no longer objective and exists to serve the interests of certain groups. As a result, the level of public trust continues to deteriorate. The people, segmented by their social, economic, political and psycho-demographic status, revert to social media, which is deemed able to fulfill their needs for information.

The attempts to seek news from alternative sources with the support of communication technology continued to increase. ~~Several regulations which support communication freedom were issued to encourage people to seek, Several regulations which support communication freedom was issued to encourage people to seek, obtain and use information according to needs. obtain and use information according to the needs.~~ 1945 Constitution of Republic of Indonesia Article 28F states that “every person is entitled to communicate and obtain information to develop themselves and their social

environment, and to seek, obtain, own, store, process and deliver information through various available outlets”.

With the support of regulations on freedom of information and communication technology, the attempts to seek and use information through Internet-based social media. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram become very familiar to the people. Based on data from the Internet Service Provider Association, the number of Internet users in Indonesia up to 2016 has reached 132.7 million and 67.8 percent regularly accessed it on their smartphone (Kompas, 2017, May 2).

Social media is used without time, geographic, sociocultural and other psychographic constraints. The hindrances are usually related to the use of technology. As a new popular media, the social media has advantages in its flexibility. “It offers digitization, convergence, interaction and network development in creating and delivering messages”. (Flew, 2002: 11-22). The ability to build interactive network has enabled social media users to have the necessary choices of information and control it to their heart’s content. “The delivery speed and interactivity are advantages of a new rapidly developing media”. (Karjaluoto, 2008: 2).

The fast and wide message delivery coverage is undeniable. Despite the fact that the weight of disseminated information cannot be accounted for. ~~Speed of message delivery without verification according to facts turns it into a hoax with adverse effects on the Indonesian plurality.~~ The speed of message delivery without verification according to facts turns it into a hoax with adverse effects on the Indonesian plurality. In this digital era, social media’s status as a means to disseminate information cannot be ignored. Furthermore, social media’s work system does not implement effective filters for verification of news, which soon became fertile grounds for hoaxes.

Based on such description, ~~the subject of this research is the impact of hoaxes on social media being the negative side to freedom to communicate,~~ the subject of this research is the impact of hoaxes on social media being the negative side of freedom to

communicate, hoaxes as a threat to national plurality and the communication strategy required to counter hoaxes. ~~The purpose of this research is to identify and describe in comprehensive manner the impact of hoaxes on social media which threatens the social plurality and communication strategy to be used for countering hoaxes in a plural society.~~ The purpose of this research is to identify and describe in a comprehensive manner the impact of hoaxes on social media which threatens the social plurality and communication strategy to be used for countering hoaxes in a plural society.

Research on social media has been carried out by Anna Sophie Kümpel, Veronika Karnowski, and Till Keyling (2014). ~~With the topic of relationship between users, content and network of reporters.~~ With the topic of the relationship between users, content, and network of reporters. It was reiterated that social media is very accessible for sharing information and journalism interests. Social media also provides individuals and organizations the ease of posting various contents for publications. Another finding by Gadi Wolfsfeld, Elad Segev, and Tamir Sheafer amidst the Arab Spring movement (2013) ~~stated that social media was used for collective actions and demonstration in the Arabic countries, widely referred to as Arab Spring.~~ stated that social media were used for collective actions and its demonstration in the Arabic countries is widely referred to as Arab Spring. The role of social media in a collective action is deeply associated with the political nuance. ~~Significant increase in the use of social media is more prominent during protests.~~ A significant increase in the use of social media is more prominent during protests.

## **Literature Review**

Various **literature** are used to support discussion of the examined issues. They include concepts and theories related to social media hoaxes in terms of communication democratization, social media as a new flexible media and effective communication strategy in a plural society. This exposure is expected to support comprehensive discussion. As such, the result of research is not only based on information from the

document, rather related to the theoretical reference in accordance with the subject of research.

### **Hoaxes and Freedom to Communicate**

“A hoax is a falsified information meant to mislead the readers”. (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017: 213). ~~The purpose of hoax is to distort the truth or mix facts with fiction in order to mislead the message recipient for personal gains.~~ The purpose of the hoax is to distort the truth or mix facts with fiction in order to mislead the message recipient for personal gains. Hoaxes may lead to fear, confusion and unnecessary widespread panic. However, sometimes this condition is preferable to the message recipients. Hoaxes increase along with the freedom to communicate as one of the ~~democraetic~~ democratic foundations of a state.

~~Freedom to communicate is often associated with freedom of press as the constitutional rights or legal protection of media and publication materials without government intervention or censure.~~ Freedom to communicate is often associated with freedom of the press as the constitutional rights or legal protection of media and publication materials without government intervention or censure. “Free media role is one of the characteristics of a democratic government“. (Urofsky, 2001:2). ~~In Law number 40/1999 regarding Press, each citizen is guaranteed the basic rights of freedom of press.~~ In Law number 40/1999 regarding Press, each citizen is guaranteed the basic rights of freedom of the press. ~~Press must not be censured, banned or restricted. The third section even states that in order to ensure the freedom of press, the national press is entitled to seek, obtain and disseminate ideas and information.~~ The press must not be censured, banned or restricted. The third section even states that in order to ensure the freedom of the press, the national press is entitled to seek, obtain and disseminate ideas and information. The fourth section states that journalists are entitled to not prove its public liability.

### **Flexibility of Social Media**

“Social media is a communication network by text, video, blog, photo and status update on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn etc. in the form of accessible online conservation”. (Alejandro, 2010:1). Meanwhile, Schottmuller states that social media as a communication channel or a tool used to store, accumulate, share, discuss or deliver information in an online community. (<https://www.marketingprofsu.com/>).

“Social media makes use of mobile and web technology to create an interactive platform where individuals and communities share, create, discuss and modify user contents”. (Kietzmann, et.al. 2014:241). Interactivity is highly sought after by the user since communication would run smoothly and the relevant parties would be able to build a meaning in an object.

### **Effective Communication and Plural Community**

According to Goyer, “effective communication is possible if the response provided by the message recipient is identical”. (Tubb and Moss, 20114:22). In a plural society, effective message delivery is possible through communication between cultures or between groups with different values, attitudes, and faiths. Communication strategy in social plurality includes: understanding one’s self, using the same language in communication and interaction, taking time, calculating setting, improving communication skills, growing feedback, developing empathy, paying attention to similarities and ethical responsibility. (Samovar, Porter and Jain, 1981).

“A plural society is established from various existing ethnic communities which were directly or indirectly forced to unite under the regime of a national system” (Suparlan, 2001:2). Emilie Durkheim stated that “the increase in social plurality became the characteristics of the process of developing the society from traditional into modern”. (Giddens, 1986:92). Modernity saw history as a river flowing towards the sea of human freedom, a movement towards a better life. (Mohamad, 2016).

The image of plurality in Indonesia can be seen from the three hundred ethnicities or ethnic groups and approximately two hundred fifty local dialects. Each ethnicity has its own cultural identity and often its own language. The differences in ethnicity are related

to the different values, attitude, and faith in their daily lives. (Geertz, 1981:1). Jean Martin believes that social plurality is the best option for any society, group or individual. “Social plurality, heterogeneity and diversity are the most relevant path to a just and prosperous society”. (Susanto, 2016:5).

## Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach to obtain the comprehensive picture of the research topic. The qualitative research can interpret an issue based on text or writing printed in the documents. The document recording is carried out to test information in a kind of texts, writings or symbols as analysis materials for specific matters that support the research. (Neuman, 2000: 34).

Information tested in the research is news reporting from online media, ~~print media and other sources reporting conflicts for fake news.~~ print media and other sources reporting conflicts of fake news. Therefore, it does not analyze information with the content of fake news. The news reporting is not restricted to the time of accidents but related to Indonesia's condition directly or indirectly.

The data of the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Communication and Informatics, there are 800,000 websites in Indonesia having been identified as the spreaders of fake information (<https://kominfo.go.id>). In January 2017, there were 5,070 public complaints on the content of fake news concerning Jakarta Regional Head Election (<http://cnnindonesia.com>).

Total news reporting in print and online media are not used as the standards of adequacy to analyze the data. The main cause to support the research analysis is the news reporting that becomes public opinion and describes the fake news threatening the diversity of Indonesian society.

~~Furthermore, data on the diversity, threat will be interpreted comprehensively.~~ Furthermore, data on the diversity and threat will be interpreted comprehensively. These have to relate to other facts that occur in the analysis process. ~~It is in line with the basis of qualitative research that applies interpretative method and involves many methods in~~



~~analyzing the research problems (Mulyana, 2008:5). It is in line with the basis of qualitative research that applies the interpretative method and involves many methods in analyzing the research problems (Mulyana, 2008:5). Moreover, the qualitative research also bases on the social context to understand the existing social world (Neuman, 2000:157-158). Moreover, the qualitative research is also based on the social context to understand the existing social world (Neuman, 2000:157-158). All the studied and collected data of the subject come from empiric data and case study. All the studied and collected data on the subject came from an empirical data and case study, personal experience, introspection, the journey of life, interviews, text of observation results, interactional history and visual data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2009:2). Finally, the subject and empirical evidence in the research will be focused on texts or writing on online and printing media in related to the experiences of individuals, groups or society in relation to fake news threatening the diversity. Finally, the subject and empirical evidence in the research will be focused on texts or writing in online and printing media relating to the experiences of individuals, groups or society in relation to fake news threatening the diversity.~~

The technique of data analysis uses three ways of activities: the data reduction, data presentation, and drawing **conclusions** (Miles & Huberman, 1992:16-19). Data and information from print and online are collected on the basis of categories and the interest of analysis. Moreover, the unrequired data will be separated or wasted away. ~~Moreover, the comprehensive analysis on the good data will be presented and drawn the conclusion. Moreover, the comprehensive analysis of the good data will be presented and drawn the conclusion.~~

## **Result of Research and Discussion**

~~Result of research is reviewed in three sub discussions, according to the purpose of research. The research result is reviewed in three sub-discussions, according to the purpose of the research.~~ The first is the scale of influence of hoaxes on social media in

the state of freedom to communicate. The second discussion focuses on the hoaxes disseminated by social media as a threat to plurality. ~~The third discussion, on the other hand, is associated with communication strategy against hoaxes on social media which divides Indonesian plurality.~~ The third discussion, on the other hand, is associated with communication strategy against the hoaxes on social media which divides the Indonesian plurality.

### **Influence of Hoaxes on the Social Media: Negative Side ~~to~~ of Freedom to Communicate.**

The spread of hoaxes on the social media by individuals, groups or various entities in the society must be stopped. The development of hoaxes as a deliberately misleading information to the readers is very dangerous to a diverse, plural society. According to Macnamara, “the number of people who consume news on social media has increased significantly over the years compared to those who rely on mainstream media”. (Macnamara, 2014:6). ~~Dissemination of information and hoaxes with the potentials of dividing the plurality of Indonesian society.~~ The dissemination of information and hoaxes with the potentials of dividing the plurality of the Indonesian society. A number of cases caused by hoax have been reported by Kompas Newspaper (2017, May 4<sup>th</sup>). In Indramayu, West Java, the people of Ilir, Parean Girang and Bulak villages attacked the Curug village in Kandanghaur district (January 10, 2017). The incident was sparked by a Facebook post saying that Ato, an Ilir villager, died after being ganged by Curug villagers. Ato instead died from a single accident. In Jakarta, there was a rally to withdraw funds from the bank en masse due to rumors of a would-be riot on 25 November 2016.

~~In Batam, Riau Islands, a fake photograph was circulating with rumors that there's been a riot and arsony in Batam city.~~ In Batam, Riau Islands, a fake photograph was circulating with rumors that there has been a riot and arson in Batam city. This hoax resulted in the decreased number of tourists from Singapore. ~~Another incident occurred in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, when the mass attacked a number of Buddhist shrines in~~

~~Tanjung Balai on 29 July 2016, after having provoked by hoaxes on the social media. Another incident occurred in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, when the masses attacked a number of Buddhist shrines in Tanjung Balai on 29 July 2016, after being provoked by hoaxes in the social media. Furthermore, there are many other hoaxes developing on the social media which brought conflicts and mass riots. Furthermore, there are many other hoaxes developments in the social media which resulted in conflicts and mass riots.~~

The spread of hoaxes in the form of text, video, blog, photo, a status update on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn etc. through online conversations is a bad example of message dissemination which disregards social diversity. ~~From the aspect of media literacy, the spread of hoaxes shows the lack of public knowledge on hoaxes which threaten the national plurality. From the aspect of media literacy, the hoaxes spread shows the lack of public knowledge on the threat hoaxes poses to the national plurality.~~ As a worrisome development amidst competition between groups of interest, the social media is used to disseminate hoaxes to build public trust. ~~There's of course a violation against the ethics of message delivery which prioritizes destructive messages and the lack of empathy towards people outside their group. Surely, there is a violation of the message delivery ethics which prioritizes destructive messages and the lack of empathy towards people outside their group.~~

This is despite the fact that in the message distribution ethics, an aspect to be accounted for is the production of an accurate, balanced and good-willed news. One of the guides to disseminating message which can be used as a reference is the Indonesian Journalism Ethics Code. This guide is mainly for mainstream mass media journalists, but should also be understood by the social media users to avoid hoaxes, false accusations, sadistic and pornographic contents. (Press Council - Dewan Pers, May 12, 2017).

It's truly ironic that amidst the scientific and technological progress, the conventional media is facing tough difficulties. The hoax phenomenon has garnered world attention, it's not only exclusively in Indonesia. "There have been many members of the society victimized by hoaxes across the internet. It could very well be that a news perceived as factual is actually a hoax". (Prasetya, 2017:xvii). ~~Therefore, it's only~~

~~reasonable that recommendations of anti-hoax literature should be included to the national curriculum.~~ Therefore, it's only reasonable that recommendations of anti-hoax literature should be included in the national curriculum. It's important to defend the society as early as possible against the flood of hoaxes on the social media. (Kompas, 2017, May 2). The recommendation would be beneficial if carried out wholeheartedly. ~~The question remains on whether the political elites and groups of interest continue to make use of differences of values, behavior, and faith as a means to gain support.~~ The question remains on whether the political elites and groups of interest will stop making use of the differences of values, behavior, and faith as a means to gain support. It is undeniable that the power players and their network have tried to take control of various government ~~bureauries~~ bureaucracies in Indonesia. This has the potentials of ~~annulling~~ annulling anti-hoax education with the purpose of building an informed society within the framework of plurality.

From the socio-cultural perspective, the Indonesian society has a multi-active cultural character. Multi-active character includes the love of social life and performing various tasks in a single time frame. (West dan Turner, 2013). ~~When communicating, there's a curious tendency of wanting to absorb an open or private information which should not be disseminated in public forum.~~ When communicating, there is a curious tendency of wanting to absorb an open or private information which should not be disseminated in a public forum. As a message recipient, the society often ignores accuracy and validity of information obtained. (Susanto, 2013). Sahidah is of the following opinion, 'hoax tends to be bad news. ~~The general public is expected to not disseminate hoaxes at will.~~ The general public is expected not to disseminate hoaxes at will. However, in reality, without thorough observation, some people instead enjoy the hoaxes for fulfilling their negative expectations of an individual or institution victimized by the hoax'. (Tempo Magazine 2017, April 2).

Basically, in a competitive situation, people often choose to ignore the accuracy of messages on the social media. ~~They don't care if the hoax causes hatred, pluralism, communalism, ethnocentrism, sub-nationalism and any integralist ideas which disfavor~~

plurality. They do not care if the hoax causes hatred, pluralism, communalism, ethnocentrism, sub-nationalism and any integralist ideas which disfavor plurality. Hoaxes indeed dominate the social media. Based on the “Kompas” Poll, the dominant content of information / news on the social media at the moment is as follows: 44.7% are hoaxes, 26.5% are accurate and 20.7% are accurate, whereas respondents who answered that they don’t know / did not answer are 8.1%. (Kompas, 2017, May 15). Hoaxes indeed dominate the social media. Based on the “Kompas” Poll, the dominant content of information/news on the social media at the moment is as follows: 44.7% are hoaxes, 26.5% are accurate and 20.7% are inaccurate, whereas respondents who answered that they do not know/did not answer are 8.1%. (Kompas, 2017, May 15).

Attempts to produce hoaxes continue to increase due to its easy process. Various information to complete the lies may be obtained from the internet ‘big data’ with engineering and editing without any meaningful difficulties. With the smartphone, users can obtain data in the form of text, photograph, video, audio, map and other formats (Kompas, 2017 May 4). The abundance of information on the social media has negative content and makes the plural life in Indonesia prone to conflicts between groups. “Therefore, ~~the social media is not only a rapid and always positive source of information.~~ the social media is not only a rapid but always a positive source of information. Inaccuracy must be considered as a critique against the weakness”. (Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley, 2012 : 11).

~~Hoaxes which color the social media do not take into account the provisions of Law of Republic of Indonesia number 11 of 2008 regarding Electronic Transactions and information.~~ The hoaxes which colored the social media, do not take into account the Republic of Indonesia provisions of the Law, number 11 of 2008 regarding Electronic Transactions and information. It regulates actions banned in the use of electronic data. The law regulates the actions that are banned in the use of electronic data. For example, distribution of information containing insults, discreditation, hoaxes or inciting hatred or hostility based on ethnicity, religion, race and social class. Furthermore, Law number 14 of 2008 regarding Public Information Transparency has also been violated. There’s a ban

on dissemination of information which ~~endangers~~ endangers safety and security as well as other actions which disadvantage the state and the society as individuals or groups.

### **Hoax as a Threat to ~~the~~ Indonesian Plurality**

~~Threat of plurality in Indonesia increased along with the social media disseminating hoaxes. The threat of plurality in Indonesia increased along with the social media disseminating hoaxes. This is despite the fact that plurality must be maintained, since it has become the character for development from a traditional to a modern, more prosperous society. This is, despite the fact that plurality must be maintained since it has become the character of development from a traditional to a modern, more prosperous society. Hoaxes in a plural society contains prejudice and lacks the empathy towards other groups with different perception, value, behavior and faith. Hoaxes in a plural society contain prejudice and lack the empathy towards other groups with a different perception, value, behavior, and faith.~~ As a result, there's an avoidance behavior against disliked groups. Discriminatory acts which marginalize certain groups for being different. Antilocution which discusses the negative side of another party. Violent physical assault in an emotional state. The most worrisome is extermination as an individual or mass-driven act of eliminating a disfavored group. (Samovar, Porter & Jain, 1981).

The prevalence of hoaxes on the social media is a real example of the complexity of information ~~content~~ contained on its negative side. It is of course not aligned with the principle of freedom to communicate and the media as a characteristic of a democratic government, even though the 1998 political reform has the purpose of creating informed democratization for the state and nation.

Various institutions or groups have stated that they are against any hoax which threatens the plurality. A formal institution against hoaxes has been established by the name of Jaringan Wartawan Anti Hoax or JAWAH (Anti-Hoax Journalist Network). It must be reiterated that false information has become a national concern. The spread of

hoaxes on the social media has caused anxiety and divisiveness among the society. Therefore, all stakeholders and the press community must come together in the face of hoaxes. They must refresh the public space with factual, refreshing and hopeful information and news. ~~All stakeholders must be expected to restore ethics and morality as a basis for communicating on the media.~~ All stakeholders must be expected to restore ethics and morality as a basis for communicating with the media (JAWAH, 2017).

Anti-hoax news network was launched by the Vice President of Republic of Indonesia Jusuf Kalla on 28 April 2017 in order to prevent the increasing number of hoaxes dividing the plural society. There are around three hundred ethnicities or groups of specific sociocultural identities associated with values, ~~attitude~~ attitude, and beliefs in their daily lives.

When handling hoaxes, priorities must be given to the national and local public interests, namely those with public anxiety-inducing content. The result of hoax verification is formulated in a redaction in accordance with the professional standards for journalism. ~~With the support from anti hoax institutions, groups and individuals, the society is expected to co-habitate peacefully.~~ With the support of the anti-hoax institutions, groups, and individuals, the society is expected to cohabitate peacefully.

However, it's never easy to instill an attitude of anti-hoax, because it may potentially hamper communication and interactions between different groups. It's so easy these days to find a social media, which reveals ethnocentric, the lack of trust, prejudice, stereotype, lack of empathy and personal withdrawal from a disliked group, and the gap of power which challenges communication between different groups or cultures (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2005). Such attitude and behavior may potentially disrupt the pluralism of a country. This conclusion is supported by the result of a survey by Masyarakat Telekomunikasi in February 2017. The types of hoaxes received by the social media users are as follows: Socio-political news regarding local leader and government election: 91.8%, news on differences of ethnicity, religion, race and social class: 88.6%, health hoaxes: 41.2%. ~~Other hoaxes which comprise of less than 30% of all~~

~~hoaxes.~~ While other hoaxes comprise less than 30% of all hoaxes. (Kompas, 2017, May 15).

In the face of hoaxes, social media users show different types of actions. According to Max Weber, there are 4 (four) social behaviors as follows: (1) Instrumental Rationale Action (Zwerk Rational): rational people judge and ponder on an action that can be taken to achieve a certain purpose. (2) Value Rational Action (Werk Rational): an ideal action which ~~precedes~~ presides over all others and take nothing into consideration. This social action prioritizes social and religious values. (3) Affectual Action: a social action dominated by feelings or emotion without any intellectual reflection or conscientious planning. (4) Traditional Action: an action which includes good behavior threshold under the influence of tradition and customs. (Giddens, 1986).

~~Essentially, hoaxes on the media which disseminate hatred against different groups may prove divisive against diversity.~~ Essentially, hoaxes in the media, which disseminate hatred against different groups may prove divisive against diversity. However, social media users vary in their behavior against hoaxes, as described in the following table.

Types of Social Actions, Behavior, and Interests

No	Type of Social Actions	Attitude towards Hoax	Interest
1	Zwerk Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observing and forwarding hoaxes to the people.</li> <li>Clarifying hoaxes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking and obtaining group support</li> <li>Providing an understanding in order to obtain public support</li> </ul>
2	Werk Rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rejecting hoaxes by not publishing them.</li> </ul>	Providing accurate information to the public



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a true, factual message for publications</li> </ul>	or different society groups.
3	Affectual Action	Forwarding messages without taking into account its accuracy	Providing emotional support to its group
4	Traditional Action	Forwarding or stopping hoaxes is also made possible by the behavior of a venerated traditional figure	Supporting its group

Source: Result of Qualitative Data Processing

The actions taken by social media users against hoaxes vary greatly. They are not necessarily associated with the person's social, economic and political status. Neither are they connected with one's position as a government elite official, politician, non-government organization nor the public in general. When receiving a hoax, a social media user may take either a positive or a negative action which has an impact on the Indonesian pluralism.

However, the issue stands that hoaxes which spread prejudice and hatred and highlight social differences are much more prevalent, ~~therefore resulting in larger threat against pluralism.~~ therefore resulting in a larger threat against pluralism. This condition is made worse by the hoax tellers' hiding behind the idea of freedom of press and communication as ensured by the state. ~~In other words, they don't feel guilty for interpreting an issue in integralist manner for the sake of an individual or a specific group's interest.~~ In other words, they do not feel guilty for interpreting an issue in an integralist manner for the sake of an individual or a specific group's interest.

### Strategy and Pattern of Communication Against Hoax Domination

In a plural society with differences in perception, value, behavior, and beliefs, communication often has the potential of hampering a harmonious relationship, especially when it's ridden with false news containing negative messages about the attitude, behavior, and characteristics of a different group. Essentially, hoaxes which trigger the conflict are simple issues regarding the differences in daily behavior up to the crucial issue of differences in values and beliefs of a certain individual or group.

There have been many attempts to counter hoaxes by the public or organized groups who care about the ethics of news publication according to freedom to communicate. Fanpage Indonesian Hoaxes Community. The Facebook social network has tens of thousands of users who can make inquiries and clarify various information and news. (Facebook, 2017, May). On the Turnback Hoax.id domain managed by Masyarakat Indonesia Anti Hoax (Anti-Hoax Indonesian Society), collecting various false information and accusations for public reference database to verify various types of information. (<https://www.turnbackhoax.id/>).

Gudanghoax.com was established by information technology activists on 31 October 2016. ~~It has since become public reference for issues, rumors, gossips and hoax news.~~ It has since become a public reference for issues, rumors, gossips and hoax news. The latest data released by the daring Turnbackhoax.id page on 1 January 2017 up to 2 February 2017 shows that 1,656 complaints have been received on hoaxes, false accusations for 47,132 times by 13,915 internet users (Kupang.Tribune, 2017, May 14)

~~The availability of source of information which disseminates a good and factual message is expected to minimize the domination of hoaxes spread by irresponsible parties.~~ The availability of a source of information which disseminates a good and factual message is expected to minimize the domination of hoaxes spread by irresponsible parties. Within the frame of communication democracy, the freedom to seek, obtain and use information is a basic public right protected by the constitution. It must, therefore, be carried out properly to give the maximum benefits in the attempt to maintain the Indonesian pluralism and tolerance. ~~By disseminating factual news on the social media,~~

~~the people will feel safe and will be able to relate with different groups. By disseminating factual news on the social media, the people will feel safe and will be able to relate to different groups. At a national scale, pluralism becomes an enjoyable fact and a drive towards welfare. On a national scale, pluralism becomes an enjoyable fact and a drive towards welfare.~~

In reality, social media as a new media supported by the communication technology has many benefits to support the actualization of a just, plural society. Social media can also build a high-quality interactive communication between different groups to create a harmonious relationship and receive constructive public opinion to preserve national plurality.

~~Attempts to maintain communication quality~~ Attempts to maintain the communication quality: (1) *Openness* is the willingness to respond to a positive information. (2) *Empathy*, which involves putting one's self in another person's shoes. (3) *Supportiveness*, which is creating a supportive environment through good communication (4) *Positiveness*, which is creating the positive feeling of encouraging others to participate constructively. (5) *Equality*, by appreciating people who are involved in communication for the sake of equality. (Devito, 1988).

Based on such opinion, substantially the ideal communication to maintain pluralism must prioritize equality, interactivity, and transparency without prejudice. Communication pattern which is not interactive, unidirectional/linear and full of partial messages will instead create communication gap within the society. (Susanto, 2016). From the perspective of communication between groups, the state officials, political elites, and public figures must carry out communication between different groups. Including: knowing yourself, using similar language, taking the time to reduce emotion, calculating setting when communicating, growing feedback, developing empathy and focusing on the common aspects of different cultures and ethical responsibilities in communicating. (Samovar and Porter, 1988).

If the communication between different groups is carried out by all stakeholders by taking into account the aforementioned factors, an effective communication to maintain pluralism may be achieved. Message sender on the social media has obtained the desired response. On the other hand, the message recipient feels comfortable to obtain information which does not disrupt the community's values, behavior, and beliefs.

Message delivery on social media must be carried out with good intentions, empathic and in a language easily comprehensible by our plural society. The message must be delivered under an ethical responsibility to create an integrative communication to obtain feedback which supports the needs for peaceful cohabitation. In terms of equality, an ideal communication between different groups would establish a common understanding without ~~institutionalized~~ institutionalized prejudice.

## Closing

Hoaxes dominate the social media content with flexibility in delivering ~~message~~ messages to the general public. The social media has developed along with the increase in the use of communication technology on all layers of the society, not limited by the sociocultural, economic and political factors. ~~On the other hand, the conventional mass media as a source of information which spreads news through factual verification is increasingly marginalized.~~ On the other hand, the conventional mass media as a source of information which spreads the news through factual verification is increasingly marginalized. In the face of hoax influence on the social media, the users should understand the ethics of information dissemination according to the applicable laws. Furthermore, conventional mass media must be able to compete by upgrading its speed and flexibility of message delivery and at the same time maintain a proper news publication method.

~~Hoaxes on the social media contain hatred against groups of different values, behavior, and beliefs have no regard for any threat against national pluralism, despite the fact that the developing freedom to communicate wants to achieve communication~~

~~democratization. Hoaxes in the social media contain hatred against groups of different values, behavior, and beliefs, having no regard for any threat against national pluralism, despite the fact that the developing freedom to communicate wishes to achieve communication democratization.~~ Based on the civilized dissemination of information to maintain tolerance in the Indonesian pluralism. ~~However, it turns out that social media users feel no remorse for spreading hoax.~~ However, it turns out that social media users feel no remorse for spreading the hoax. They constantly take cover in the freedom to communicate in terms of seeking, obtaining and using information. Social media users and organs within the government should not be carried away with publications of hoaxes. However, factual clarifications against hoaxes which threaten national pluralism.

Strategy and pattern of communication against hoaxes are not yet carried out optimally. ~~Various groups of society and the government may even be caught in the dissemination of information on the social media which may have negative impact on pluralism.~~ Various groups of society and the government may even be caught in the dissemination of information on the social media which may have a negative impact on pluralism. ~~This condition is made possible by the lies packaged in differences of values, behavior and beliefs on the social media are used to obtain support in the competition between groups of specific interests;~~ This condition is made possible by the lies packaged in differences of values, behavior, and beliefs on the social media which are used to obtain support in the competition between groups of specific interests, despite the fact that all stakeholders must assume responsibility over communication to maintain national pluralism. ~~The communication strategy and pattern that can be used to prevent conflicts based on differences of value, behavior and beliefs by individuals and groups within the society or the government. With the hopes of establishing effective communication on the social media to avoid prejudice and other negative actions which potentially divide the plural society.~~ The communication strategy and pattern is used to prevent conflicts based on differences of value, behavior, and beliefs of individuals and groups within the society or the government; with the hopes of establishing effective communication on the social

media to avoid prejudice and other negative actions which potentially divide the plural society.

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