SOCIAL MEDIA, MUSLIM COMMUNITY, AND THE PANDEMIC
Context-Oriented Approaches to Misinformation and Disinformation in Indonesia and Malaysia

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Abstract: This study focuses on misinformation and disinformation (MDI) in social media in Indonesia and Malaysia during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study argues that empirical inquiries into such general categories of contexts reveal the specificity of each of them *in situ*, e.g. complex landscapes of emotions in Indonesia and Malaysia as described by Heider, or the normative news clusters observed by Goal et al. in Indonesian and Malaysian online news media. The conclusion is that both content- and context-oriented strategies to counter MDI should consider the fragmentation of audiences in Indonesia and Malaysia and their heterogeneous emotional and normative landscapes. A hybrid, combined approach including both social media content and social networks outside of social media, but relevant for the emotional and normative context of social media users, e.g. trusted religious communities, seems to be a promising strategy to counter MDI.

Keywords: Social media, misinformation, disinformation, Covid-19.

Introduction

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the ideological polarization on Indonesian and Malaysian social media reportedly strongly increased, enhancing the challenge to the moderate mainstream of society, including in the religious field.[1] Fact-checking websites in Indonesia

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[1] W. Akmaliah, "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10, 1 (2020): pp. 1-24; CH Karjo and A. Ng, "Hate Speech Propaganda from and against

and Malaysia such as *Hoax Buster* (Indonesia) and *Sebenarnya.my* (Malaysia) are reporting about and are reacting to high numbers of misinformation and disinformation (MDI) in social media, by correcting the fake news of the day.[2] Both websites were established by government agencies in the two countries and are being used as part of their communication strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic, complementing other ways of communicating with the public, such as the use of *Twitter* by Indonesia's President Jokowi during the Covid-19 pandemic.[3]

It is important to realize that especially disinformation is often being produced by someone with a particular intent or interest such as a foreign political power, commercial interest, a domestic political or social organization, or private hate. Seen from a national perspective, disinformation during the Covid-19 pandemic is not only dangerous for individual health, especially for economically weaker parts of society, but also for social and political cohesion, economic recovery after the pandemic, and indirectly also for a country's economic and political position in the world. This context explains why disinformation content is regarded as a problem for various major players, and therefore, the Indonesian government entertains a special website to counter fake news around the Covid-19 pandemic, namely Hoax Buster,[4] including international organizations such as UNESCO, ASEAN, the EU etc. and also state actors, e.g. the Cyber Defense Agencies of Indonesia (BSSN, *Badan Siber dan Sandi Negara*)[5] and Malaysia (NACSA; *Agensi Keselamatan Siber Negara*),[6] the Ministries of

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Muslims in Facebook Posts," *International Journal of Cyber Criminology* 14, 2 (2020): pp. 400-416; or K. Kastolani, "Understanding the Delivery of Islamophobic Hate Speech via Social Media in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10, 2 (2021): pp. 247-270.

[2] For an overview on misinformation related to the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, Narila Mutia Nasir, Baequni, & Mochamad Iqbal Nurmansyah, "Kesalahan Informasi COVID-19 di Indonesia", *Jurnal Administrasi Kesehatan Indonesia* 8, 1 (2020): pp. 51-59.

[3] K. Prayoga, "How Jokowi Communicates with the Public During Covid-19 Crisis: An Analysis of Tweets on Twitter," *Jurnal Komunikasi – Malaysian Journal of Communication* 36, 2 (2020): pp. 434-456.

[4] https://covid19.go.id/p/hoax-buster, accessed 2 March 2022.

[5] https://honeynet.ui.ac.id/badan-siber-dan-sandi-negara-bssn/, accessed 2 March 2022.

[6] https://www.nacsa.gov.my/, accessed 2 March 2022. Both agencies were established in 2017. It can be assumed that also other agencies of the national defense and

Interior Affairs, state universities and state-linked think tanks, such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta.[7]

Similarly, the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) entertain the website *sebenarnya.my*, correcting daily fake news. This portal was launched by the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia and the MCMC on 14th March 2017. According to the Minister-in-charge at that time, Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak, the government has taken the initiative to develop *Sebenarnya.my* to ensure only genuine news and information to reach the Malaysian public. News – whether online or print will be collected, analysed and confirmed and published on the portal for public information. False news which went viral online will also be treated similarly. In the process of analysing and confirming particular news, the MCMC has collaborated with relevant ministries in-charge. This should ensure that news genuinely came from the right authority.[8] MCMC also imposed liability on moderators of *Whatsapp* Groups and other social media groups.[9]

This article departs from a comparative view of these two fact-checking websites, by categorizing them as "content-oriented". A recent theoretical contribution from the field of philosophy of digital environments suggests that such content-oriented approaches can only have limited success due to the basic design of social media. Principally, social media are attractive to users for their strong emotional and normative appeal. The epistemic context is often rather weak. As Indonesian and Malaysian Studies are observing highly

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intelligence communities in Indonesia and Malaysia are active in this context. However, their actions are usually not visible for the public and hence will not be discussed further here.

[7] https://www.csis.or.id/x, accessed 2 March 2022. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, MDI on social media has been the topic of numerous publications in Southeast Asian Studies, often in a comparative perspective. Cf. Emy Ruth de Quiros Gianan, "Disinformation Trends in Southeast Asia: Comparative Case Studies on Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, 1 (2020): pp. 1-27.

[8] Mahyuddin Daud and Sonny Zulhuda, "Regulating the Spread of False Content Online in Malaysia: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward," *International Journal of Business and Society* 21, (2020): pp. 32-48.

[9] Moonyati Mohd. Yatid, "Truth Tampering Through Social Media: Malaysia's Approach in Fighting Disinformation & Misinformation," *The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, 2 (2019): pp. 203-230; Zulhuda, "Regulating the Spread of False Content Online in Malaysia," p. 39.

heterogeneous "landscapes of emotions", in the second part of this article that the cleavages and fragmentations of Indonesian and Malaysian culture(s) need to be considered in order to develop effective approaches of counter-acting misinformation and disinformation (MDI) in social media in both countries. In this regard, offline social networks, agencies, and institutions could also play an important role, especially if they play an important role in emotional and normative regards, such as Islamic social mass organizations as part of civil society.

Context-Oriented Approaches to MDI in Indonesia and Malaysia

In a recent contribution from the field of philosophy of digital environment, Marin[10] points out that the usual design of user's interaction with information on social media shows strong emotional context, weak epistemic context, and strong normative context. Accordingly, the emotional infrastructure of social media is part of their design from the beginning. During the Covid-19 pandemic, users tended to use social media more often because of this emotional context, e.g. in order to express their own fear or concern. The emotional consensus obtained from social networks was important for the own emotional needs. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that social media are usually not a place to get information, but rather emotional satisfaction.[11] Coping strategies were in high demand during the pandemic to emotionally deal with social alienation, fear and depression. Hence, one could observe the emotional need of symbolically "taking control", e.g. laymen pretending to be "experts" in virology by sharing all sorts of (dis)information. The implication of this is that content-focused efforts such as *Sebenarnya.my* or *Hoax Busters* cannot be very effective. At the same time, social media during the pandemic also showed a strong normative context, since MDI

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[10] Lavinia Marin, "Three Contextual Dimensions of Social Media: Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Ethics and Information Technology* 23, 1 (2021): pp. 79-86. Cf. also Lavinia Marin and Sabiner Roeser, "Emotions and Digital Well-Being: The Rationalistic Bias of Social Media Design in Online Deliberations," in Burr C., Floridi L. (eds), *Ethics of Digital Well-Being* Philosophical Studies Series, vol. 140. Springer, Cham (2020): pp. 139-150.

[11] This strong role of the emotional dimension of social media is also visible in other media in Indonesia, leading to a trend called McJournalism, See Muslikhin and Deddy Mulyana, "The Practice of McJournalism in Indonesia's Cyber Media," *Jurnal Komunikasi – Malaysian Journal of Communication* 37, 2 (2021): pp. 1-18.

claims on various aspects of the pandemic were not descriptive, but also prescriptive and evaluative, by implying to know the right action, or to evaluate the situation. Based on this consideration, Marin's general advice is to not only conduct fact-checking or flagging efforts on social media, but also to increase user's critical engagement.

**Illustration 1.** News cluster networks in Indonesia according to Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo.
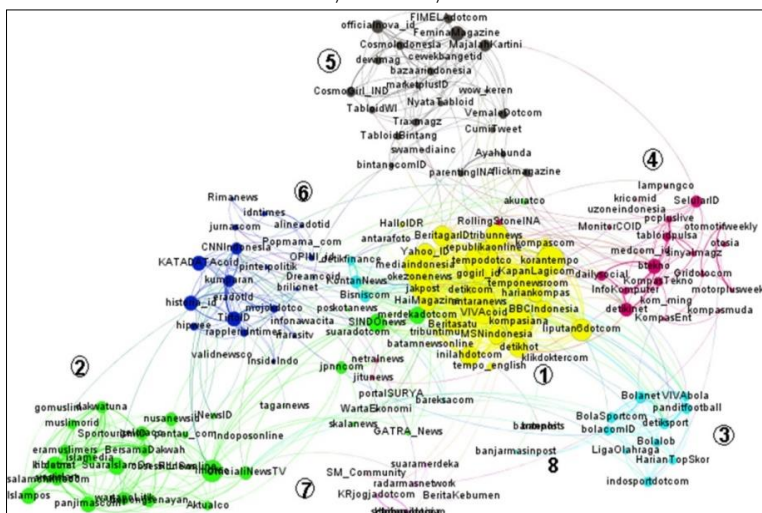
From the perspective of Southeast Asian Studies, Marin's insights are rather interesting and helpful, especially her emphasis on the emotional context. However, it is argued that landscapes of emotion differ at least from culture to culture, if not from individual to individual.[12] It means, in order to understand the emotional context of social media in multicultural Indonesia and Malaysia, it is important to take into account the various fragmentations, cleavages, and clusters in these countries, including differentiations according to the ethnic group, religious orientation, gender, age, education, rural or urban settings, personal experiences with trauma and or success etc. Also, the time period is of relevance: there might be considerable differences in the emotional landscapes of 1900, 1957, 1965/66, 1969, 1998, or 2020. As much as there is already an interesting body of literature in a

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[12] Karl Heider, *Landscapes of Emotions: Mapping Three Cultures of Emotion in Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

number of relevant aspects, more investigations seem necessary, from a number of disciplines, including literature, arts, musicology, Islamic Studies, anthropology, philosophy, media studies, political science and interdisciplinary Southeast Asian Studies.

Illustration 2. News cluster networks in Malaysia according to Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo.
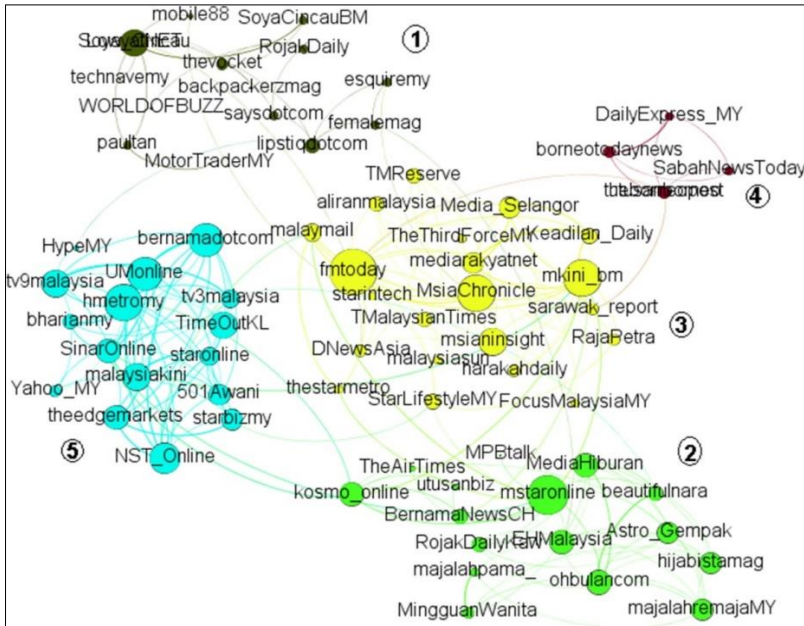
For the purpose of this paper, we would like to start relating the above-said, especially the seemingly important emotional context of social media, to a recent publication by Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo on news clusters in the Indonesian, Malaysian, and Singaporean news media networks on the Internet.[13] This contribution maps distinct nodes or clusters and gives evidence for high fragmentation of these clusters in Indonesia and Malaysia versus no fragmentation in Singapore. It also provides visual representations of these clusters.

This fragmentation study by Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo seems rather helpful for future research on the emotional context of social media in

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[13] Ford Lumban Gaol, Ardian Maulana, and Tokuro Matsuo, "News Consumption Patterns on Twitter: Fragmentation Study on the Online News Media Network," *Heliyon* 6, 10 (2020): pp. 2-11.

Indonesia and Malaysia, as it allows to take the measured clusters as departure points for more detailed investigations according, e.g., the mentioned social and cultural differentiations (age, gender, religious orientation etc.). It is particularly important to realize the strong fragmentation of clusters and the related very little inter-cluster overlapping of audience in comparison to the much more intense intra-cluster oberlapping, e.g. in the case of the religious cluster in Indonesia.

Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo also provides tables that list each news media in the various news media clusters in both countries.[14]

Table 1. Groups of news outlets in Indonesian online news media network (Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo)

Cluster	Online News Media	Segmentation	%
1	tempo, antaranews, kompas, tribunnews, kompasiana, antara foto, koran tempo, msnindonesia, beritagar, kapanlagi, viva, okezone, tribun timur, hallo indonesia, batamnews, inilah, detik, media indonesia, harian kompas, liputan6, hai, yahoo indonesia, tempo english, detikhot, tempo news room, gogirl, the jakarta post, beritasatu, republika, bbc news indonesia, klikdokter	cross-segment of national news media	22.84
2	eramuslim, inews, islampos, gelora news, arrahmah, gomuslim, sportourism, wartapolitik, rmol, rilis, dakwatuna, obsessionnews, indopos, inews, merdeka, salam-online, harian surya, muslim,voa-islam, hidayatullah, sindonews, islamedia, poskota news, jpnn, nusanews, gatra, skalanews, bersama dakwah, suara, pantau, teropongsenayan, suara-islam, tagar news, panjimas, aktual, kiblat, akurat	religious news outlets	19.14
3	bola, bolasport, bolalob, panditfootball, bisnis, detikfinance, banjarmasin post, bola, indosport, bareksa, vivabola, topskor, kontan news, liga olahraga, detiksport	Sports	9.26

[14] Table 8 and Table 9 in their article, here presented as Table 1 and 2 respectively.

Cluster	Online News Media	Segmentation	%
4	kompas muda, kompas minggu, tabloid pulsa, selular, kompastekno, jitunews, dailysocial, medcom, gridoto, motor plus, tabloid otomotif, berita teknologi, kompas entertainment, rolling stone, monitor, detikinet, sinyal magz, pcplus live, netralnews, lampung, uzone, majalah infokomputer, kricom, otosia	technology and hobby	14.81
5	Cewek Banget, femina indonesia, tabloid nyata, swa media, majalah kartini, bintang, wanita indonesia, marketplus, warta ekonomi, wowkeren, nova, parenting indonesia, dewi magazine, tabloid bintang, cumicumi, majalahtrax, harper's bazaar, flick magazine, ayahbunda, cosmogirl, fimela, vemale, cosmopolitan	women and entertainment	14.2
6	Kata Data, idn Times, tirto, validnews, popmama, era indonesia, historia, pinterpolitik, infonawacita, narasi, dream, brilio, inside indonesia, alinea, opini, mojok, rappler, cnn indonesia, kumparan, hipwee, jurnas, rimanews	cross-segment national news media	13.58
7	berita kebumen, suara merdeka, harian jogja, kedaulatan rakyat, tribun jogja, solopos, radar banyumas	regional-based media outlets	4.94
8	bantenpos, banten hits	regional-based media outlets	

Table 2. Groups of news outlets in Malaysian online news media network.

Clusters	Online news media	Segment	%
1	Motor Trader MY, soyacincau (bm), soyacincau, technave, world of buzz, latest on says, mobile88, vocket, lipstiq, female malaysia, backpackerz, rojak daily, esquire malaysia, paul tan, lowyat	technology and hobby	20.55
2	media hiburan, mstar online, mingguan wanita, MPBtalk, ohbulan, kosmo online, astro gempak, bernama news channel (bnc), rojak daily kaw!, eh! malaysia, air times news network, remaja,	entertainment	21.92

Clusters	Online news media	Segment	%
	beautifulnara, utusanbiz, pa&ma, hijabista magazine		
3	malaysia chronicle, malaysia kini (bm), in.tech, raja petra kamarudin, the malaysian reserve, free malaysia today, star life style, the malaysian insight, the malaysian times, the third force, malaysia sun, media selangor, digital news asia, media rakyat, aliran, keadilan daily, the star metro, sarawak report, harakahdaily, malay mail, focus Malaysia	cross-segment national news media	28.77
4	Utusanborneo, dailyExpress_MY, sabahNewsToday, theborneopost, borneotodaynews	regional-based media outlets	6.85
5	hmetro, tv9 malaysia, Yahoo Malaysia, HypeMY, tv3malaysia, malaysiakini, nst, thestar, utusanonline, bernamadotcom, SinarOnline, TimeOutKL, 501Awani, the*edge*markets, bharian, staronline	cross-segment national news media	21.92

In order to compare the news media clusters in Indonesia and Malaysia, this article focuses on the segments identified by Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo.

Table 3. Cross-Segment National News Media Clusters in Indonesia and Malaysia

Indonesia	%	Malaysia	%
tempo, antaranews, kompas, tribunnews, kompasiana, antara foto, koran tempo, msnindonesia, beritagar, kapanlagi, viva, okezone, tribun timur, hallo indonesia, batamnews, inilah, detik, media indonesia, harian kompas, liputan6, hai, yahoo indonesia, tempo english, detikhot, tempo news room, gogirl, the jakarta post, beritasatu, republika, bbc news indonesia, klikdokter	22.84	hmetro, tv9 malaysia, Yahoo Malaysia, HypeMY, tv3malaysia, malaysiakini, nst, thestar, utusanonline, bernamadotcom, SinarOnline, TimeOutKL, 501Awani, theedgemarkets, bharian, staronline	21.92
Kata Data, idn Times, tirto, validnews, popmama, era	13.58	malaysia chronicle, malaysia kini (bm), in.tech, raja petra	28.77

Indonesia	%	Malaysia	%
indonesia, historia, pinterpolitik, infonawacita, narasi, dream, brilio, inside indonesia, alinea, opini, mojok, rappler, cnn indonesia, kumparan, hipwee, jurnas, rimanews		kamarudin, the malaysian reserve, free malaysia today, star life style, the malaysian insight, the malaysian times, the third force, malaysia sun, media selangor, digital news asia, media rakyat, aliran, keadilan daily, the star metro, sarawak report, harakahdaily, malay mail, focus Malaysia	

Tables 1 to 3 shows the cross-segment national news media clusters in Indonesia and Malaysia based on the calculations of Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo (2020). It is apparent that in both countries this segment is rather fragmented, which mean that users of these online media outlets tend to stay within the same ideological cluster. In Malaysia, for instance, the media related to the long-ruling National Front (Barisan Nasional), such as *utusanonline, hmetro, the star* etc. are clearly in a separate cluster (together 21.92 % at the time of the measurement) than the media of the former long-lasting opposition (28.77 %), including *Malaysia kini, keadilan daily, Malaysia sun etc*. In Indonesia, media such as *Tempo, Kompas, antaranews etc*. (together 22.84 %) are in a different cluster than *kata data, idn times, tirto* etc. (13.58 %).

It can be said that both in Indonesia and Malaysia, that cross segment/cluster media have a relatively wide audience. The media is also becoming more and more exist and its tendency is growing along with the development of audience literacy and the increasing selective choice of its readers towards news sources that can be relied on for credibility and accuracy.

It can be said that both in Indonesia and Malaysia, these cross-segment (community) media have a relatively stable level of reader's loyalty. If it is correlated with the variety of choices of information sources, it can be assumed that media readers across this segment have a tendency to continue to be present and consistent in their choices to choose information sources that they feel are appropriate.

Table 4. Regional-based media clusters in Indonesia and Malaysia

Indonesia	%	Malaysia	%
bantenpos, banten hits	N/A	Utusan borneo, daily Express_MY, sabah News	6.85

Indonesia	%	Malaysia	%
berita kebumen, suaramerdeka, suara merdeka, harian jogja, kedaulatan rakyat, tribun jogja, solopos, radar banyumas	4.94	Today, the borneo post, borneo today news	

Table 4: in both Indonesia and Malaysia, regional-based media outlets form important clusters according to Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo 2020). In Malaysia, this concerns media that are targeting Borneo (6.85 %), in Indonesia it is media for a Javanese audience (4.94 %) and readers in Banten (percentage not available).

In both Indonesia and Malaysia, the strength of regionally based-local media is the speed to provide information based on local nuances with a primordial touch and cultural symbols that can further familia-rize the news with the readers' immediate symbolic environment.

This segment of readers from local media is predicted to continue to increase along with the rising longing for ethnic and nostalgic auras. Local media can also function as an instrument of community outreach with quick accessibility from their readers. In several news rubrics, the local media also functions as a cultural heritage and a treasure trove of nomenclature and expression of local dialects.

Table 5. Religious news outlets in Indonesia and Malaysia

Indonesia	%	Malaysia	%
eramuslim, inews, islampos, gelora news, arrahmah, gomuslim, sportourism, wartapolitik, rmol, rilis, dakwatuna, obsessionnews, indopos, inews, merdeka, salam-online, harian surya, muslim, voa-islam, hidayatullah, sindonews, islamedia, poskota news, jpnn, nusanews, gatra, skalanews, bersama dakwah, suara, pantau, teropongsenayan, suara-islam, tagar news, panjimas,	19.14	N/A	N/A

Indonesia	%	Malaysia	%
aktual, kiblat, akurat			

Table 5: Interestingly, Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo only identify a religious news media cluster for Indonesia, not Malaysia. *Eramuslim, inews, islampos* etc. are clearly online media that possess a distinct Muslim profile. From Illustration 2, it becomes very clear that users of media in this news media cluster tend to remain in this cluster, just as users in other clusters do.

This religious community media is a hallmark of the development of religious affinity-based information. The large market share of its readers reflects that this media plays a role in dissemination and socialization related to the pandemic. It is very possible that this media characterized by a religious community has loyal readers who can act as informants in their closest circle (family, relatives and friends). This is because, as is customary in religious societies, they have regular weekly and even daily agendas to hold meetings of religious congregations. It can be assumed that when they meet at that moment, then the process of socialization and further dissemination of things related to the pandemic will naturally and automatically take place in a mutually continuous chain.

The government through the Ministry of Health (*Kementrian Kesehatan*) of the Republic of Indonesia has coordinated with various parties to closely monitor the widespread hoaxes and ensure that the information received by the public is accurate and trustworthy. The spread of Covid-19 hoaxes is carried out by various backgrounds, including Muslim community social media accounts. To mention, there are at least two Muslim community social media accounts that spread hoaxes about Covid-19. It is very likely that there are still similar accounts, but due to the monitoring of official authorities, these accounts no longer leave a clear digital trace and are difficult to trace further.

First, @muslimcyber411 is a media that provides news in the form of Islamic studies by creating short videos and e-flyers containing calls for a return to the right path according to their version. This account has 90,6 thousand followers on *Instagram*. The religious typology (Islam) built by the account is oriented towards the purification group (*puritan*)[15] targeting urban communities with a tendency to extreme

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[15] Arrazi Hasyim, *Teologi Muslim Puritan: Genelogi dan Ajaran Salafi* (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2017).

Islamic narration and positioning itself as opposition to almost all government policies during the leadership of President Joko Widodo. Thus, the narration built also often opposes the policies issued by the government, such as the response during the Covid-19 period. Specifically during Covid-19, this account also provides a narration in its content by linking the Covid-19 outbreak with Regional Head Elections (Pilkada).[16]

Second, @pemuda.hijrah_212, this account is not much different from *@muslimcyber411,* this media carries a narration that often invites to the right path according to their version which is extreme and radical. Using the term *hijrah* makes this account have a relatively large number of followers, which is 20.8 thousand on Instagram. The phenomenon of using the word *hijrah* gives a nuance of Islam on the account supported by clips of videos and e-flyers responding to current issues and linking them to religious topics. During the Covid-19 period, this account uploads clips of lectures on Covid-19 and its antidote. Almost all of its contents are not empirically-logical based on Health science, but are more likely associated with conspiracy theories.[17]

Table 6. Religious-based Media Used to Spread Hoaxes

Media Name	Hoax Theme	Followers	*Platform*
@muslimcyber411	Covid-19 and Government Policy	90.6 thousand	Instagram
@pemuda.hijrah_212	Covid-19 and the Antidote	20.8 thousand	Instagram

Message of Religious Leaders

The vertical and horizontal plurality of people makes a complex situation. In the case of Indonesia and Malaysia, religious leaders as well as community developers have to be aware of factors that push a more chaotic condition. Hence, they are to disseminate as for as possible that the spread of hoaxes has a negative impact on society, causing violence, confusion, insecurity, and even causing ethnic, religious and racial conflicts between groups. People become individuals who are too self-confident and feel they are the most correct in the cases that occur, even though they have not traced the

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[16] See @muslimcyber41, https://www.instagram.com/p/CGa9F8IHddU

[17] See @pemuda.hijrah_212, https://www.instagram.com/p/B9-wcyXlceB/

source. The spread of hoaxes also has serious consequences for social and political life which has 4 points as a result of the spread of the fake news, namely:

First, fake news or hoaxes actually violate communication ethics and specifically in the world of journalism violate journalistic ethics. The reason is that the information disseminated is often not based on facts or distorts facts. In the world of journalism, a news story must convey information that can be verified and proven empirically, not just information based on personal assumptions of the author/journalist that cannot be verified.

Second, the role of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, which are borderless in nature, causes the effect of distorting facts/reality by hoaxes to reach a very wide audience. In addition, everyone can become a journalist, editor, and can share it. the web or in general social media has a positive impact in terms of affordability of information and knowledge that can be accessed by everyone as long as they have internet accounts and data, but on the other hand it also has a dark side (bad side) namely the dissemination of information or fake news that can affect public perception of an issue.

Third, because the nature of news, whether true or false, provides information and a form of knowledge to the public, hoaxes as a public discourse can be an effective tool for manipulating the public's mind (cognitive manipulation) to believe something that is wrong as a truth [believing a falsity] as a truth). The term cognitive manipulation was deliberately chosen as part of the title of this article because the essence of spreading hoaxes is manipulating and controlling the minds of readers which in turn can influence their attitudes and behavior. Discourse manipulation (for example through hoaxes) is always social, cognitive, and discursive. Social in nature, because hoaxes are produced and disseminated intentionally by a group or social actor to individuals or other social groups; is cognitive because it can manipulate the mind of the audience; and is discursive because manipulation or lies are constructed in texts and visual messages. The manipulative nature of this hoax is deliberately constructed by certain social actors based on their ideological interests and it becomes a big problem if the information in the hoax that is ideological in nature is actually understood by the public as natural information.

Fourth, the effect of this cognitive manipulation is that the public mind is invited to relate one issue to another or commonly known as

the discourse chain in the study of critical discourse analysis. In the socio-historical approach, a discourse in the past can be re-presented in different texts or text genres and in different contexts. Historical texts in the past can be recycled in the form of today's texts at different times and places with certain ideological purposes.

Community Media to Fight Against Hoaxes

As the spread of fake news or hoaxes increases, public trust in the media is decreasing, not only against the mainstream media but also the community media. Community media have an important role in fighting against hoaxes due to their proximity to residents.

Community media are media created by, and for citizens. This community exists for residents and consists of clustered residents. The existence of community media in the midst of people's lives makes community media have a close relationship with residents. However, in many cases, community media do not have legal certification like national media. Therefore, the truth is often questioned. Thus, the problem with community media is usually the administrative and legal aspects. According to the regulation, the barcode can be the standard to be the authority of truth. The authority that regulates the press provides conditions that the barcode is often entitled to the big media of well-established companies.

In fact, in practice, not having legal certification does not mean that community media cannot be trusted. Community media can play an important role in fighting against hoaxes by inviting residents to be more cautious with the information they receive and becoming a tool or means to prevent hoaxes from spreading to residents.

In addition, community media play a role in raising information in their environment so that residents are not focused on problems that are not directly related to their lives. The issues raised are issues that will not be raised by the mainstream media because their focus is on the hub government or the main administrative control area (the capital).

Radio, as one of the existing community media, has the potential to help fight against hoaxes by inviting people to read books to improve media literacy. Radio can also facilitate the community by building a small library. In addition, Radio often invites booklovers, a familiar greeting to the public, to get information from trusted sources.

In the end, through community media, citizens must be equipped with the ability to distinguish between hoaxes and non-hoaxes. The general public can be given some advice in dealing with hoaxes. First, do not be lazy to click on news on the internet, especially when the source is unclear or doesn't include the source. Second, apply one journalistic principle, namely suspicion. What is suspected is news content. It can also train our criticality. Third, check and re-check the news by comparing it with other media.

Through various community media, people can be invited to participate so that they will not easily believe a news story, especially one that does not include a clear source: if you include a source from an inconclusive website or some kind of blog, it means that the news is suspect.

For the main argument of this paper, these findings show that there are indeed deep clusters and cleavages in the online news media outlets of Indonesia and Malaysia. Hence, they are indicative of very different landscapes of emotion, both in the online and offline worlds. This implies that a strategic response to the rise of misinformation and disinformation (MD) in social media during the Covid-19 pandemic should consider the various relevant social fields and their respective emotional and normative contexts. This includes important institutions, organizations, networks, and personalities in every concerned cluster. To overcome the rise of MDI in social media during the pandemic, I would furthermore argue that not only online context should be part of the analysis and counterstrategies, but also the offline emotional and normative contexts. In each of the identified clusters, trusted institutions, organizations, networks, and personalities therefore have an important role in countering MDI.

The Two Religious-Based Civil Organizations and MDI in Indonesia

As it has been mentioned above, in fighting against misinformation and disinformation (MDI), it is pivotal to look at deep roots in content and context strategies. Hence, a hybrid approach that combines both social media and social network may be more relevant for the emotional as well as normative context of social media uses, e.g., some steps and agendas of rooted and trusted religious communities: Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is an Islamic organization known for having a large number of followers. It reaches 25 million followers.

The same goes for Muhammadiyah, an Islamic organization known to have a strong economic independence. Data in 2020 showed that the organization manages 4,623 Kindergartens, 2,604 Elementary Schools, 1,172 Junior High Schools, and 1,143 Senior High Schools, as well as 172 Higher Education Institutions and 107 Hospitals throughout Indonesia. Thus, both of these Islamic organizations certainly have a very vital role for the Indonesian Muslim community, including in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.[18]

The challenges facing Indonesia in dealing with Covid-19 are not only in the health sector, but also in the rampant infodemics containing false or hoax news and rumours about Covid-19 in society. This information can worsen the pandemic situation itself. The spread of hoax news is often caused by someone not checking when sharing with others and not understanding the impact of that information on their social environment. In addition, infodemics can also result in fatalities, causing casualties. This phenomenon often occurs in society, such as false information about one of the Covid-19 preventive drugs that makes people feel safe with the existence of the drug, thus ignoring health protocol recommendations.

Another piece of information related to Covid is the connection of this pandemic with conspiracy theories. This information explains that the pandemic is part of the world depopulation process (reducing the world's population) that is deliberately carried out by certain parties, especially to reduce the number of Muslims. This information is continuously associated (for example) with the global confirmed cases reaching 256 million, with more than 5.1 million deaths as of November 2021. Indonesia is one of the countries most affected by Covid-19, with more than four million cases and more than 143,000 deaths. This means that, in terms of population loss due to Covid 19, Indonesia ranks highest in Southeast Asia.[19]

Aside from the positive impact, social media also has negative impacts. Social media is used to spread false, fake, and made-up news

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[18] E. Rachmawati, Y. Umniyatun, M. Rosyidi, & M. I. Nurmansyah, "The Roles of Islamic Faith-Based Organizations on Countermeasures Against the Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," *Heliyon* 8, 2 (2022): pp. 1-9.

[19] Ibid.

about the corona virus.[20] Realizing this, during the Covid-19 outbreak, the official NU and Muhammadiyah websites consistently took a role in combating hoax news by featuring Islamic content discussing the outbreak. Various posts and information are displayed on their websites. Of course, this is an effort by the two large Islamic organizations to respond to and combat Misinformation and Disinformation during Covid-19. To summarize, some methods for these purposes are done with the following approach:

Internal Religious Reinforcement Communication

NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) tries to awaken the community to the fact that Covid-19 is a plague, and to link it to the will of God as a giver of calamities. Internal communication means reinforcing the belief that this disaster that has occurred is due to Allah, as a form of belief in Allah's power. It could very well be due to human negligence. On the NU site, there is an article entitled, "Corona and Human Mistakes". It states that we must be able to appreciate the majesty of Allah through events near us and in our daily lives, including the phenomenon of the emergence of Covid-19. NU regards Covid-19 as a means of testing the faith of a Muslim. NU guarantees that Allah is Almighty and over-comes every calamity that befalls humanity. However, NU invites the community to understand any phenomenon that occurs, as proof of the existence of Allah. This means that NU does not allow believers to then look for justification by blaming others. Accusing someone of deliberately creating or finding ways to profit themselves and inflict harm on others.[21]

Muhammadiyah also tries to cultivate *tawhid* (monotheism) during the pandemic. Muhammadiyah is an Islamic organization that always bases itself on the movement of integrating reason and revelation. Both are then explicitly embodied in social *tawhid* or social activism. Regarding the Pandemic, Muhammadiyah sees it as a manifestation of the power of Allah. As reported on the Muhammadiyah website. The

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[20] Adeni and Silviatul Hasanah, "Islam and Disaster Communication via Online Media amid the Covid-19 in Indonesia: The Case of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Salafism," *Al-Milal: Journal of Religion and Thought* 3, 2 (2021): pp. 155-169.

[21] Nurmansyah, "The Roles of Islamic Faith-Based Organizations," p. 9; Wahyudi Akmaliah, "Reclaiming Moderate Islam in Nahdlatul Ulama: Challenging the Dominant Religious Authority in Digital Platform," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 16, 1 (2022).

Chairman of the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nashir, said, "The Covid pandemic invites Muslims to be close to Allah. The unexpected arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused us as human beings to be speechless all over the world. It has provided important experiences and provided many lessons." Through several articles available, Muhammadiyah invites the Muslim community to re-establish communication with the Creator. The communication is displayed in the form of a total fear of Allah, as well as caring for the fate of fellow humans for the common good. Muhammadiyyah calls on all parties not to be in a position of accusing each other, spreading unverifiable news and being critically rational about all the dissemination of information that exacerbates the atmosphere.

The Normative-Contextual Communication

The normative-contextual communication of NU, which bases its movement on the *pesantren* community, develops Islamic narratives to combat hoaxes and orient itself to be normative and realistic based on medical knowledge, responding more to Covid-19 through a contextual Islamic legal narrative. Among the issues they discussed were the legality of praying with protective equipment for medical workers; the legality of burying a Covid-19 patient who has not been washed but has already been buried; the legality of swab testing while fasting; and the legality of using a hand sanitizer or antiseptic for prayer. At this level, the existing classical *fiqh* tradition in NU increasingly finds its relevance in the context of modern society's problems.[22] In the social-religious field, NU also plays a role and actively participates in helping the government to encourage the public to comply with health protocols, supporting the government for vaccination. NU has sent its envoys several times to educate the public about the dangers of the pandemic and to provide assistance to those affected by the pandemic. For example, on the NU website, there is news that Nahdlatul Ulama Muslimat Center distributed 200 packages of food and 600 masks to vulnerable groups in South Jakarta, East Jakarta, and North Jakarta.

The Muhammadiyah movement, which tends to be substantively transformative culturally, tries to translate religious teachings into

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[22] Ahmad Zainul Hamdi, "Constructing Indonesian Religious Pluralism: The Role of Nahdlatul Ulama in Countering Violent Religious Extremism," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, 2 (2021).

applicable and sustainable actions, fighting against the dangers of MDI. On the Muhammadiyah website, there are few portraits of Islamic legal issues related to the pandemic. However, Muhammadiyah has the concept of Fiqh Disaster (*fiqh* disaster) which is translated into a transformative religious movement. Muhammadiyah's *fiqh* does not target secondary issues in the pandemic problem, but rather precise disaster mitigation through the actualization of *fiqh* into Muhammadiyah's priorities. The synergy between theological, medical, and educational movements in disasters has enabled Muhammadiyah's orientation to respond to social and pandemic issues. As part of the fiqh reflection on disaster, Muhammadiyah tries to discuss the controversial law on vaccines in Indonesia. On its website, it is stated that "there is an emergency (*al-ḍarūrah*). If this condition affects someone, then it is allowed to do something that is normally prohibited (prohibited). Emergency conditions are generally always associated with saving lives. The most famous example is the ability to consume the forbidden (haram) when there is no more halal food.

In addition, based on the characteristic work of Muhammadiyah which is to translate Islam into concrete actions by providing advanced technological tools in its hospitals to detect the virus, as seen on its website, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Muhammadiyah has released IDR 344,162,461,061 billion in funds for 31,869,988 beneficiaries.[23] Of course, what is done by these two organizations in handling Covid-19 shows how serious this outbreak is and convinces the public that Covid-19 is real and not influenced by hoaxes and MDI.

Twitter is a concrete proof of the seriousness of NU and Muhammadiyah in combating hoax news. Twitter becomes an important medium used by Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in communicating related to Covid-19 vaccination. Although initially the Covid-19 vaccine was declared haram through a fatwa from the Indonesian Ulama Council, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah collaborated to encourage the public to use the vaccine. The reason is the emergency situation that afflicts Indonesia. The fatwa has been revised with MUI Fatwa Number 2/2021 on Covid-19 Vaccine Products, which explains that the Covid-19 vaccine is halal. The content of the communication of Nahdlatul Ulama and

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[23] Muhammadiyah Gelontorkan Dana 346 Miliar Untuk Penanganan Pandemi diakses dari https://lazismu.org/view/muhammadiyah-gelontorkan-dana-346-miliar-untuk-penanganan-pandemi.

Muhammadiyah's Twitter accounts is about the inconsistency of Covid-19 policies, health protocols, Covid-19 vaccination collaboration, and awareness of Covid-19 vaccination. The content of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah's Twitter communication has connectivity with each other.[24] All of these reinforce the attitude towards the need to fight against and avoid MDI in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

This paper departs from a comparison of the content-oriented efforts of the Indonesian and Malaysian governments in order to fight against misinformation and disinformation (MDI) during the Covid-19 pandemic on the Internet. It is shown, that both countries have similar fact-checking anti-hoax websites. However, based on the theoretical considerations of Marin, it is argued that the emotional and normative context of social media is highly relevant for the understanding of the problem, and possibly also for approaches to counteract the unintended side-effects of social media, especially misinformation and disinformation (MDI). A suggestion for future discussions could be to not only consider social interactions on the Internet, but to take into account the users of social media in a more holistic way, namely also in the offline world. If Marin (2021) is right that the main appeal of social media is the emotional and normative satisfaction that users can obtain here, a useful measure to counter MDI on social media could be to increase the offline emotional and normative agency of NGOs, religious organizations, neighborhood communities, sports clubs etc., since this would enhance the satisfaction of emotional needs outside the social media. Due to the restrictions on offline social interaction during the Covid-1ß pandemic, the observed strong increase in MDI activities on social media appears understandable in this light. At the same time, as the recovery after the pandemic will most likely include more offline social interaction (and hence emotional and normative interaction), a strategy of the mentioned NGOs, religious organizations and other communities could be to deliberately emphasize on the emotional dimension.

Due to the high cultural diversity of insular Southeast Asia, however, it is found that the various landscapes of emotion in

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[24] Dimas Subekti, "Covid-19 Vaccinations Communication of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in Twitter," *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 17, 1 (2022): pp. 33-46.

Indonesia and Malaysia need to be taken into account in this context. In this regard, a good base for future research could be the contribution by Gaol/Maulana/Matsuo that demonstrates the high fragmentation of online news media networks in Indonesia and Malaysia, including the religious news media network. Here, humanities and social sciences working on Indonesia and Malaysia, still have highly relevant research themes to investigate in greater detail.[]

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