

The Impact of Media in the Spread of Propaganda by Rebel Groups in Indonesia (Analysis of the Armed Separatist Movement KKB in Papua)

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Abstract— This research is an in-depth look at the impact of media in the dissemination of propaganda by insurgent groups, with a focus on the armed separatist movement KKB (armed criminal group) in Papua, Indonesia. Mass media, particularly digital platforms and social media, have become the main channels for armed groups to spread their narratives and propaganda. This research aims to reveal the mechanism of information dissemination by the Papuan KKB through the media, as well as analyse its impact on public perceptions of the conflict and the issue of separatism in Papua. This research method involves qualitative analysis with secondary data sources obtained through literature study. The results of the analysis will provide a deeper understanding of how mass media acts as an effective tool in armed groups' efforts to influence public opinion. The study also discusses the factors that influence how the public responds to the propaganda spread by the Papuan KKB. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on media impact in the context of separatism movements, as well as provide a richer insight into how mass media can be used to influence public views on armed conflict in Indonesia. In addition, this research can also serve as a basis for designing strategies to prevent the spread of unhealthy propaganda through mass media in order to support peace and stability in the region.

Keywords-Propaganda, Insurgency, Separatism.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of mass media continues to evolve over time. Today, the media has experienced rapid progress, especially with the emergence of the internet as one of the most influential forms of media. In the past, mass media mainly consisted of newspapers, radio and television, at which time it was considered the only source of information accessible to the general public. The term "mass media" refers to communication tools that operate on a variety of scales, ranging from a limited scale to reaching and engaging a wider range of people. The understanding of mass media includes a number of media that have existed for decades and are still used today. According to Denis Mcquail (2000), mass media have properties or characteristics that are able to reach large and wide masses, are public, and are able to give popularity to anyone who appears in the mass media.

These characteristics have significant implications in the political and cultural context of today's society. From a political perspective, mass media becomes an important channel for conveying information and opinions, while from a cultural

perspective, mass media becomes the main guide in determining the definition of an event and providing an overview of social reality. Technically, mass media has four characteristics, namely indirect (through technical media), one-way (without interaction between the messenger and the recipient of the message), open (accessible to anyone), aimed at a wide public, and involving a geographically dispersed public.

In using the media, people often focus more on the content of the message without realising that the media itself affects their lives, shaping and influencing the message or information conveyed. In the past, the media was one-way and regulated by the government, becoming the main tool to shape public opinion in accordance with the government's wishes. However, with the times, the media has become more open, allowing people to access information from various sources. Theories describe the media of the past as a "hypodermic needle," where the information conveyed had an immediate impact on society, similar to the healing effect provided by a hypodermic needle. At that time, propaganda was used to shape public opinion, as was the case during the cold war. Propaganda often involves spreading fake news to manipulate people's perceptions. In the current era, information channels through the media are very accessible, especially with the internet. While this facilitates access to information, it also creates new challenges, where audiences must be wise in selecting and assessing the news they receive. With the ability of individuals to create and disseminate their own news, mass media is difficult to control, creating challenges in the healthy exchange of information. One of the reasons the media has such a huge impact on lives is because of society's widespread need for information.

The development of propaganda in Indonesia today is growing along with the post-reform information disclosure policy. While propaganda through the media can have a significant impact, it can also have positive and negative consequences. Propaganda can divide society, creating conflict, but it can also be used to direct the public to positive actions. Like a sharp blade, propaganda has two sides that can be used for good or bad. In relation to separatism, the use of mass media in supporting or opposing separatist movements, such as the Papua KKB, can be an important factor in shaping public opinion and perception. In Indonesia, the media plays a crucial role in shaping people's opinions and perceptions on various issues, including armed separatist movements, as observed in the armed separatist movement KKB (Kelompok Kriminal Bersenjata) in Papua. This research will explore the impact of the media in the spread of propaganda by rebel groups, with a focus on the Papua KKB.

In recent years, the mass media, especially through digital platforms and social media, has become the main means for armed groups to spread their narratives and propaganda. This has had a major impact on people's understanding of the conflict and the issue of separatism in Papua. As technology has evolved, the Papuan KKB has become increasingly sophisticated in using the media to amplify their narratives, both at the national and international levels.

In this study, we will detail how mass media, be it through news, television broadcasts, or digital platforms, can be an effective tool for the Papuan KKB in spreading their propaganda. By exploring the mechanisms of information dissemination and its impact on public perception, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of the media in the context of armed separatism movements in Indonesia. It is important to remember that the influence of the media includes not only the information conveyed, but also how it is received and processed by the public. This study aims to identify factors that influence the impact of the media on people's views of the separatist movement, provide a firmer basis for understanding the conflict, and stimulate discussion on efforts to prevent the spread of unhealthy propaganda through the mass media.

II. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of propaganda was proposed by psychologist Harold Lasswell (Wilcox, 2005) in 1920, who stated that propaganda is the regulation of collective behaviour by manipulating significant symbols. The use of the term "collective behaviour" is an attempt to capture public opinion, a shared value system regardless of physical proximity. Through "significant symbols", Lasswell tries to capture stimuli which then produce a reaction. Then Laswell gave another explanation of the function of propaganda in a society where there was social disorder due to rapid technological change. Jacques Ellul then offers a definition of propaganda as a set of methods used by organised groups who then want to lead active or passive participation in their actions to a mass number of individuals united through a process of psychological manipulation and coordinated within the organisation. By mentioning the word "passive", Ellul broadens the range of public response to include not only active supporters but also audiences who passively accept the propaganda idea and do not actively resist.

Propaganda activities can be carried out for various purposes. Laswell (1927) discussed four main objectives of propaganda,

namely; 1) to foster hatred of the enemy; 2) to preserve the friendship of allies; 3) to maintain friendship and, if possible, to establish cooperation with neutral parties; 4) to destroy the spirit of the enemy. However, the above objectives discussed by Laswell according to Warner J. Severin, et al., (2005) are propaganda objectives in wartime. So it will not be used for advertising or other types of persuasion in peacetime. A quote from Paul Joseph Goebbels: "The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never escape from it." Goebbels also taught that the greatest lie is the truth altered just a little. Propaganda has evolved into psychological warfare where propaganda finds its extension. Political propaganda involves government, party or group efforts to achieve strategic and tactical goals (Asmoro, 2022).

The presentation of news and information through the media is sometimes unconscious propaganda. Media ignorance can make people ignorant if they identify themselves as a persecuted group and in the same category, i.e. as oppressed people or as an oppressed nation. Media mistakes can lead to tragic social actions. The media can also be used as a tool of interest and propaganda in elections to gain power. In the theory of media analysis, Louis Althusser suggests structural Marxism, namely the mass media is part of the ideological apparatus of the state. Media and state power are interrelated. In priming theory which discusses the "short-term media effect" or short-term effects that arise in a person's mind and behaviour after consuming media. Berkowitz argues that the content contained in the mass media will have a temporary influence on its audience. Shortly after consuming media, whoever the media audience is, whether children or adults, their minds will definitely be coloured by what they see in the media. Propaganda has a more significant threat level, especially in the face of the infinite development of the third world.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative research methods. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows the researcher to detail and analyse information from various literature sources relevant to the research subject. Literature study is the main means of data collection, where relevant literature will be analysed to obtain holistic information. The qualitative approach in this research allows the researcher to explore the nuances, complexities and context of the research. Further analysis is conducted to identify common patterns, trends, and paradigm shifts that may occur as knowledge about propaganda trends in the context of separatism develops.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Propaganda and the Media

Media is a term that came into use in the 1920s to denote a type of media that is specifically designed to reach a very wide audience. The word media comes from the Latin *Medius* which literally means middle, intermediary, or introduction. Meanwhile, the word mass according to KBBI (Big Indonesian Dictionary) is a large number of objects (substances etc.) that are collected (united) into one (or unity). In everyday speech, this term is often abbreviated as media, both mass media and electronic media.

The presentation of news and information through the media is sometimes unconscious propaganda. The ignorance of the media can lead to the ignorance of the people if the people identify themselves as a persecuted group and in the same category, i.e. as oppressed people or as an oppressed nation. Media mistakes can lead to tragic social actions.

The media can also be used as a tool of interest and propaganda in elections to gain power. In the theory of media analysis, Louis Althusser suggests structural Marxism, namely the mass media is part of the ideological apparatus of the state. Media and state power are interrelated. For example, in the implementation of elections, some mass media will provide news that may not be neutral for several reasons. The media makes the issues raised important even though they are not fully needed by the community. Thus, people seem to need messages and information that ultimately change the thinking and even the culture in the society.

The media can organise the public's attention to issues and thus shape public opinion. The priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of society. In selecting and presenting news, editors and newsroom staff play an important role in shaping reality. Audiences not only learn about an issue but also how important it is. Robert Entman (1993), who states that there are two important aspects of the media, namely (Berkowitz, 1986):

a. Issue selection (selecting)

This aspect relates to the selection of facts. From a complex and diverse reality, the media will choose aspects that are selected to be displayed. In this process, some parts of the news are included, but some are excluded. Not all aspects or parts of the news are displayed.

b. Emphasis (highlighting) or protrusion of certain aspects of reality or issues.

This aspect relates to the writing of facts. When aspects of an event or issue have been selected, the next step is to think about how they are told. This is closely related to the selection of words, sentences, images, and certain images to be displayed to the audience.

The media does not merely report information and opinions, but rather selects and determines them. That is, the media actually concentrates on certain issues that may be few in number, and then makes the audience accept that these are more important than the many other issues.

The context of modern times, characterised by advances in information and communication technology, has brought about significant changes in the way propaganda and media interact. Propaganda, as a systematic attempt to influence public opinion or behaviour, now finds itself in an increasingly complex and dynamic terrain, especially with the key role played by various forms of media. Traditional mass media, such as newspapers, television and radio, remain a major force in spreading propaganda. However, with the rise of social media and online platforms, this dynamic has undergone a notable shift. Social media allows for the rapid spread of propaganda messages, creating a highly dynamic space where information can move at an unprecedented speed.

Propaganda today often relies on compelling visual and audio aspects, with images, videos and short messages having greater appeal than long texts. This strategy is employed to capture the audience's immediate attention and influence their emotions, so that the message can easily seep into the public consciousness. Not only that, the media now also acts as a place where propaganda can be tailored to a more specific target audience. Algorithms and data analysis allow for more targeted propaganda, tailoring messages according to individual preferences, behaviours and opinions. However, while the media provides a powerful platform to spread propaganda messages, it is also a place where people are increasingly critical of the information they receive. Factors such as "fake news" and awareness of information manipulation efforts have led to greater doubt and caution among the public (Bachtiar, 2016).

The study of propaganda and media today is important not only to observe how propaganda is constructed and disseminated, but also how people respond to and consume it. By understanding the dynamics of this relationship, we can gain deeper insights into the role of the media in shaping public opinion and behaviour in this digital era.

Media, particularly social media, has become a key channel for spreading propaganda even in the context of insurgency. Armed groups tend to utilise various digital platforms to spread their messages to a wider audience, with the aim of gaining support and gaining sympathy. Images, videos and stories presented through social media can play a key role in shaping people's perceptions and opinions about the insurgency. In the context of insurgency cases, the relationship between propaganda and media has become increasingly complex and has a major impact on conflict dynamics. Insurgencies, which often involve attempts by armed groups to counter existing governments or authorities, use propaganda as a key tool to build narratives, recruit supporters, and gain legitimacy (Malik, 2016).

Propaganda in the context of insurgency is often designed to create a narrative that supports the armed group's goals, while undermining the existing authority. The choice of language, images and messages is structured in such a way as to influence people's perceptions of the conflict and create support for the insurgency's goals. But in addition, the media can also be a tool to counter insurgency propaganda. Governments and opponents of insurgency can use the media to disseminate information that is counter to the armed group's narrative. In some cases, people affected by insurgency may also use the media to share their own stories, which may not match the narrative developed by the insurgency group. In the digital information age, control over narratives and public opinion can be a decisive factor in the success or failure of an insurgency. An increasingly connected and informed public can critically assess propaganda messages, and the media plays an important role as a mediator in this process. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the relationship between propaganda and media today is crucial to detailing the complex

dynamics in the context of insurgency (Badan Pendidikan dan Pelatihan Kemhan RI, 2020).

Propaganda Analysis of Armed Groups (KKB Papua)

Insurgency is divided into two forms: national insurrection and national liberation revolution. Firstly, national insurgency: In a national insurgency, the main enemies are those who rebel against the national government, each with legitimacy and support. In rebel states, the distinction between rebels and the government is based on economic class, ideology, identity (ethnicity, race, religion) or other political factors. In a national insurgency, the actors involved are not only the insurgents and the government, but also other actors who can support each other. This second form, the insurgents consider that the ruler (government) is considered a foreign invader. The aim of the rebels is to liberate their nation from the rulers in their homeland. What motivates the rebels is not the lack of jobs, schools, or the right to vote, but the hatred of jobs, interference, and rule by outsiders or those perceived as outsiders. For this reason, skilled insurgents prefer to have their movement seen as liberation, thus making mobilisation of support and internal unity within the insurgency easier.

The fundamental action of an insurgent attack against the legitimate government as their activity implements several points. Insurgency strategy is based on three interrelated components namely:

- a. Force protection (through deployment, coverage, use of complex terrain, effective counterintelligence, etc.);
- b. Actions aimed at eroding the will, power and legitimacy of the regime (through violence and psychopolitical programmes);
- c. Resource and argument support.

Ideology is used as a basis to legitimise rebellion on the grounds that the prevailing system is unjust, i.e. rebellion arises out of dissatisfaction with the existing system. Ideology is used as a tool of solidarity, particularly in national uprisings. Leadership is important, successful rebel leaders are those who can unite different groups and organisations and impose their will on a single goal. A leader must be able to convince members that despite opposition, they will persevere. In terms of resources, insurgents need at least five types of resources: 1) human resources 2) equipment/supplies, especially access to weapons, ammunition and explosives; 3) a base camp and, 4) trained intelligence/skills.

An example of a rebellious case that occurred in Indonesia in the past was the Andi Azis incident which gave colour to the history of the Indonesian military to suppress the rebellion which was actually the motive of TNI members at that time. The incident that occurred in early April 1950 in Makassar, South Sulawesi, was not only understood as a form of rebellion due to dissatisfaction with Jakarta's political policies in regulating the formation of the state that was still unstable at that time but also social resistance to the regional army as the most effective representative of popular power in its day.

Analysing the similarity of Andi Aziz's insurgency motives with the Papuan KKB, namely dissatisfaction with central political policies that have not implemented the aspirations of Papuans, there are other factors that also cause the Papuan KKB. However, the absence of a clear national policy and a coherent strategy for peace negotiations has led to a loss of hope for the government and insurgency groups to make peace.

The Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, OPM) is a general term for the independence movement established in the provinces of Papua and West Papua, also formerly known as Papua, Irian Jaya and West Irian. The movement consists of three elements: a group of different armed units, each with limited territorial control without a single commander; several groups in the region who conduct demonstrations and protests; and a small group of leaders based abroad who raise awareness of issues in the region while striving for international support for independence.

These movements are commonly referred to as KKB (Armed Criminal Group), KKS (Armed Separatist Criminal Group), and KSTP (Papua Terrorist Separatist Group). Since its inception, the OPM has also pursued diplomatic channels, conducted Morning Star flag-raising ceremonies, and acts of terrorism as part of the Papuan conflict. Supporters routinely display the Morning Star flag and other symbols of Papuan separatism, such as the national anthem "Hai Tanahku Papua" and the state emblem, which had been adopted in the period from 1961 until Indonesian rule began in May 1963 under the New York Agreement. The militant movement is considered a separatist organisation in Indonesia, and its activities have led to treason

charges.

The OPM and KKB as Papuan separatist groups are doing various ways so that they can separate from the Republic of Indonesia. The guerrilla method used today is still being carried out while carrying out propaganda through social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and so on to create propaganda. The goal remains the same, namely to make indigenous Papuan civilians want to join the OPM, and also attract international attention. The spread of fear and terror of separatist groups on social media is intended to make more indigenous Papuans respect them. In addition, they also intensify propaganda so that more people side with the OPM than the Indonesian government. This psychological game is deliberate so that the OPM flies in cyberspace massively through the media and continuously, because its reach can reach abroad.

The public has been urged to be aware of OPM propaganda. One of the OPM propaganda in 2020 is about the covid-19 pandemic. The status made contains news as if the Indonesian government deliberately did not lockdown when corona attacked this country, in March. Then the OPM deliberately reported that airports and ports continued to be opened, so the government was ignored. In addition, there is also propaganda about KKB (armed criminal group) managed to trick the authorities and seize several types of firearms such as Bazooka. So now they are increasingly feared because of their many and complete war equipment. Even though from the editorial sentence there are irregularities, because the TNI has never had such weapons.

This is where the role of the media is felt. the worst role of the media is the media in spreading conflict journalism. With its power of persuasion, the media can present the spirit to support conflict. The media as a means of informing the general public has the potential to be a trigger for the spirit of war or conflict when steps towards peace should be prioritised. The propaganda that has already been spread by the OPM and this Separatist Group has the potential to make indigenous Papuans split into two camps. The potential to support the Republic of Indonesia or the potential to defect to the OPM and betray the Republic of Indonesia. Because the separatists will be very happy with their many new cadres, who are willing to give money and other support so that the desire for an independent Papua increases.

The government has investigated and found at least 74 social media accounts spreading propaganda. Some of these accounts have been deactivated. The solution to this case is also in collaboration with the Facebook and Twitter companies and they want to take the initiative to freeze the account. Because it is proven to spread hoaxes and propaganda. This deactivation is carried out so that there are no negative effects in the future. Because one of the advantages of propaganda is that it creates sympathy from the international community.

The recent murder of 2 civilians by an armed Papuan separatist criminal group in the Bintang Mountains seems to confirm what the OPM and separatist groups have done regarding the actions they have carried out. This was due to the success of the propaganda that was spread that Papua was suffering and very oppressed under Indonesian rule so that it was as if the Papuan people, through this group, rose up to fight and justify all the cruel actions carried out. With the power of propaganda, the media can position Papuan separatist groups as victims of the regime, not separatist perpetrators. If we look again at the news about separatist groups whose actions sacrifice many civilians, this is considered justified because of the human rights and racial issues raised by these groups. The propaganda created by OPM and KKB on social media was deliberately created to create a narrative as if the government was colonizing Papua. Even though the central government has provided many facilities for residents in Bumi Cendrawasih. This is the stage where the framing and priming theory occurs, which depicts as if the OPM were victims of the Republic of Indonesia government officials. This can be interpreted as an act of communication, because it is not the victim who is most important but rather what message you want to convey (Schmid & Graaf, 1982).

This is where the role of the media is in conveying the message to the public because the media is a means of communication that conveys to the public or the public about certain issues that are considered important and then the public can not only learn and understand the news issues but also how important the meaning of an issue or topic is. based on how the media emphasizes the issue. Finally, today's terrorist acts are a "trijuncta di uno", namely a relationship that requires three complementary aspects, namely the Perpetrator, Victim and Society to get coverage from the media to attract attention (Bryant, 2002).

In the study of warfare, mass threats then led to patterns and characteristics that were still conventional, but current threats focus more on the concept of modern warfare which tends to be irregular. Changes in civilization and attack patterns must be more anticipated as a form. The war or conflict that results is quite small in its spectrum of activities with an impact that is no less large than an ordinary conventional war. The aim is to disturb the stability of the country's security, either from a group of

individuals or an extension of another country to disturb a particular country. In the context of a conflict or rebellion, the government is often faced with the need to use propaganda as a strategic tool to counter narratives promoted by rebel groups. Government propaganda in this case is not only an instrument of communication, but also an effort to design stories that can gain support, destroy rebel narratives, and rebuild public trust in government authorities (Simorangki, 2017).

Government propaganda aims to form a positive narrative regarding the government's goals and actions in the conflict. This can include an emphasis on national values, justice, and efforts to defend state sovereignty. Through propaganda, the government can try to mobilize public support for efforts to deal with the rebellion. Messages that build solidarity, patriotism and national spirit can strengthen the bond between government and citizens.

V. CONCLUSION

The media in its history has been a powerful force in disseminating information and shaping public opinion. In the context of rebellion, especially the KKB Papua Armed Separatist Movement, the role of the media in spreading propaganda becomes increasingly significant. Propaganda spread by rebel groups, such as OPM and KKB, through various media, including social media, has had a major impact on people's perceptions of the conflict in Papua. In the modern era, shifting media dynamics have become increasingly complex with the emergence of digital platforms and social media. Propaganda not only utilizes text, but also visual and audio elements to grab attention and influence the emotions of the audience. Social media gives armed groups the freedom to spread propaganda messages quickly and on target, while algorithms and data analysis enable the tailoring of messages to suit individual preferences and opinions. In the context of an insurgency, propaganda is not only used to recruit supporters but also to create a narrative that supports the goals of the armed group. The media has become a battleground where the government and rebel groups compete to shape public opinion. The success of propaganda can gain sympathy from the international community, while the media's failure to present neutral information can have tragic social impacts.

The importance of the media in directing public attention to certain issues is also emphasized. The selection and emphasis of issues by the media plays an important role in shaping public perceptions. Thus, understanding how the media presents information and selects issues is crucial for interpreting social reality. The government, in dealing with rebel group propaganda, not only uses the media as a means of communication but also as a strategic tool to counter the rebel narrative. Government propaganda aimed to build solidarity and mobilize public support, creating a positive story about efforts to deal with the rebellion. In facing the challenge of propaganda, society also needs to be more critical of the information it receives. Increased awareness of the potential for manipulation and diversity of information sources can help the public distinguish between facts and propaganda. As a media user, the responsibility to check the veracity of information is becoming increasingly important. Thus, in dealing with the impact of the media in spreading propaganda by rebel groups in Indonesia, especially the KKB Papua Armed Separatist Movement, wise and informed steps are needed. Government, media and society have a significant role in shaping social reality and creating a healthy information environment.

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