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ISLAM, CYBERSPACE AND POST-TRUTH: EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Fake news, Post-truth, Era digital, Cyberspace, Epistemologi Islam

Studi ini mengurai bagaimana Islam mengambil posisi dalam menyikapi post-truth yang kerap muncul di ruang digital, terutama pada saat menghadapi momentum politik. Secara faktual, post-truth terkait langsung dengan masalah kebenaran, karena itu ia beririsan dengan epistemologi. Studi ini menawarkan perpaduan antara taxonomy fake news dengan epistemologi Islam Murtadba Mutabbari sebagai frame work menyikapi post-truth. Melalui pendekatan penyatuan horizon Gadamer, pendeteksi post truth dan horizon epistemologi Islam, basil studi menemukan bahwa post-truth berjangkar pada masalah bias kognitif manusia, di mana mereka cenderung percaya terhadap sesuatu yang mereka ingin percaya sebagai kebenaran. Sedangkan karakteristik utama kebohongan di ruang maya adalah misrepresentasi, bias media, pencucian informasi, penipuan statistik, kekeliruan basil pemilu, dan lain sejenisnya. Berbagai kerangka kebohongan tersebut perlu dihadapkan pada upaya verifikasi, korespondensi, dan kebersihan jiwa ala epistemologi Islam Murtadba Mutabbari.

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Abstract

Keywords:
Fake news,
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Digital Age,
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Islamic
epistemology

This study describes how Islam responds to the post-truth that frequently appears in the digital sphere, especially when political momentum is involved. Post-truth connects with epistemology since, factually, it is intimately tied to the question of truth. This study provides a paradigm for dealing with post-truth by combining the taxonomy of fake news with the Islamic epistemology of Murtadha Mutahhari. Using the horizon of post-truth detection and the Islamic epistemological horizon, the method integrates Gadamer's horizons. According to the study's findings, post-truth stems from the issue of human cognitive bias, which occurs when people tend to accept what they want to think to be true. Meanwhile, misrepresentation, media bias, information laundering, statistical deceit, manipulation of election results, and similar practices are the main traits of falsehoods in the virtual world. In line with Murtadha Mutahhari's Islamic epistemology, the multiple frameworks of these lies must be challenged with efforts at verification, correspondence, and soul purity.

Introduction

The 21st century is a time when—to borrow Manuel Castells' words—the virtual world can build the real world. With this, Castells would like to point out the ability of information technology (after this, referred to as IT) to present the effect or entity of an event in fact, even though the event or entity is not accurate.¹ Before Castells' formulation became popular, Baudrillard had attributed the term to this phenomenon as simulacra. At its peak, virtual reality, which seemed natural, reached its culmination in the era of social media and online media. This becomes important considering that various pieces of information are spread every second on the internet and shape public opinion about, for example, politics. So, various community activities on the internet, especially access to information, must be balanced with qualified filtering.

Whether in print, electronic, or online, information produced is never sterile from interest. On the economic plane, the media are interested in producing information to gain economic benefits; media

¹ Rahma Sugihartati, *Perkembangan Masyarakat Informasi dan Teori Sosial Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2014).

owners can produce information to shape public perceptions; and politicians can produce information—in a variety of ways—to win contested votes. For the sake of these various interests, it is not uncommon for reality to be shaped in such a way, even though it violates the facts, to shape public emotions and achieve specific goals. This phenomenon is then called post-truth.² Symptoms where emotions are more important as long as they can legitimize beliefs, even though the facts show the opposite.

Samantha Bradshaw and Philip N. Howard concluded that in 70 countries, including Indonesia, there are efforts to lead public opinion through the internet, in this case, social media.³ Politicians and political parties in Indonesia—still referring to research by Bradshaw and Howard—finance cyber troops to manipulate public opinion to cause disinformation.⁴ In the 2019 political year, you can see a lot of commotion related to oblique news that befell certain political parties or figures. The above is the result of mutual attacks between parties to win votes. As a result, the public is not only led to their opinion; more than that, the public is confused about accurate information. That can include this disinformation phenomenon in the post-truth phenomenon: global politics, especially in the context of Donald Trump, has become the trigger for the word post-truth to become famous and widely studied.⁵

² One definition of post truth is to build a world view and refuse to back down from it; or accept doubtful evidence. While the main definition of post truth is a situation where objective facts are less influential on the formation of public opinion than emotional factors and personal beliefs. See Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018).

³ Samantha Bradshaw and Philip N. Howard, “The Global Disinformation: Order 2019 Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation” (UK: Oxford University, 2020), <https://demtech.oxi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2019/09/CyberTroop-Report19.pdf>.

⁴ The media used are Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Furthermore, this research shows that politicians use robots and buzzers to create content that supports themselves, and topples opposition. This research also shows that buzzers in Indonesia get paid between 1-50 million rupiah. Bradshaw and Howard, “The Global Disinformation Order: 2019 Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation.”

⁵ Ilan Zvi Baron, *How to Save Politics in a Post-Truth Era: Thinking Through Difficult Times* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 174.

As a discourse, many previous studies have tried to portray post-truth from various paradigms. For example, Cika Anugerah et al. explore post-truth and provide a framework for ethical solutions, according to al-Kindi. The research concluded that one could find truth through ethics, and the first source of truth, namely God, should be the main anchor.⁶ Rubadi delves into the emergence of Islamic populism in Indonesia within the framework of a post-truth environment.⁷ At the same time, taking other variables, Moh. Dulkiah and Paelani Setia examined the pattern of hoaxes spread among students. They concluded that students had three patterns of spreading hoaxes: limited dissemination, general deployment, and interrupted distribution.⁸ Another similar study, in the global scope, was written by Maria D. Molina et al.;⁹ Nathan Walter et al.;¹⁰ Cristian Vaccari;¹¹ C. Thi Nguyen;¹² Silvio Waisboard.¹³ To make it easier to see the position and novelty of this research, it is depicted in the following chart:

⁶ Cika Anugerah Septiyadi et al., “Truth dan Post-Truth dalam Perspektif Al-Kindi pada Era Milenial,” *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial dan Sains* 9, no. 2 (July 2, 2020): 225–32, <https://doi.org/10.19109/intelektualita.v9i2.4523>.

⁷ Rubaidi Rubaidi, “Islamic Populism in Post-Truth Indonesia,” *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 15, no. 02 (October 2, 2020): 265–86, <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2020.15.02.265-286>.

⁸ Moh Dulkiah, “Pola Penyebaran Hoaks pada Kalangan Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Islam di Bandung Jawa Barat,” *SMaRT* 06, no. 02 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v6i2.978>.

⁹ Maria D. Molina et al., “‘Fake News’ Is Not Simply False Information: A Concept Explication and Taxonomy of Online Content,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 65, no. 2 (February 2021): 180–212, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219878224>.

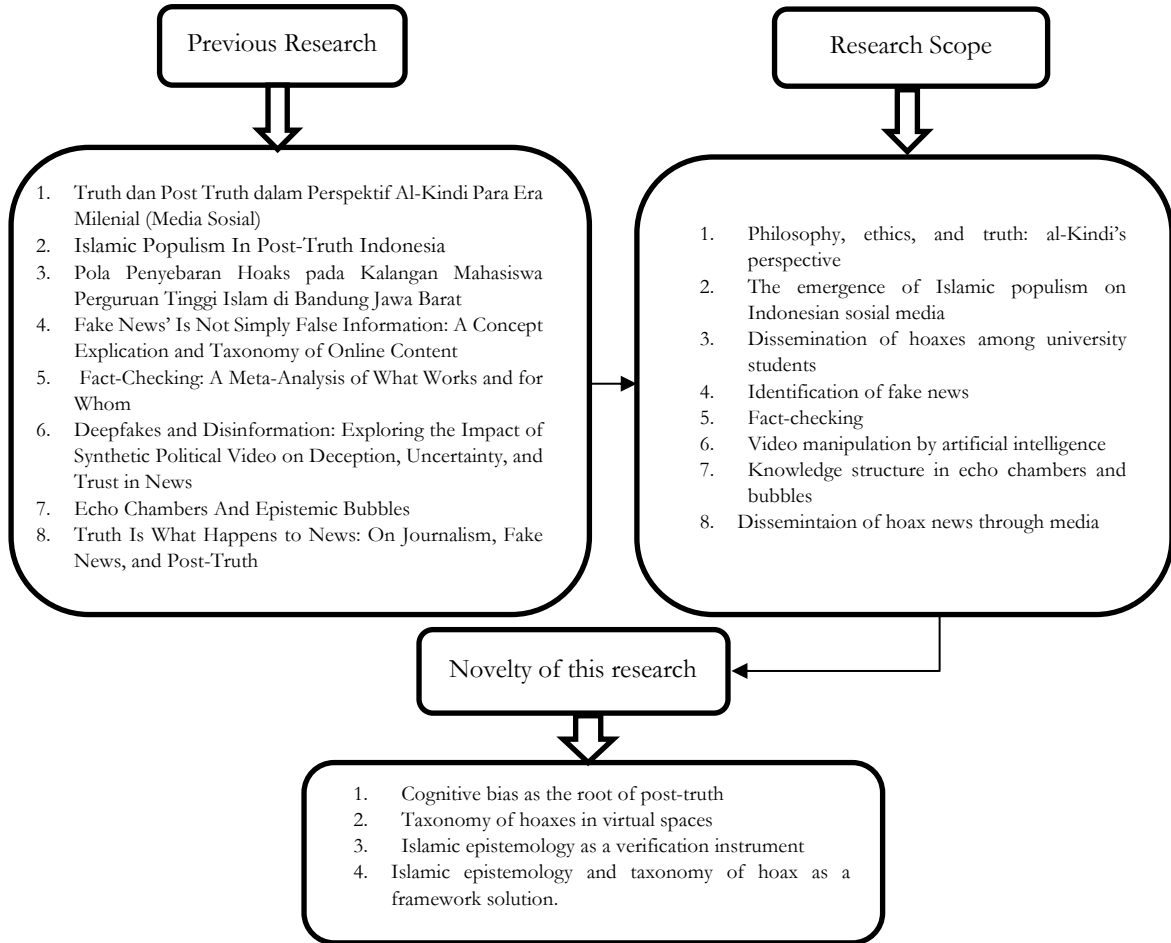
¹⁰ Nathan Walter et al., “Fact-Checking: A Meta-Analysis of What Works and for Whom,” *Political Communication* 37, no. 3 (May 3, 2020): 350–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1668894>.

¹¹ Cristian Vaccari and Andrew Chadwick, “Deepfakes and Disinformation: Exploring the Impact of Synthetic Political Video on Deception, Uncertainty, and Trust in News,” *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 1 (January 2020): 2056305120903408, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120903408>.

¹² C. Thi Nguyen, “Echo Chambers And Epistemic Bubbles,” *Episteme* 17, no. 2 (June 2020): 141–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2018.32>.

¹³ Silvio Waisbord, “Truth Is What Happens to News: On Journalism, Fake News, and Post-Truth,” *Journalism Studies* 19, no. 13 (October 3, 2018): 1866–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1492881>.

Figure (1): an earlier research map



The studies above have their own unique features. At a certain point, they still have gab-research, which will be the main discussion in this research: post-truth seen from the paradigm of contemporary theology or Islamic philosophy. Although Cika Anugerah's observations have raised al-Kindi, post-truth is a matter of determining the truth, so further exploration is needed in the area of epistemology, not just ethics. While global research addresses the technical aspects of fake news from various paradigms, it does not propose Islamic epistemology as a solution. In addition, this research will provide a basis for post-truth cognitive bias,

which is the starting point for why post-truth has become a symptom in the public sphere due to psychological effects. Finally, that will add it to the taxonomy of fake news. Thus, through the formulation of cognitive bias, Islamic epistemology, the taxonomy of fake news, will become a link that forms a hybrid framework for solutions in responding to the post-truth era.

Dynamics of Cyberspace: From Public Space to Social Simulacra

Information society is a term that refers to post-industrial civilization, with the significant development of the information revolution. Many thinkers have expressed views regarding recent developments. Daniel Bell is the first sociologist to study the development of digital communication media. According to Bell, there are two main indications of developments in the information sector: the invention of miniature electronic and optical circuits capable of accelerating the flow of information through networks and the integration of computer and telecommunications processes into an integrated technology known as communication.¹⁴

Manuel Castells, underscoring Daniel Bell's ideas, stated that in addition to the development of highly sophisticated IT, the era of the information revolution gave rise to what he calls authentic virtual culture: a new socio-cultural system in which reality is fully encompassed and included in the set of virtual images and fantasy. In this "new" world, displays are not only on the screen where experiences are communicated, but they become experiences themselves.¹⁵ Thus, reality is not just something tangible that can be sensed but has shifted to virtual reality. Thus, was born culture and a virtual community.

The internet as a new form of global communication network has given rise to distinctive forms of its community (virtual community), its

¹⁴ Rahma Sugihartati. *Perkembangan Masyarakat Informasi dan Teori Sosial Kontemporer*. Jakarta: Kencana, 2014. 83.

¹⁵ Rahmad Sugihartati. *Perkembangan Masyarakat Informasi dan Teori Sosial Kontemporer*. Jakarta: Kencana, 2014.

form of reality (virtual reality), and its form of space (cyberspace). Computer technology, coupled with the presence of the internet, allows its users to explore space and time without limits. The community of online fans has developed into a group that interacts with each other via the internet, develops its own culture, and communicates intensively even though they may never have met before. This phenomenon later became one of the attributes of globalization.

According to Yasraf Amir Brokerage, globalization is one of the main drivers of social, economic, political, and cultural change. Globalization is not a single concept because it has various meanings. On the one hand, globalization is described as a tendency toward unification, alliance, interdependence, and homogenization, which has created a world without borders, an open society, and a global culture. On the other hand, globalization is described as a tendency toward separatism, autonomy, decentralization, diversity, plurality, exchange, and hybridity, which a global principle cannot unite.¹⁶ A further consequence of the existence of this information technology is the emergence of a phenomenon called Piliang with a "digital narrative". The term refers to the phenomenon of the sequence of human life in today's world being shaped by various information technology systems: Facebook, Twitter, digital money, etc.¹⁷ However foreign at first, this type of narrative has created ways of life that were previously unthinkable: without concrete space.

Unfortunately, life without concrete space has a negative effect, and it replaces direct experience with artificial visual images. As a result, humans are led to dissociation from the world of reality, the effect of which is specific crises in the social, cultural, and moral order, such as social paranoia, anxiety, haste, and impatience. At its peak, the virtual world carries the character of anonymity--the loss of the true identity of

¹⁶ Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Dunia yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmagoria* (Yogyakarta: Cantrik Pustaka, 2017) h, 146.

¹⁷ Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Dunia yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmagoria*.

something.¹⁸ Many things then don't have stable, hard-coded names. Everyone can show himself by any name. This condition opens up space for anyone to display an image, symbol, or identity, not to reveal the truth but to distort it. The result is—to borrow Baudrillard's term—social simulacra: a model of social relations that seems fundamental and essential, but in reality, it is full of manipulation.¹⁹

Information Politics Manuel Castells and Post Truth

Baudrillard has anxiety related to distortion in the world of information, which he calls social simulacra. Manuel Castells, more disquieting, says that the various pieces of information are produced by the bureaucracy and the elite to create public opinion with a particular interest. If the typical form of the Information Age is a network society, then the politics that mark this age are "information politics." In the new political system, various media (print, electronic, and the internet) can become political arenas. Not in the sense of dominating politics, but the logic and organization of the media into the frame and structure of politics,²⁰ because the media connects citizens with their political actions. In the context of democratic politics, the image of politicians depends on the media, which gets public attention.²¹ Citizens get information through the media itself. So, to gain support and influence the community, political parties use the media. And because the media is still a business with a measure of success in attracting a large audience—this is the main criterion for advertisers as the primary source of funding—the media must be pretty close to political and government news sources.²²

¹⁸ Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Dunia yang Berlari: Dromologi, Implosi, Fantasmagoria* h, 147.

¹⁹ See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ithaca: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

²⁰ Adeline M.T, "Politik Informasional dan Krisis Demokrasi," in *Hermeneutika Pascakolonial: Soal Identitas* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2004).

²¹ F. Budi Hardiman, "Komersialisasi Ruang Publik Menurut Hannah Arent dan Jurgen Habermas," in *Ruang Publik: Melacak Partisipasi Demokratis dari Polis Sampai Cyberspace* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017).

²² F. Budi Hardiman, "Komersialisasi Ruang Publik Menurut Hannah Arent dan Jurgen Habermas," in *Ruang Publik: Melacak Partisipasi Demokratis dari Polis Sampai Cyberspace*

Castells gave an example of America as a place for information politics. Initially, there were three interconnected processes: the declining popularity of political parties; the emergence of complex media systems; and the development of political marketing. The logic of American media and other countries today is a contestation of viewership ratings, so it competes with entertainment programs. As a result, the development of political media is similar to entertainment, and personalization occurs: it is more attractive to political figures than their political thoughts.²³ Coupled with the news jargon "bad news is good news," political news tends to kill opponents personally.

In practice, information politics has become a political scandal. The media as the fourth pillar of democracy is a double-edged sword: it can be used as a supporter of the dominant structure and its breakthrough. Unfortunately, the global political economy trend tends to use communication media as a supporter of dominant power. The problem will be complicated if the politicians have their significant media, and then the media space becomes an arena for discourse battles. In Indonesia itself, several prominent media outlets are owned by certain politicians who compete. The implication is clear: in the political years, the content of big media has a bias of interests. At this point, that will quickly influence the alliteration society. At a certain point, information politics became the basis for the birth of post-truth.²⁴

Post-truth emerged on the public surface and became widely used because of the political contestation,²⁵ mainly anchored in Donald Trump's victory in America in 2016. In that year, the use of this term

(Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017) 69.

²³ F. Budi Hardiman, "Komersialisasi Ruang Publik Menurut Hannah Arent dan Jurgen Habermas," in *Ruang Publik: Melacak Partisipasi Demokratis dari Polis Sampai Cyberspace* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017) 71.

²⁴ Rubaidi, Rubaidi. "Islamic Populism In Post-Truth Indonesia." *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 15, no. 02 (October 2, 2020): 265–86. <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2020.15.02.265-286>.

²⁵ Steve Fuller, *Post-Truth: Knowledge as a Power Game* (UK & USA: Anthem Press, 2018).

increased by 2000 per cent.²⁶ Trump is considered a character who likes to make claims without evidence, and because of that, the term post-truth is often attributed to him. He once said that if he lost, it would be clear that he had cheated. This claim is made with emotional sentiment because it is not based on facts, except persuasion to the public before the final results of the vote are shown. After the election, Trump claimed—also without supporting evidence—that he won the popular vote, though the facts were reversed.

At the inauguration ceremony, Trump also claimed that he had the most significant electoral victory since Reagan; his inauguration was the most festive ceremony in the history of the inauguration of American presidents.²⁷ This symptom of a politician's lies has become more widespread since Trump has made blatant claims without evidence.²⁸ Turkey, Russia, and Hungary are countries with politicians who often campaign with disinformation; they dare to bend the facts to fit their opinion. According to McIntyre, this destructive phenomenon cannot be generalized as a campaign that says facts are unnecessary but rather as a phenomenon that can select facts and be presented in a political context that supports one interpretation.²⁹ This later gave rise to the term alternative fact in Trump circles.

Looking at the pattern of information politics and the Trump phenomenon, post-truth is not just a lie but an attack on the concept of truth itself. Truth is no longer a matter of correspondence, coherence, and so on, but how rationality is used to construct "alternative truths"—not to tell lies.³⁰ According to McIntyre, there are several types of lying. You must understand that. For example, willful ignorance is when someone doesn't know about something but still makes the point without any effort to track

²⁶ Lee, McIntyre. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018.1

²⁷ Sharon Rider, "On Knowing How to Tell the Truth," in *Post-Truth, Fake News: Viral Modernity and Higher Education* (Singapore: Springer, 2018).

²⁸ Lee, McIntyre. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge: h, 3.

²⁹ Lee, McIntyre. *Post-Truth*. Cambridge: h, 3-4.

³⁰ Steve Fuller. *Post-Truth: Knowledge as a Power Game*. UK & USA: Anthem Press, 2018.

down further information. One step after willful ignorance is lying, i.e., the awareness to deceive others. Psychologically, a person has no burden if he tells a lie without anyone listening. At this point, the definition emerges: lies always have an audience. Deliberate lying is when someone intends to manipulate facts so that people believe something that the liar knows is not true.³¹

Political lies have many other layers. A politician can tell lies, but he may be trapped in cynicism, delusion, or indifference. But it can be said that all of these points are counterproductive to the truth, so they can be categorized as post-truth.³² What Trump and many other politicians have done in the world is an extension of information politics. Information politics and post-truth are closely intertwined; even post-truth and information politics cause various cultural shocks because public lies are shown without boundaries.³³ On the broader landscape, information politics is only one scene from post-truth because, looking at the basic pattern, post-truth has long roots in various contexts.

Cognitive Bias as the Root of Post-Truth

In McIntyre's view, one of the roots of post-truth that must be realized is cognitive bias: that in the aspect of human rationality, there is a particular bias so that what is considered rational is sometimes an extension of the human ego. Because it is still related to the ego, psychological experiments become an essential basis for cognitive bias. The central concept of psychology is that humans tend to avoid psychic suffering, for example, by accepting wrong facts about themselves. It is more pleasant for a person to think that he is intelligent, knowledgeable, and capable of many things than to think otherwise.³⁴ Therefore, psychic

³¹Lee McIntyre, *Post-Truth*. Cambridge: h, 8.

³²Ignas Kalpokas, *A Political Theory of Post-Truth* (New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2018), 9–22.

³³Stuart Sim, *Post-Truth, Scepticism, and Power* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), h. 35-36.

³⁴Stuart Sim, *Post-Truth, Scepticism, and Power*, h. 35-36.

tension occurs when factual information contradicts one's beliefs, and to overcome this tension, a person is faced with a tug of war over whether to maintain their beliefs or choose factual information. Critical research to explain cognitive bias includes cognitive dissonance, source amnesia, repetition of information, motivated reasons, and confirmation bias.

Cognitive dissonance is a term that Leon Festinger coined after conducting various studies in 1957. According to Festinger, humans instinctively seek harmony between beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Ultimately, the primary purpose of such harmony is to preserve self-esteem.³⁵ He concluded this opinion after conducting experiments. Festinger gave very tedious tasks to the subjects; some were rewarded with one dollar, while others were rewarded with 20 dollars. While doing the assignment, other subjects were waiting their turn to do the same task. And after the subjects completed the task, they were asked to inform the next subject that the task was enjoyable.

Festinger found that subjects rewarded with a dollar made an effort to say the task was fun. At the same time, the subject who received a reward of 20 dollars did not show the same enthusiasm. Because, according to Festinger, there is ego at stake. Subjects paid one dollar more have the burden of convincing other subjects that the task is fun, even though they are only paid one dollar because what they inform represents their self-worth.³⁶ The subject understood that he was only paid one dollar, which is quite a low figure. But precisely because he was low, he was more trying to convince others. He builds an image that he is right, even though he is not. In other words, the more contradictory the facts and the ego are, the more defensive a person's attitude towards them becomes.

Festinger's conclusions certainly extend to larger areas; for example, what if cognitive dissonance is involved in more complex phenomena? Festinger gave an example of a group that believed that the world's end

³⁵ Stuart Sim, *Post-Truth, Scepticism, and Power*, h. 37.

³⁶ Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (California: Stanford University Press, 1957).

would occur on December 21, 1954. Dorothy Martin was the chairperson of this group, and she instructed all her followers to sell all their possessions. On December 21 of that year, they gathered at one point to await the apocalypse. But the apocalypse did not happen, and Martin made a new announcement that the prayers of his followers were so strong that they answered them. According to Festinger, it is easy to judge the above phenomena as lies and stupidity. But basically, humans suffer from cognitive dissonance. There is a tendency to think irrationally, especially if you live in an environment that believes in similar irrationality. It is difficult for someone to get out of that belief.

Furthermore, according to McIntyre, another essential term for advocates of understanding cognitive bias is source amnesia. A person remembers what was read, seen, and heard but does not remember whether it was from a reliable source.³⁷ Does this have a point of relevance in explaining where these irrational beliefs come from? In addition, the "repetition effect" is also significant: a person may believe something that is said repeatedly and consistently, even though the information is wrong. Hitler's propagandist, Paul Joseph Goebbels, who popularized the phenomenon, said that a lie that he told over and over would become the truth.

An important term to complement cognitive bias is "motivated reasoning": what is expected to be true becomes the perception of truth. In other words, motivated reasoning is a reasoning system that is carried out to support what is believed to be the truth. Motivated reasoning is also the reason for someone's motives for donating. When a person experiences psychic discomfort, he tends to be motivated to find non-ego-threatening ways to reduce the psychic stress, leading to the accommodation of the irrational aspect. Another concept that complements motivated reasoning is confirmation bias, or conformational

³⁷ Leon Festinger. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (California: Stanford University Press, 1957) 44.

bias: a person's motive is to seek arguments that support one's beliefs while setting aside all arguments that contradict one's beliefs. Therefore, motivated reasoning and confirmation bias often intertwine to create delusions for the believer and cognitive bias.

In the area of implications, all of the above biases will make the problem even more complex when it comes to social media. Because a person can set what information he wants, which groups he wants to be friends with on Facebook, or which figures he wants to follow on Instagram or Twitter. In other words, a person can surround himself with the ideas he wants, and this is the fundamental point from which various biases occur, as already explained. As a tool that can also be used as a disseminator of truth in the factual area, social media can manifest itself as a source of bias.

Hybrid Framework Reading Post-Truth

It is not easy to parse information to arrive at the point of determining whether the information is true or false. Even though the cause of lying is a psychological aspect, let's look further to find out whether a piece of information is authentic or not. It is close to the epistemological domain; because of that, an epistemological insight contextualized with the latest observation tools will lead to a problem-solving synthesis of the post-truth phenomenon. As an effort to focus on exploration, the epistemology that will be described is the Islamic epistemology of Murtadha Mutahhari because he is an up-to-date figure who knows the maps of previous philosophers' debates. Thus, his basis is quite strong, and the exploration of his ideas can be relevant.

The starting point of Mutahhari's epistemology is the definition of truth—a point relevant to post-truth because post-truth is related to truth. He explains the earlier debate about the notion of truth. The most basic understanding of truth is a thought, idea, or opinion that follows reality.³⁸ It means the truth of the correspondence. He said that the definition is

³⁸ Murtadha Mutahhari, *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam* (Jakarta: Sathra Press, 2010), h. 207.
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fair in the context of sensory, natural, and experimental knowledge. Still, this definition cannot be used in all knowledge contexts, for example, mathematics, because mathematics explains the laws and rules that, for Mutahhari, are not directly tied to the objective-empirical realm. All non-empirical knowledge, such as logic, mentality, and psychology, is difficult to verify using the corresponding definition.³⁹

Because of the weakness of the first definition, philosophers make a second definition, and proper knowledge is if the knowledge is following other knowledge. This definition presupposes that there is no contradiction between one knowledge and another. If there is a contradiction, then the knowledge is not valid.⁴⁰ He further explained that the second truth is a collective agreement, namely where one society agrees on a piece of specific knowledge, especially of scientists, scholars, philosophers, and scholars agree on one thing, then it is true. The definition at first glance seems solid because it requires that there are no contradictions between knowledge; there is no dispute between scientists, but in fact, the truth can be agreed upon at one time but refuted at another.⁴¹ That is, something that was initially thought to be true can be wrong at another time, the first knowledge stands on a fragile footing, and since that can revise each knowledge in the next, every knowledge rests on a weak argument.

Mutahhari explained the definition of the third truth. Truth is the product of the mind's power in the objective realm, and since every thought has a point of view, truth does have many views. At one point, a person can sense an object and come to two different conclusions.⁴² Mutahhari, for example, gives an example of a person with jaundice; he

³⁹ Murtadha, Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 207

⁴⁰ Murtadha, Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 207.

⁴¹ See Thomas S. Kuhn and Ian Hacking, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Fourth edition (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, 3rd ed (London; New York: Verso, 1993).

⁴² Mikael Stenmark, *Relativism and Post-Truth in Contemporary Society: Possibilities and Challenges* (New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2018), 21.

will see all objects with a yellowish color. At the same time, people with normal eyes will see the same object in standard colors. At this point, the question arises: which of the two is correct? According to the third theory, both have the truth.

Mutahhari gives another example: if he immerses his right hand at 60 degrees Celsius and his left hand at 0 degrees Celsius, then he immerses both hands at 20 degrees Celsius. The two hands will have different sensory perceptions. The third definition, or theory, of truth is based on relativity. Something can be said to be valid if it follows perceptions but can be wrong with other perceptions, or that can say that everything is true according to their respective perceptions. Although we can apply this definition, the problem is that there is a specific objective reality. The temperature of 20 degrees is an objective reality that can be measured and studied, so the third truth has a fragile footing, like the previous truth.

The fourth theory of truth Mutahhari explains: truth is knowledge supported by experiments. Natural science then uses this definition with a simple rule: put forward a rational hypothesis and prove it with empirical facts and experimental tests.⁴³ This definition rests on solid arguments at the factual level, but scientists are also fully aware that knowledge and theory can change. Therefore, even this kind of truth can change. Of the four theories of truth, according to Mutahhari, what is important to realize is the balance of knowledge, which is the knowledge used to measure other knowledge.⁴⁴ About post-truth, Mutahhari's idea that can be used as a foothold is the definition of the first truth, namely, that information can be said to be valid if it is following reality.

We will synthesize the definition with a "balance of knowledge," a measuring tool to justify whether a piece of information is true or false. Although Mutahhari did not explain specifically—in fact, he had difficulties—what kind of science can be used as a balance of knowledge,⁴⁵

⁴³ Murtadha Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 218.

⁴⁴ Murtadha, Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 218.

⁴⁵ He said that one of the instruments to create a knowledge balance is the use of intuition, *fu'ad*, but this use is difficult to apply in the context of reading post truth on social

because the balance of knowledge includes no less knowledge. Still, the instrument of proof is one of the ideas he put forward. Thus, when dealing with information, in order not to get stuck in post-truth, one can use verification instruments. At this point, Mutahhari's framework carries two epistemic articulations: a conceptual set of truths and an interpretive device through verification efforts. Applying the Gadamerian approach, both of these points become the main horizons for post-truth reading.

As a Muslim philosopher, Mutahhari's principles are related to the Islamic dimension, especially the Koran. He does not explicitly say that experimentation or verification is the only source of justification, but he underlines that "practice" is one of the keys to knowledge.⁴⁶ Furthermore, he pays attention to the fact that to achieve knowledge, which can distinguish right from wrong, humans must connect with an attitude of righteousness. According to Mutahhari,⁴⁷ the Surah Al-Anfal, verse 29, becomes a vital basis. This verse literally discusses how the quality of piety can enable someone to possess *furqan*, the ability to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong.

Mutahhari gives a definite meaning from the Al-Anfal, verse 29, as a guide to righteousness and as a starting point for obtaining a specific tool in the heart. According to him, this verse is also an extension of the attitude of cleansing the soul to be sensitive to the truth.⁴⁸ Mutahhari's epistemological principles have a close relationship with Islamic ethics itself, which is reflected in terms of righteousness. This can be a principle that overcomes ethical problems in post-truth, where cognitive bias shows that it is not only the way people understand that is problematic, but ego and psychological problems play an important role. Thus, epistemology

media or online media. One of the rationalizations of the intuitive approach was carried out by Muhammad Iqbal, who said that intuitive knowledge is very empirical in nature, and, therefore, is validly considered as an epistemology. See Muhammad Iqbal, *Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Religius Dalam Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 2016).

⁴⁶ Murtadha Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 225.

⁴⁷ Murtadha Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 83.

⁴⁸ Murtadha Mutahhari. *Pengantar Epistemologi Islam*, h. 83.

and ethics become a unified instrument in Mutahhari's formulation and overcome the post-truth problem, which has two dimensions: ethics and epistemology.

Mutahhari did not formulate specific instruments regarding post-truth verification procedures. Still, the verification principle he meant was testing knowledge with specific measuring instruments to be valid. If the experimental knowledge is chemical knowledge, the testing procedure must be a chemical test procedure. Therefore, the knowledge balance for post-truth needs to be equipped with general principles for clarifying a piece of news or phenomenon. If we take a closer look, post-truth is born and lives with the momentum of technology. Hence, an approach from a broader perspective is necessary, especially in terms of the shape of post-truth characteristics on social media and the characteristics of the technology itself. For this reason, we will look at several taxonomies of fake news before becoming a foothold in verification efforts. Mutahhari's horizon must merge with the taxonomy horizon of fake news.

Fake news can be interpreted as new reports based on fictitious accounts that appear genuine and factual.⁴⁹ As fake news becomes more diverse, the definitions of fake news or news continue to change through various paradigms such as journalism, media studies, computer science, and philosophy. And the general definition has been agreed upon: fake news is fictitious information presented to the public under the guise of being factual information, with the intent to mislead or provide false information.⁵⁰ In the end, fake news also intersects with other elements such as parody, political satire, hoaxes, and propaganda, thus creating disproportionate parallels. In recent developments, it has also been distinguished between misinformation and disinformation. The first is

⁴⁹ Mark Chong and Murphy Choy, "An Empirically Supported Taxonomy of Misinformation," in *Navigating Fake News, Alternative Facts, and Misinformation in a Post Truth World* (USA: IGI Global, 2020).

⁵⁰ Mark Chong and Murphy Choy. "An Empirically Supported Taxonomy of Misinformation." In *Navigating Fake News, Alternative Facts, and Misinformation in a Post Truth World*. USA: IGI Global, 2020.

sharing false information by accident, while the second is knowingly sharing fake news.

As a result of the problems above, to determine the taxonomy of fake news and to define fake news, the vital starting point is to know the definition of real news—or better known as 'news'—namely the power of an independent and reliable journalistic channel to present information accurately, and with standards. Morals and ethics. Journalistic standards must present news neutrally and impartially, have been verified with appropriate sources, and be accurate and factual.⁵¹ However, it is not uncommon for quality journalism to present various interest biases, as has been presented in the previous section. Journalists sometimes also engage in community construction for economic purposes. As a result, the news produced is vulnerable to being influenced by the public (political and economic bias), and on the other hand, the personal bias of journalists.⁵² Therefore, the character of the news is *first* presented in a neutral, balanced, and non-inflammatory manner. *Second*, it can be verified by sources or independent parties within reasonable limits. *Third*, accurate and factual, based on information available or provided by sources. *Fourth*, comprehensive: no malicious censorship, modification, or manipulation.⁵³

The definition of false information, or fake news, can be defined as news that does not meet the above characteristics. From these definitions, the most straightforward taxonomy of fake news is: authentic material used in the wrong context; fake news sites are designed to look like credible sites; false information or images; manipulative content; and parody. As a starting point, the taxonomy shows no signs of being "invisible," so it still leaves a problem of its own. From the various existing

⁵¹ Mark Chong and Murphy Choy. "An Empirically Supported Taxonomy of Misinformation." In *Navigating Fake News, Alternative Facts, and Misinformation in a Post Truth World*. USA: IGI Global, 2020. 118.

⁵² Bruce McComiskey, *Post-Truth Ebetoric and Composition*, Current Arguments in Composition (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2017), 9; David Block, *Post-Truth and Political Discourse* (New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2018).

⁵³ Ignatus Hariyanto, *Jurnalisme Era Digital: Tantangan Industri Media Abad 21* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2014).

taxonomies, Mark Chong and Murphy Choy started on the following taxonomies:⁵⁴

Table (1): First taxonomy⁵⁵

| 7 types of misinformation and disinformation taxonomy | |
|---|---|
| Type | Description |
| Satire or parody | No malicious intent but potentially deceptive |
| Misleading content | Use of misleading information to frame problems |
| Fraudulent content | When the original source is plagiarized |
| Artificial content | Content 100% false and made to cheat |
| Wrong connection | When titles, visuals and text don't support content |
| Fake content | When the main content is shared with the wrong contextual information |
| Content manipulated | When images or information are manipulated to deceive |

Table (2): first taxonomic matrix

| Misinformation Matrix | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | Satire/ parody | False connection | Misleading content | Fake context | Deceptive content | Manipulated content | Contrived content |
| Bad journalism | | X | X | X | | | |
| For parody | X | | | | X | | X |
| For provocation | | | | | X | X | X |
| Desire partiality | | | | X | | | |
| profit | | X | | | X | | |
| Political influence | | | X | X | | X | X |
| propaganda | | | X | X | X | X | X |

⁵⁴ Chong, Mark, and Murphy Choy. "An Empirically Supported Taxonomy of Misinformation." In *Navigating Fake News, Alternative Facts, and Misinformation in a Post Truth World*. USA: IGI Global, 2020. 120.

⁵⁵ Claire Wardle and Hosen Derakhshan, *Information Disorder: Toward Interdisciplinary Frame Work for Research Adn Policy Making* (Europe: Council of Europe, 2017).

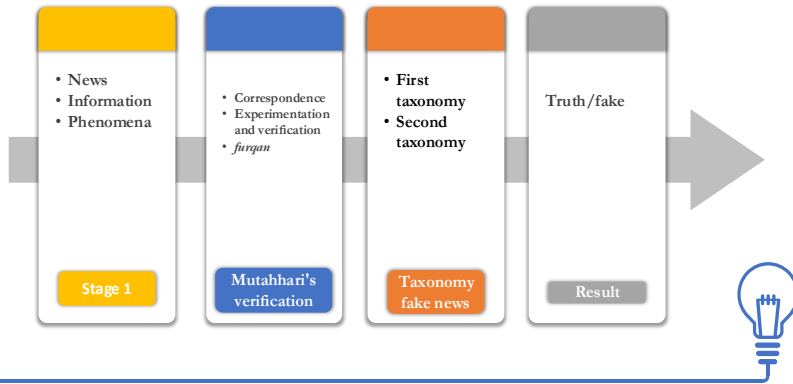
Tabel (3): Second taxonomy⁵⁶

| Area | Manipulation Type | Manipulation Technique |
|-------|------------------------------|---|
| Media | Misrepresentation | Misrepresentation |
| | Media Bias | Nationalism distraction Fallacy Black sheep distraction Phenomenon distraction Semantic distraction Regression distraction Misleading distraction Scary distraction Appeal consensus Sensor Opposition Demonization Fright |
| | Information washing | <i>Pink washing</i> <i>Green washing</i> <i>White washing</i> <i>Blue washing</i> |
| | Statistical scam | Discard unfavorable data Overgeneralization Sample bias False causality Confusing statistical significance Data dredging Data manipulation Wrong reporting wrong estimate |
| | Mistakes in election results | "Sanitary barrier" |

The first taxonomy above is more accessible to benchmarks, although it has some drawbacks. The second taxonomy is more comprehensive and can cover a variety of fake news contexts. Through the taxonomy above, Mutahhari's verification model can be applied. Mutahhari's epistemology, which is still tied to ethics, functions as an internal compass before synthesizing an empirical taxonomy of fake news. In the outline of the chart, the relationship between the two points gives rise to the model framework as follows:

⁵⁶ Wardle Claire and Hosen Derakhshan. Information Disorder: Toward Interdisciplinary Frame Work for Research Adn Policy Making. Europe: Council of Europe, 2017. 122.

Figure 2: hybrid of epistemology



The image above is a reflection of the integration of Mutahhari's Islamic epistemological horizon with the taxonomy of fake news. From the image above, it can be concluded that Mutahhari's verification instrument is directly linked to the measurement tools for fake news characteristics. To verify, one needs to read the entirety of the news, applying the first and second taxonomic frameworks: whether there is a discrepancy between the title and the content of the news; whether there is misleading information framing the issue; whether there is generalization; whether the news source is not credible; and so on. Furthermore, fake news can also be detected through comparison, an effort to compare one piece of news with various similar news items, thereby creating a comprehensive picture of the news.

Through the integration of Gadamer's horizon,⁵⁷ Mutahhari's verification principles, which remain general in nature, can be translated into concrete and applicable terms in the context of post-truth reading. Through this operational approach, Islamic epistemology can take a position on contemporary issues. The significant value of Mutahhari's epistemic thought lies in the interconnectedness of one knowledge with

⁵⁷ F. Budi Hardiman, *Seni Memahami: Hermeneutika dari Schleiermacher Hingga Derrida* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015), 180–86.

another, which he refers to as the “balance of knowledge”. This means that one form of knowledge—in the context of post-truth, it can be discourse or news—must be examined in relation to other knowledge, whether through correspondence, coherence, or *furqaan*. Viewed through al-Jabiri, Mutahhari's epistemology is a combination of *burhani* and *'irfani*.⁵⁸ Thus, the main advantage of Mutahhari's reading is the placement of instinctive sharpness as the key to reading reality. This operational step establishes a dialogue between Islamic scholarship and contemporary knowledge to address post truth issues.

Conclusion

This research has unraveled how Islam positions itself in the development of post-truth, both in the context of political discourse and general discourse. It can be concluded that the main finding of this research is that post-truth is rooted in the cognitive bias of human conditions. Observing the patterns that have unfolded, political battles often become fertile ground for the proliferation of post-truth, and biased conditions can exacerbate the spread of fake news. The proposed solution to address post-truth involves a hybrid approach between Islamic epistemology in the style of Murtada Mutahhari and the taxonomy of fake news. Islamic epistemology deals with how to seek the truth about something, making epistemological soundness a fundamental tool for determining the truth of discourse or news.

In brief, Mutahhari's epistemology is anchored in the elements of the philosophy of science: correspondence, coherence, and furqan. Correspondence, in the context of post-truth, is used to test the alignment between statements and reality. Coherence is employed to assess one body of knowledge in relation to another. Furqan serves as a means of spiritual sensitivity that leads to the knowledge of kashf. Thus, logic and ethics

⁵⁸ Muhammad 'Abid Al-Jabiri, *Bunyah Al-'Aql Al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasah al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1994); Muhammad 'Abid Al-Jabiri, *Takwin Al-'Aql al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasah al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1991).

become integral parts of Mutahhari's epistemology. The spiritual quality of an individual determines the quality of the analysis. This concept simultaneously serves as a marker for the characteristic features of Islamic epistemology that need to be translated into operational terms in the context of information reading in the post-truth era.

Both correspondence, coherence, and furqan can be applied within the framework of verification. This means that information must be verified to draw conclusions about its alignment with reality. However, the verification horizon in this research goes further by merging with the horizon of fake news taxonomy, such as discrepancies between the title and content of the news, excessive generalization, and so on. With this taxonomy, Islamic epistemology can be translated into an applicable space. If epistemology becomes the main principle in the search for truth, then the taxonomy of fake news becomes a guide in post-truth itself, allowing the merging of these horizons to take a strategic position.

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