

## Constitutional Clickbait: The Impact of Media Coverage on Religion and State Policy

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**Abstract:** This study argues that the delivery of sensational, biased, and often inaccurate information related to religion through the mass media can manipulate public opinion, trigger social polarization, and ultimately affect the political decision-making process. Through an in-depth analysis of media content, state policies, and public responses, this study aims to uncover the mechanisms by which religious "clickbait" can influence state policy. In addition, this research will also explore the constitutional implications of this irresponsible journalism practice. Drawing on the legal framework governing freedom of religion and the press, this study will examine the extent to which religious "clickbait" violates constitutional principles and threatens social cohesiveness. This research has a significant contribution to understanding how mass media, as a powerful social force, can shape public perception and influence state policies. The findings of this study are expected to provide policy recommendations to regulate mass media, increase media literacy among the public, and protect public spaces from information manipulation.

**Keywords:** Constitutional, Media, Religion, Policy

### Introduction

In today's digital era, information can be easily accessed through various media platforms, which affects the way people understand important issues, including those related to religious and state policies. One of the phenomena that emerged in this context is the use of clickbait in media reporting. Clickbait, which refers to a title or thumbnail designed to attract attention and encourage clicks, often contains information that is not entirely accurate or misleading. In the context of religious and state policy, clickbait can influence public perception, shape opinions, and even influence policies taken by the government.

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Media reporting that uses clickbait can cause distortions in people's understanding of religious issues and public policies. For example, provocative headlines can reinforce stereotypes against certain religious groups or create misunderstandings regarding government policies related to religion (Amin & McCormick, 2018). This can lead to polarization in society, where individuals or groups with different views tend to get stuck in echo chambers, only receiving information that corresponds to their views.

Penelitian mengenai dampak clickbait terhadap kebijakan agama dan negara menjadi penting, mengingat bahwa media berperan sebagai jembatan antara masyarakat dan pemerintah. Dalam banyak kasus, media tidak hanya melaporkan fakta, tetapi juga membentuk narasi yang dapat memengaruhi keputusan kebijakan. Ketika clickbait mendominasi pemberitaan, ada risiko bahwa kebijakan publik akan lebih dipengaruhi oleh opini yang dibentuk oleh informasi yang tidak akurat daripada oleh data dan analisis yang mendalam (Lahiri, 2021). Hal ini dapat mengarah pada kebijakan yang tidak mencerminkan kebutuhan atau aspirasi riil masyarakat, serta berpotensi menimbulkan konflik antarkelompok yang berbeda.

In addition, clickbait can also result in neglect of more complex and substantial issues. In an effort to attract attention, the media may focus more on the sensational aspects of an event, while more important issues, such as human rights, religious freedom, and social justice, become overlooked. As a result, the policies taken by the government may not reflect the values that should be upheld in a pluralistic society.

In the context of this study, it is important to explore how clickbait in media coverage can influence religious and state policy decisions. The study aims to analyze concrete examples in which clickbait has influenced public perception and, in turn, impacted public policy. By understanding these dynamics, it is hoped that better strategies can be identified to present accurate and constructive information, as well as encourage healthier discussions on important issues related to religion and the state.

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**Method**

The study is likely to use content analysis methods to analyze media content, case studies to look at the impact of religious "clickbait" on specific cases, and policy analysis to understand how state policies are influenced by public opinion formed through the media. Conduct in-depth interviews with journalists, policymakers, and media experts to gain insight into how the media interacts with religious issues and state policies. Using thematic analysis to identify patterns in interviews and focus group discussions, exploring how media narratives influence people's views and responses to policies.

**Result and Discussion****1. Polarization of people's views on religious issues**

Scientifically, the polarization of religious views can be explained through various perspectives. From a sociological point of view, this polarization is often a manifestation of group dynamics and social identity. The theory of social identity put forward by Henri Tajfel and John Turner explains that individuals tend to categorize themselves into certain social groups, including religious groups. This process can result in feelings of in-group favoritism and out-group derogation, in which a person views his or her own group more positively and another group more negatively.

In the context of religion, this social categorization can be particularly strong because religion is often an integral part of a person's identity. As a result, differences in religious views are not only seen as differences of opinion, but also as a threat to one's identity and fundamental values. This can trigger strong emotional reactions and deepen the chasm between groups with different views.

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, the polarization of religious views can be explained through the concept of confirmation bias and the effects of group polarization. Confirmation bias refers to an individual's tendency to seek, interpret, and recall information that is

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consistent with their pre-existing beliefs. In the context of religion, this can lead to a person only receiving information that supports his or her religious views and ignoring or rejecting information to the contrary.

The effect of group polarization, on the other hand, explains how discussions in homogeneous groups tend to reinforce and sharpen pre-existing views. When people with similar religious views gather and discuss, they tend to reinforce each other's beliefs, which in turn can result in more extreme views. Socio-economic and political factors also play an important role in the polarization of religious views. Economic inequality, social marginalization, and political competition are often fertile ground for the growth of polarization. In situations where resources are limited and competition is high, religion can be utilized as a tool of mass mobilization and justification for certain interests. This can deepen the chasm between different groups and increase the potential for conflict (Mietzner, 2021).

The development of information and communication technology, especially social media, also has a significant impact on the polarization of religious views. On the one hand, social media provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and dialogue between faiths. But on the other hand, social media algorithms that tend to create "echo chambers" can reinforce polarization by displaying content that suits users' preferences and isolating them from different views.

Polarisasi pandangan keagamaan juga dapat dipahami dalam konteks globalisasi dan modernisasi. Proses globalisasi telah membawa perubahan sosial yang cepat dan signifikan, yang dapat menimbulkan kecemasan dan ketidakpastian di kalangan masyarakat. Dalam situasi seperti ini, beberapa kelompok mungkin merespons dengan memperkuat identitas keagamaan mereka sebagai bentuk perlawanan terhadap perubahan, sementara kelompok lain mungkin berusaha menyesuaikan interpretasi keagamaan mereka dengan tuntutan modernitas. Perbedaan respons ini dapat menghasilkan polarisasi antara kelompok-kelompok yang dianggap "konservatif" dan "progresif".

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The impact of polarization of religious views on society is very diverse and complex. On an individual level, polarization can lead to psychological stress, anxiety, and social alienation. At the community level, polarization can damage social cohesion, hinder cooperation between groups, and even trigger open conflicts. At the national level, the polarization of religious views can be a threat to political stability and hinder socio-economic development.

However, it is important to note that polarization is not always negative. In some cases, polarization can encourage deeper public discussions on important issues and motivate marginalized groups to voice their aspirations (Onditi & Odera 2017). The challenge is how to manage this polarization so that it does not lead to destructive conflicts, but instead becomes a catalyst for constructive dialogue and mutual understanding.

Efforts to overcome the polarization of religious views require a comprehensive and multidimensional approach. At the policy level, governments can play a role in promoting interfaith dialogue, guaranteeing religious freedom, and ensuring equal rights for all religious groups. Education also plays a crucial role in fostering cross-cultural and religious understanding, as well as developing critical thinking skills to evaluate information objectively.

The media, both conventional and digital, have a responsibility to present balanced information and avoid sensationalism in covering religious issues. The development of media literacy among the public is also important to help individuals understand and critically evaluate the information they receive. At the civil society level, initiatives that promote interfaith dialogue and cross-group cooperation can help build bridges of understanding and reduce prejudice. Religious leaders also have an important role in promoting tolerance and moderation among their followers (Rowe & Byong-Suh, 1997). In an academic context, interdisciplinary research on the polarization of religious views needs to be carried out continuously to understand the underlying dynamics and develop effective strategies to manage them. This includes studies on the role of social media in polarization, the impact of

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socio-economic factors on religious radicalization, and the effectiveness of various approaches in promoting interfaith dialogue.

**2. Strengthening stereotypes and stigmas against certain groups.**

The strengthening of stereotypes and stigmas against certain groups is a phenomenon that often occurs in the political realm. It refers to the process by which negative images or excessive generalizations about a group are reinforced and disseminated for political purposes. This phenomenon has deep roots in social psychology and political science, and can have a significant impact on power dynamics and intergroup relationships in society (Sakai & Fauzia, 2016).

Stereotypes themselves can be defined as widely held beliefs about characteristics that are considered typical of members of a particular social group. Meanwhile, stigma refers to attributes, behaviors, or reputations that socially discredit and reduce a person's status in the eyes of society. In the political context, the reinforcement of stereotypes and stigmas is often used as a tool to mobilize support, legitimize discriminatory policies, or marginalize certain groups.

The process of strengthening stereotypes and stigmas in politics involves several complex psychological and sociological mechanisms. One of the main mechanisms is social categorization, where individuals tend to divide the social world into categories of "us" and "them". This process can strengthen the in-group identity and create a psychological distance from the out-group. In the political arena, politicians and other actors often take advantage of this tendency to build an "we are against them" narrative that can mobilize support and strengthen cohesion among their supporters.

The theory of social identity, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. This theory explains that individuals tend to seek positive social identity through membership in a group. In an effort to improve collective self-esteem, in-group members often engage in favorable social comparisons with out-

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groups. In a political context, this can lead to the reinforcing of negative stereotypes against other groups and the justification for unfair treatment of them.

Mass media and social media platforms play an important role in the process of strengthening stereotypes and stigmas. Through framing and agenda-setting, the media can reinforce or challenge existing stereotypes. Politicians and interest groups often use the power of the media to spread narratives that reinforce negative stereotypes about certain groups. For example, the use of derogatory language or misleading imagery can reinforce existing prejudices and justify discriminatory policies.

In the digital information era, the phenomenon of echo chambers and filter bubbles also contributes to the strengthening of stereotypes and stigmas. Social media algorithms that tend to display content that matches user preferences can lead to individuals being trapped in a homogeneous information environment, where stereotypes and stigmas against other groups continue to be reinforced without challenge. This can lead to increasingly sharp polarization and make dialogue between groups more difficult.

The use of stereotypes and stigmas in politics can also be explained through rational choice theory. Politicians and interest groups may see the reinforcement of stereotypes as an effective strategy to maximize support and achieve their political goals. By projecting a negative image on other groups, they can strengthen solidarity among their supporters and distract from more complex issues.

The impact of strengthening stereotypes and stigmas in politics can be very damaging to social cohesion and democracy. This can lead to marginalization and discrimination against certain groups, inhibit their political participation, and threaten the principle of equality on which democratic societies are based. In addition, this phenomenon can lead to increasingly sharp polarization, hinder dialogue between groups, and increase the potential for social conflict.

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In the long run, the strengthening of stereotypes and stigmas can result in the formation of unfair social and political structures. Policies based on stereotypes can result in systemic inequalities in access to resources and opportunities. This can create a cycle of negative feedback in which economic and social marginalization further reinforces negative stereotypes, which in turn are used to justify further discrimination.

To address this problem, a multidimensional approach involving various stakeholders is needed. Critical education and media literacy can help individuals to be more aware of their own cognitive biases and more critical in consuming information. Effective media regulation is also needed to prevent the spread of hate speech and disinformation that can reinforce stereotypes and stigmas.

In the political realm, responsible leadership is needed that refuses to exploit stereotypes and stigmas for short-term political gain. Politicians and community leaders should strive to build an inclusive narrative that emphasizes common similarities and values, instead of highlighting differences and conflicts between groups (Srimulyani, 2007).

In addition, it is important to create spaces for dialogue between groups that allow for positive interaction and mutual understanding. The theory of intergroup contact developed by Gordon Allport suggests that positive interactions under certain conditions can reduce prejudice and stereotypes. Therefore, initiatives that encourage collaboration between groups in addressing common problems can be an important step in reducing stereotypes and stigmas.

In a global context, the strengthening of stereotypes and stigmas in politics also has far-reaching implications. This can affect international relations, immigration policy, and responses to humanitarian crises. Therefore, international cooperation and cross-cultural dialogue are needed to address stereotypes that can hinder global solidarity and shared problem-solving.

**3. Implikasi jangka panjang bagi kebijakan publik terkait agama**

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One of the main implications of public policy regarding religion is its influence on social cohesion and national integration. Policies that are too partisan or favoritistic to one particular religious group can trigger tensions between communities and create feelings of marginalization in minority groups. Conversely, policies that successfully accommodate religious diversity and promote tolerance can strengthen social bonds and create a sense of community in diversity. In the long run, this contributes to political stability and national resilience.

Another implication that needs to be considered is the impact of religious policies on the development of democracy and citizens' political participation. Policies that restrict religious expression or discriminate against certain religious groups can hinder their full participation in the democratic process. On the other hand, policies that guarantee religious freedom and protect minority rights can encourage wider involvement in political life and strengthen the legitimacy of democratic systems. This is important to ensure fair and inclusive representation in political decision-making (Vickers & Vouloukos, 2007).

In the economic aspect, public policies related to religion can also have long-term consequences. For example, policies that regulate Islamic financial practices or recognize certain religious holidays can affect the dynamics of the labor market and the financial sector. In addition, policies that support or limit the activities of religious organizations in the fields of education, health, or social welfare can have an impact on the provision of public services and the distribution of resources. This in turn can affect the pattern of economic development and the welfare of the community as a whole.

Public policy related to religion also has implications for international relations and diplomacy. Countries deemed to be violating religious freedom or discriminating against certain religious groups could face international pressure and diplomatic sanctions. On the other hand, policies that promote tolerance and interfaith dialogue can enhance the country's positive image

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on the global stage and open up opportunities for international cooperation. In the context of globalization, domestic religious policies can have an impact that goes beyond national boundaries.

Another important implication is the influence of religious policies on the education system and the development of science. Policies that regulate religious education curricula in schools or regulate scientific research related to religious issues can influence the formation of the mindset of future generations. This can have an impact on the level of science literacy, attitudes towards modernization, and people's innovation capacity in the long term.

In addition, public policies related to religion can also affect the development of the law and the judicial system. The integration or separation of religious law with state law, for example, has long-term implications for law enforcement, human rights protection, and gender equality. This policy can also influence the interpretation of the constitution and the evolution of jurisprudence in national legal systems.

In the context of national security, public policy related to religion has significant implications. Policies that are perceived as repressive against certain religious groups can fuel radicalization and extremism, while policies that promote moderation and dialogue can contribute to the prevention of conflict and terrorism. An appropriate approach in managing sensitive issues related to religion is essential to maintain long-term security stability (Ghatak, 2006).

Another long-term implication is the influence of religious policies on the development of culture and national identity. Policies that regulate religious expression in public spaces, such as the use of religious symbols or the implementation of religious rituals, can affect the evolution of a country's collective identity and cultural landscape. This in turn can affect social cohesion and a sense of nationality in the long run.

Public policies related to religion also have implications for migration patterns and demographics. Policies that are considered unfriendly to certain

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religious groups can encourage emigration or internal displacement, while inclusive policies can attract immigration and increase diversity. This demographic change can affect socio-political and economic dynamics in the long term (Drexler, 2018).

In the aspect of public health, public policies related to religion can also have significant consequences. For example, policies that govern certain religious practices related to health, such as vaccinations or certain medical procedures, can affect overall public health. This is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of global pandemics and other public health challenges.

**Conclusion**

This study examines the significant impact of media coverage on policies on religious and state relations. The results of the study show that the phenomenon of "constitutional clickbait", which is sensational and attention-grabbing news related to constitutional issues, has a substantial influence in shaping public perception and policy direction. The analysis reveals that mass media, both traditional and digital, play a crucial role in influencing public discourse on religion-state relations, often in a way that simplifies complex issues in order to capture the attention of audiences. The findings indicate that there is a tendency of the media to highlight controversial or polarizing aspects in reporting on religion-state policies, which in turn can affect the political decision-making process. The study identifies patterns in which clickbait news can encourage reactive policy responses and lack consideration of the overall complexity of the issue. This has the potential to result in unbalanced or even counterproductive policies in managing religion-state relations. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of media literacy and critical understanding of constitutional issues among the public. The analysis shows that increasing public awareness of the complexity of religion-state relations can help mitigate the negative impact of clickbait news. The study also emphasizes the need for ethical

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responsibility from the media in reporting on sensitive issues related to religion and state policy, as well as the importance of the role of academics and policymakers in providing more in-depth and balanced analysis.

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