

THE QUR'ANIC COMMUNICATION ETHICS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The Significance of *Surah Al-Hujarât*

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Abstract

The politicization of religion in virtual sphere has increased significantly during the election. Political symbols are mobilized to shape public opinion, especially in social media. As a result, social media has become an arena for candidates to contest and get votes as well as political supports. This contestation involves black campaign and hoax. Using a philosophical analysis this article examines ethical values in social media based on Al-Hujarât verses. This article shows that the ethics of communication as mentioned in al-Hujarât verses describe two important points namely the producer of news (communicator) and as the news reader (communicant). Al-Hujarât explains that a communicator has to convey messages in a very sophisticated ways, avoid lowering others, dividing and ruling, circulating hoax, and adjusted to the interlocutor. As communicants need to instill critical thoughts and clarification (tabayyun) towards the truth of the news content.

[Komodifikasi agama dalam ruang publik dunia maya semakin gencar. Hal ini bisa dilihat pada kampanye pemilu serentak yang baru saja usai. Simbol-simbol keagamaan dipolitisasi dan para pemangku keagamaan berhasil membentuk opini publik terutama di media sosial. Akibatnya media sosial menjadi arena perebutan wacana dan gelanggang caci-maki yang tidak lagi mempertimbangkan etika komunikasi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan filosofis, artikel ini mengkaji tentang nilai etika di media sosial

berdasarkan surat al-Hujarât. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa nilai etika komunikasi dalam surat al-Hujarât meliputi dua hal: sebagai produsen berita (komunikator) dan sebagai pembaca berita (komunikan). Sebagai komunikator dalam berkomunikasi tidak boleh merendahkan yang lain, tidak mengandung unsur adu domba, ghibah, namimah, hoax, menyampaikannya dengan lembut, dan disesuaikan dengan lawan bicaranya. Sebagai komunikan perlu menanamkan sikap kritis dan tabayyun terhadap kebenaran isi berita.]

Keyword: *Qur'anic Communication, Ethics, Social Media, al-Hujarât*

Introduction

The fourth industrial revolution marks a new pattern of interaction and communication which primarily based on digital technology. According to Anthony Giddens, modernity has changed traditional notion of space and place. The relationship between sphere and time has been interrupted, then sphere is gradually separated from place.¹ In other words, new context has formulated a new definition on communication and interaction in the internet, especially social media.

A study demonstrates that people who access seven or more various platforms of social media can suffer three times or having more symptoms of anxiety compared to those who are only use them zero to two times a day. In 2015 Pew Research Center based in Washington DC released that social media induces more stress. It surveyed 1,800 people and found that women are more stress than men. Moreover, among other social media platforms, Twitter called as a “significant contributor” of stress.² In addition, social media also contributes to consumerism. Social media has also become a marketplace for selling products. Commodity items that are marketed on social media are able to shift large malls.

¹ George Ritzer and J. Gooman, *Teori Sosiologi Dari Teori Sosiologi Klasik Sampai Perkembangan Mutakhir Teori Sosial Postmodern* (Bantul: Kreasi Wacana, 2011), p. 617.

² <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180104-is-social-media-bad-for-you-the-evidence-and-the-unknowns>, accessed May 12, 2019.

Sartre in his novel *La Nausse* describes a story of Antoine Roquentin who feels horrible after seeing things which are completely meaningless and unreasonable. However, Roquentin cannot avoid the magnetism of objects that are more tempting. Finally, he chooses to submit to the charm and abundance of things. At the end of the story, the choices made by Antoine in principle are a futile choice. He experiences a total failure. He decides to deny freedom and surrenders to things. This story implies that you cannot escape from freedom and responsibility.

In addition, mass media also presents hyperreality. According to Baudrillard, under the glory of the advanced capitalism “mode of production” has been replaced by “mode of consumption.”³ In other words, consumption makes all aspects of life nothing more than objects of consumption in the form of commodities.

Therefore, Jürgen Habermas distinguishes between work and communication. Work is an instrumental action, so it is an action that aims to achieve goals. While communication is an act of mutual understanding. Habermas is one of the Frankfurt School proponents who circulate the idea that theory and praxis cannot be separated. Praxis is based on reason awareness, it does not only appear in activities and work solely, but through interactions with other people using everyday language. In addition, his predecessors view reason as a an arena of power.⁴

If we refer to Habermas, social media communication ideally involves reasoning in order to pursue consensus. Truth will emerge as exchange of informations and ideas. As a result, social change will not lead to violence, but rather comes to a process of discussion and persuasion. The discourse of Habermas, aims to reach an intersubjective consensus through conversations. But while the consensus has been achieved, the participants

³ Hans Bertens, *The Idea of The Post Modern: A History* (Canada: Routledge, 1995), p. 146.

⁴ Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory Habermas and Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

of this discourse must produce another consensus at the reflective level.⁵

Based on various perspective of scholars mentioned above, ethical values need to be formulated as a tool to criticize the conditions, especially in the social media context. Social media is expected to be a public sphere where people can exchange their ideas through communication. Normative ethics originating from Qur'an is the most effective form of ethics in practice, especially *Al-Hujurat* verses. It is used as a basis value in communication, both personal and collective communication, and it also mentions interpersonal communication with God. Thus, using a philosophical approach, this article will elaborate *Al-Hujurati* verses by appropriating its essence which is an ethical value. Then it is contextualized with the current social situation, namely social media.

Muslims' Ethics in Communication

K. Bertens argues that ethics can be divided into three connotative terms: *first*, it is used in the sense of moral and norms that become a handle for a person or group in regulating their behavior. *Second*, it refers to a collection of principles or moral values that are similar to a code of conducts. *Third*, ethics understood as the science of good and bad (moral philosophy).⁶ According to Ahmad Amin ethics means an explanation of good and bad, and as guidance for people in their daily life.⁷

Meanwhile, Frans Magnis Suseno claims that ethics has three considerations: *first*, it is an analysis of concepts, a guidance on what should be done, moral rules, and right and wrong. *Second*, it refers to the character of morality or moral actions and finally it also explores

⁵ Saiful Mustofa, "Berebut Wacana: Hilangnya Etika Komunikasi di Ruang Publik Dunia Maya," *Jurnal Studi Agama & Masyarakat (JSAM)*, Vol. 15, No. 01, 2019, pp. 60.

⁶ K. Bertens, *Pengantar Etika Bisnis* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2000), p. 67.

⁷ Ahmad Amin, *Etika: Ilmu Akhlak*, trans. Farid Ma'ruf (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1983), p.87.

about how to live a moral life.⁸ Moreover If ethics viewed in terms of philosophy, it is understood as moral philosophy.

In social context, ethics can be understood as knowledge about morality. How a correctness applies and becomes a benchmark for a society. Substantially, ethics is a spirit for action because it is accompanied by diverse intentions. Consequently, if the action motivated by good intentions, it will stem a good deed, otherwise if the action is motivated by bad intentions, then the result is also bad.⁹ In addition, ethics is not an additional source for moral teachings but rather a theoretical reflection about teaching and moral views. Ethics and morals are not at the same level. Ethics can be called moral teachings.¹⁰

Furthermore, the term of communication has implied several definitions. According to Aristotle communication is a tool that can be used by community to participate in the democratic process. According to Carl I. Hovland communication is a process that conveys information to others intending to change their behavior. Meanwhile, William I. Gordon argues that communication is a dynamic transaction involving ideas and feelings. While, according to Harorl D. Lasswell communication is a process that explains who, what, with what channels, to whom? With what result or outcome?¹¹

General definition of communication denoting to the process of sending and receiving information or messages between two or more effectively. Communication occurs when a message is delivered by the sender and then received by the recipient. The basic elements of communication include communicators, communicants, media, messages or information, effects and feedback.

⁸ Franz Magnis Suseno, *12 Tokoh Etika Abad ke-20* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2000), p.14-16.

⁹ Samsul Munir Amin, *Ilmu Dakwah* (Jakarta: Hamzah, 2009), p. 3.

¹⁰ K. Bertens, *Pengantar Etika...*, p. 78.

¹¹ D. Lawrence and Wilbur Schramm, *Asas-Asas Komunikasi Antarmanusia*, trans. Agus Setiadi (Jakarta: Komunikasi Insani, 1980), p. 67.

Communicator is an element of communication that plays as a messenger. Communicators are a source of information for communicants. Therefore how communicators can effectively convey a message significantly affects to the success of communication. Message is an idea that the communicator wants to convey to the communicant. The message can be in the form of words, writing, pictures or other. Media communication is a means or channel used by communicators to deliver a message. Communication can be an individual, group, organization or other.¹²

Appreciating and Calling with Good Names

The content of information should be expressed in a polite way. It has to respect the interlocutor whether the communication conducted in direct or indirect way such as on social media. *Al-Hujurât* verses provide a guidance on how to respect others and suggest to avoid conflict.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا
تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُم الظَّالِمُونَ

"The faithful, do not let a group of men humble another group, it may be that those who are laughed at are better than them. And also not a group of women demean other assemblies, may those who are humbled are better. And do not like to condemn yourself and do not call as a mockery. As bad as the call is that is bad after faith and those who do not repent, then they are the wrongdoers" (Surah al-Hujurât: 11).

The context of verse mentioned above is, Al-Wahidi narrated from Ibn Abbas that this verse pertains to Tsabit bin Qais, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad who had a problem of hearing. Accordingly, he tried to sit closer to the Prophet in order to hear the Prophet Muhammad's religious advice. One day Tsabit reprimanded by someone, but he replied: "Who is this?" When the person answered, "I am someone", Tsabit

¹² Onong Uchjana Effendi (ed.), *Komunikasi dan Modernisasi* (Bandung: Alumni, 1986), p. 28.

stated that the person was a child of someone who was disgrace during the time of ignorance. In short, the person disappointed, and the verse came down to remind Tsabit.

In the communication perspective, the *asbabun nuḥūl* or the context of revelation related to the verse above mentioned is to prohibit from insulting or bullying other people because of their poverty, or religious descendants such as Jews, or their families. Bullying is prohibited in Islam because it humiliates others.

Although media facilitates the constitution of public sphere where people can exchange ideas to pursue consensus and common good, it is also an arena for circulating hoaxes and unimportant news. Almost every day public receive celebrity gossip through television and entertainment programs. Meanwhile news on global injustice do not have a proportional information. Jim Hall—as cited by Saiful Mustofa—remarks that these new media paltforms will affect every aspect of our lives. He says that what is at stake is ultimately a more powerful democracy and new forms of government, but at the same time it facilitates self-expression to grow.¹³

A survey from PoliticaWave denotes that hoaxes increase significantly during 2019 compared to the 2014 presidential election. The agency monitored the presence of some of the biggest conversations in social media, namely, issues concerning the rise of the PKI, President Joko Widodo anti-Islam, and “criminalization” of ulama.¹⁴ Furthermore, based on Masyarakat Telematika (Mastel’s) survey, the categories of hoax percentage commonly accepted by people reveal to several types of hoaxes, such as: social political (91.8%), SARA (ethnic, racial, and religious sentiments) (88.6%), health (41.2 %), food and beverages (32.6%), financial fraud (24.5%), IPTEK (Technological science) (23.7%), hoax news grief (18.8%), joke (17.6 %), natural disaster (10.3%) and

¹³ Saiful Mustofa, *Media Online Radikal dan Matinya Rasionalitas Komunikatif* (Tulungagung: Akademia Pustaka, 2019), p. 31.

¹⁴ <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1173282/politicawave-ada-10-isu-hoaks-di-media-sosial-serang-jokowi/full&view=ok>, accessed May 19, 2019.

traffic 4%. The spread of hoax is channeled through interpersonal communication either direct communication or media communication. Thus, the technological development contributes the speed of hoax spread. The spread of hoaxes in Indonesia itself has reached an alarming level. Hoax spreads rapidly, raising debates and anxieties in society. Mastel conducted an online survey of 1,116 respondents to find out community behavior on hoax reception and how it shapes political discourses among the community. The survey finds that the respondents define hoax as deliberate misrepresentation (90.30%), inciting news (61.60%), and inaccurate news (59%)(29.10%), and a reliable source (29.10%).¹⁵

V. L. Rubin, Y. Chen & N.J. Conroy design a fake news detection system to find out the types of potential fake news. The prediction of a news items being deliberately deceptive based on an analysis of previous news that is considered true and false. The scarcity of available fake news as a predictive model is considered as the major obstacle in Natural Language Processing (NLP) and deception detection. The spread of gossip and rumors can be seen as epidemiological information that spreads like a plague in society and from one place to another. The spread of this gossip can be attributed to social influences, beliefs and political extremism. Human behavior against gossip and rumors affect the structure of social networks.¹⁶

Based on the above data, the commodification of religion reaches a 88.6%, a significant number compared to other type of hoax news. In the context of piety and commodification of religion, they tend to consume religious commodities such as *umrah*, exclusive Islamic study groups, and Islamic fashion, cosmetics, books, and music. This commodification of religion does not only relate to market but also Muslim conservative ideology. This phenomenon demonstrates that Indonesian Islam

¹⁵ Saiful Mustofa, "Berebut Wacana:...", pp. 62.

¹⁶ Andi Nugroho, "The Analysis of Hoax Spread in Social Media," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Vol. 23, No. 6, June, 2018, pp. 53.

experiences a more complex contestation than before.¹⁷

Consequently, it is relevant to refer to the contents of *al-Hujurât*: 11 especially during the 2019 presidential election. The election has used social media as an arena for circulating black campaign and it significantly contributes to the political divide. Each faction seems to have an authority to claim the truth by using religion as its legitimate instrument. According to Merlyna Lim—as cited Muzayyin Ahyar— social media has played an important role in facilitating successful mass mobilization through what she calls as social media activism.¹⁸

Based on this context, Baudrillard suggests the idea of simulacra namely a fluid boundary between reality (truth) and fantasy (pseudo). There are no main sources or references to truth. In the rapid flow of information, people seems to have a freedom to access various informations around the world but it also contributes to a less and shallow understanding of reality.¹⁹

Therefore, the existence of the above verse is very relevant to the current state of communication chaos. *Surah al-Hujurât* is thus appropriately used as a normative guideline and criticism so that social media acts as an instrument for gluing friendship and brotherhood rather than causing divisions of the *ummah*.

Information (Message) Doesn't Contain of Truth

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَ لَا
تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

¹⁷ <https://alif.id/read/yp/parokialisme-keagamaan-fragmentasi-umat-dan-tanggung-jawab-kita-b217859p/>, accessed May 19, 2019.

¹⁸ Muzayyin Ahyar, “*Aksi Bela Islam: Islamic Clicktivism and The New Authority of Religious Propaganda in The Millennial Age in Indonesia*,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 9, No.1, 2019, pp. 15.

¹⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser & Ann Arbor (USA: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 78.

"The faithful, stay away from prejudices because some of them are sinful. And don't look for the ugliness of people and don't gossip about one another. Is there one of you who likes to eat the flesh of a dead brother? Then surely you feel disgusted with him. And fear Allah, for Allah is the Recipient of Repentance, the Most Merciful".
(*Surah al-Hujurat*: 12)

From Abu Hurairah the Prophet said,

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ

"Beware badly because the act is as bad as lying." (HR. *Bukhari*: 5143 & *Muslim*: 2563)

Ibnu Katsir in *Tafsir of Al Qur'an Al 'Azhim*—as Imam Al Auza'i said—states that the meaning of *tajassus* referring to look for something. There is also the term *tabassus* which means eavesdropping to look for the ugliness of a people where they do not like to be heard, or stalking on their doors. The *tafsir Jalalain* explains that prejudice is a sin. There is a considerable amount of prejudice to detract from the believers who always perform a good deed. The faithful who always do good enough are quite different, different from the wicked people from among the Muslims, then there is no sin if we deteriorate against it concerning the problem of evil that is visible from them (and do not let you find fault from others).²⁰

The pronunciation of *tajassasuu* at first is *tatajassasuu*, then one of the two letters "ta" is discarded so that it becomes *tajassasuu*, the meaning that you don't look for their genitals and shame by investigating them (and don't some of you gossiping some of the others) something he did not admit, even though it was true. (Does one of you eat the flesh of a dead brother?) *Maytan* pronunciation can also be read by *Mayyitan*, meaning of course this is not worthy of you to do. (Then you surely feel disgusted with him) that is to say, gossiping about people during their lifetime is tantamount to eating their meat after they passed away. You

²⁰ Imam as Suyuti, *Ringkasan Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Bandung: Jabal), p. 445.

obviously won't like it, so don't do this. (And fear Allah) that is fearing His punishment if you are going to gossip about others, so repent you from this deed (verily Allah is the Recipient of repentance) that is always accepting repentance to those who repent (and Merciful) to them who repented.

The above verse is a guideline that communication should avoid prejudice or suspicion. Furthermore, communication must be fair between communicants and communicators. As for surah *al-Hujurat* verse: 9 below.

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقْتُلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

"And if there are two groups of those the faithful fighting should be reconciled between them !But if one violates the agreement with the other ,let them violate the agreement until you recede back to God's command .If they have receded ,reconcile both of them with justice ,and let you act justly because Allah loves those who are just) ".Surah al-Hujurat(9 :

The crucial point can be taken from the above verse is to reconcile the two groups which are hostile to the principle of justice .This notion has a similarity with John Rawls's concept of social justice .In creating justice ,there are two main principles used :*first*, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. *Second*, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.²¹

²¹ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 213.

Polite Communication

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ
قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Indeed, those who lower their voices beside Rasulallah are those whose hearts Allah has tested to be cautious. For them forgiveness and great reward.” (Surah al-Hujurat: 3)

The context of revelation behind the verse 2 above mentioned as narrated by Ibn Jarir from Qotadah is related to the debate between Umar bin Khatab and Abu Bakar regarding the appointment of al-Aqro‘ Ibn Habis Ibn Ma‘bad .They argued before the prophet until their voices getting louder and exceeded the voice of the prophet.

Other resource mentions that the context of the verse related to story of Tsabit bin Qais who had a loud voice .Then ,Rasullullah called Tsabit said” Are you not pleased ,if you live praiseworthy martyrdom and enter the heaven ,then Tsabit answers” ,I am pleased and I will not harden my voice forever before Rasul “.This story is narrated from Ibnu Jarir ath-Thabari ,and comes from Muhammad bin Tsabit bin Qais bin Syams²².

Afterward, Abu Bakar and Umar maintained their voice in front of Muhammad Prophet.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ينادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

“They are loud (rude), including people who are not intelligent.” (Surah al-Hujurat: 4).

The Significance of *Tabayyun* (Clarification)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهْلَةٍ
فَتُصِيبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نُدْمِينَ

“The faithful, if come to you the fasik (atheistic) bring a message, then examine it carefully so that you do not bring a disaster to a people without knowing the circumstances that cause you to regret your actions.” (Surah al-Hujurat: 6).

²² Ad-Dimasyqi Al-Imam Abdul Fida Ismail Ibnu Kasir, *Tafsirul Qur’anil Adzimi*, trans. Bahrun Abu Bakar (Bandung: Zinar Baru Alingsindo, 2008).

The verse implies that when we receive messages, news, pictures, and posts, we have to clarify the truth of them. Then, we must consider, research and analyse what and how the content of the news. Selection of information and literacy culture are components that cannot be ignored. So, the tradition of easily sharing news without investigating the validity in depth is not justified in Islam.²³

The Ethical Message of *Surah al-Hujurat*

Generally, there are many Qur'anic verses that can be used as guidelines in social life, especially *Surah al-Hujurat*. The verses below have relevance in the context of communication on social media which can be viewed from the point of view of psychology and sociology.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“Allah knows what is mystic in heaven and earth. And Allah sees what you do (Surah al-Hujurat: 18).

The Qur'an uses the word *tafa'ala* in the editorial *lita'arafuu* which means to admit each other. Interaction between the two parties will lead to not only sympathy but also empathy. In other words, the ethics of social interaction encourages to respect and admit one each other.

Islamic ethics is necessarily important as normative guidelines in communication on social media. By saying the words mentioned in the Qur'an: *Qaulan Sadida* (قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا), *Qaulan Baligha* (قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا), *Qulan Ma'rufa* (قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا), *Qaulan Karima* (قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا), *Qaulan Layinan* (قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا), *Qaulan Maysura* (قَوْلًا مَيْسُورًا). In addition, as a communicator, we must pay attention to the content of the news delivered as in *Surah al-Hujurat*. Meanwhile, as a communicant we must be selective and carry out clarification (*tabayyun*) about the contents of the news.

Habermas suggests communicative reason to overcome the misrepresentation of communication. Communicative society is not

²³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Quran: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), p. 208-209.

the one who criticizes through the path of revolution or violence, but through argumentation. Habermas, in this case, distinguishes two kinds of argumentation: discourse and criticism. We do discourse by assuming the possibility of achieving consensus. The discourse to reach consensus called as “theoretical discourse”, meanwhile the claims of accuracy called as “practical discourse”. Finally, the discourse for reaching a consensus on the overall claim is called “explosive discourse”. Every effective communication must reach these claims and people who are able to communicate in the sense of producing these claims, according to Habermas have “communicative competence”.²⁴

Prior to reach a condition where communicative actions are trying to be mutual understanding, there must be preconditions that can make consensus legitimately, especially if the discussion has been concerned with the lives of many people. There are three conditions that must be met. *First*, participation in creating discourse is only possible, if people use the same language and consistently adhere to the logical and semantic rules of the language. *Second*, equality in obtaining opportunities in discourse can only be realized, if each participant has the intention to reach a consensus that does not take sides and views other participants as sincere, responsible and equal autonomous individuals and does not consider them to be mere suggestions. *Third*, there must be rules which adhered by participants to secure the discourse process from pressure and discrimination. These rules must ensure that people reach consensus not because of coercion or dominance of power.²⁵

Conclusion

Al-Hujurat verses contain ethical values of communication in social life. The values taught in this *surah* are relevant to the conditions

²⁴ F. Budi Hardiman, *Menuju Masyarakat Komunikatif: Ilmu, Masyarakat, Politik dan Postmodernisme menurut Jürgen Habermas* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2013), p. 18.

²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Teori Tindakan Komunikatif II: Kritik atas Rasio Fungsionaris*, trans. Nurhadi (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2007).

of communication on social media today which ignores ethical code of conducts. The rapid flow of information has significantly accelerated the spread of hoaxes, and hate speeches. *Al-Hujurât verses* provide a guidance for building the ethics of communication in the digital society today.

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