

#Kamitidaktakut: *Revisit the Truth of Security on Social Media after the Surabaya Blast*

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Abstract: Several hours after a bomb blast in Surabaya, the internet was flooded by the hashtag #kamitidaktakut (we are not afraid) and #surabayaorawedi (Surabaya is not afraid). International media claimed that the attack was the worst in a decade suffered by Indonesia, highlighting the involvement of women and children as the attackers. The Indonesian government was urged of the necessity to impose a Terrorism Law even though the draft received criticism due to the distortion of human rights values. In such circumstances, the public displays a different response as depicted in social media, stating that the public is not afraid. The research question proposed is 'How does the public, as the targeted victim of terrorism, offer an alternative narrative when responding to a recent terror act in Surabaya?' We employed post-truth as the main perspective to analyse the issue. In the post-truth era, objective reality is no longer relevant. Instead of being sensed, community and information exchanges in social interaction play a great role in truth construction. Social media has become a platform for truth contestation. This article argues that the public's engagement in social media shows the citizen's spontaneous effort to combat the feeling of being terrorised by considering the attack to be irrelevant. The data was collected through observations on internet platforms and through a literature review. The conclusion reached was that while the government signifies the 'state paranoia' by imposing a controversial counter-terrorism policy, the public had succeeded in delivering the message that they are not afraid, thus rendering the attack insignificant.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia was once again projected as a haven for terrorism following the last bombing wave in Surabaya last May. The deadly suicide bombings hit the second-biggest city, aimed at vital places such as the Catholic Church and Police Headquarters (Hermawan, 2018), while another premature explosion took place in a flat in Sidoarjo. The Time's magazine claimed that the attack was the worst in the decade suffered by Indonesia, highlighting the involvement of women and children as the attackers (Hincks, 2018). The event took place just before Ramadhan, the holy month for Muslims, and served as a wake-up call for both the government and society that terrorism never sleeps. President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) condemned the act and stated that "This is the act of cowards, undignified and barbaric" (Hincks, 2018). Moreover, Jokowi stressed the urgency to legalise the Law on Terrorism as soon as possible. The draft itself had

long been considered polemic in nature compared to the national legislative process due to its lack of human rights measures.

Existing studies mostly see terrorism issues as a conflict between terrorists and states, which are then defined as executive, armed forces and the police. Subhan (Subhan, 2016) and Johnson's (2016) studies, for example, analyse periodisation based on changes in the pattern of terrorism that have led to differences in governmental responses from 1998 through to 2016. Meanwhile, Febrica (Febrica, 2010) limited their study to a shorter period in the Megawati and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono era, which identified to what degree the two Presidents conducted securitisation in response to terrorism. Seniwati went further by discussing how the United States influenced the government's response in Indonesia (Seniwati & Alimudin, 2016).

This paper argues that a mere highlight on the government's response would only deliver a partial insight into the counter-terrorism strategy. As

mentioned by Thetford, terror should be publicised by its perpetrators to create fear (Thetford, 2001). There is a lingering gap in addressing the question of social media becoming a truth contestation platform for a group that has been influenced by a terror act. Previous studies are lacking in the portrayal of how terror acts are directed not only at the state but also to every human living in it – which is society.

Particularly for Surabaya, this shocked the citizens since it was the first time that such an attack had rocked the city. The recent terrorist events sparked a widespread reaction and flow of information via social media. However, the public response created a common pattern: to deliver the message to the terror perpetrators that the public were not terrorised. Hours after the first bomb blasted in Santa Maria Tak Bercela Catholic Church, social media was flooded by the hashtag #Suroboyoorawedi (Surabaya is not afraid). Since terrorism aims to spread terror, the simplest anti-thesis would be saying that the public was not afraid.

The social media stream, however, also provides a pattern related to the phenomena that the truth was not for taken for granted. Thus, the research question proposed is how social media creates and obscures the dominant narrative when responding to Surabaya's recent bombings. In this research, the authors believe that truth has been produced and reproduced through the various messages spread in society, particularly on social media. The truth perceived would further influence the decision and behaviours of related parties: in this paper, the Government and the public. We employed post-truth analysis to reveal the connection between social media and public resistance to terrorism.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

This research was mainly conducted using a literature review and discourse analysis to capture the government and public's response regarding Surabaya Bombings. The references were limited to social media, public engagements, post-truth, constructivism, terrorism and counter-terrorism. Post-truth was applied to determine an alternative to the dominant narrative prevailing in society on terrorism. We analysed the outreach of the tweets using Tweetreach to measure engagement and the spread of terror-related tweets after the Surabaya attack. By seeking out an alternative discourse in analysing the impact of the terror act in society, we hope to contribute by providing a complete image in this particular counter-terrorism study.

3 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Social Media: A Contestation Space for Narratives

The world has witnessed the massive growth of technology and the development of social media over the past decade. Social media has emerged as a potential research field which can uncover broad social phenomena. It can capture the millions of invisible interactions in a network and provides a readable pattern of social reactions. Social media has increasingly been used by citizens in the local up to the global scale to spread real-time event news, particularly in a crisis. Information scattered in social media diffuses in various forms such as supporting social resilience and spreading information. On the other hand, social media can also play a disruptive role by informing the public of inaccurate details and being a platform for antagonist commentary (Burnap et al., 2014). However, social media is not yet a coherent academic discipline or a distinctive intelligence tradecraft, even though it features intersections between various disciplines ranging from computer sciences to ethnography, communication and brand management (Bartlett and Reynolds, 2015).

Specifically discussing terrorism, social media analysis focusing on how society reacts to terror and the reflection is less popular compared to how social media is used as a tool to expand the radicalism which leads to terrorism. However, many attempts have been made in drawing relations between the reactive response in social media and the goals of terrorism as perceived by society. Burnap et al (2014) published research on the social media reaction after the Woolwich terrorist attack, specifically analysing the reactions shared on Twitter. This study measures the sentiment and tension expressed in tweets quantitatively and has predicted the information flow size and survival of the terrorist event. It suggests that the social factors explained the largest amount of variance in the content factors and temporal factors. Therefore, to create a large information flow regarding the terrorist event, social features played a crucial part. The research proves that the opinion/emotional factors of tweets are statistically important in major socially disruptive events such as terrorism.

This argument was supported by Careless, who stated that social media is a digital space where billions of people interact in an unlimited manner. Nowadays, people can share and talk about the same issues through retweeting, tagging and hashtagging.

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram suddenly become a new space to argue, debate and sometimes consolidate. As essentially free, virtual non-hierarchical tools that facilitate user-generated knowledge, these online spaces may be powerful applications for talking – or "typing" – back to the dominant narrative and giving voice to counter-discourse (Careless, 2015).

Social media is defined as user-controlled and user-created because of its easiness and openness of use. This tool can be transparent, flexible and democratic, in which participation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing can be forced through a simple application. Even for those who actively participate in the digital space –digital citizenship, with the individuals known as netizens - they have the opportunity to become engaged in advocating for themselves or their society. Social media, like any other democratic channel, provides a wider space for questioning inequitable social, cultural, and political systems that serve the interests of a dominant minority, but that are embedded in everyday practices (Careless, 2015). This characteristic allows critical discourse to challenge the dominant ideology. But because of its flexibility and accessibility, social media can become a discourse-controller while at the same time, becoming a counter-discourse tool.

3.2 Mapping the aim of terrorism

Many terrorist acts have put the weight of justification on the cliché saying stated that "One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter." Such a definition leads to a highly contested debate related to the goal of terror groups. Fortna (2015) defines terrorists as a group that employ a campaign of indiscriminate violence against public civilians to target a wider audience with the main goal to coerce the government into making political concessions. What makes terrorism horrible is the intentional targeting of civilians and the randomness of the attack. Therefore, it is clear that the aim of the terror is not limited to the victim of the violence, but rather, it is to send a message to the masses. For Wilkinson and Stewart, terrorism is generally viewed as a specific method of struggle that can be executed by various actors. Terrorism is also highlighted as the weapon of the poor because it aims to address political changes but is not supported by adequate costs to achieve the goal (Özdamar, 2008).

The act of terrorism has been used as a form of communication with targets that symbolise the goal

of the attack. As mentioned by Thetford(2001), "... [T]he terrorist needs to publicise his attack. If no one knows about it, then it will not produce fear. The need for publicity often drives target selection; the greater the symbolic value of the target, the more publicity that the attack brings to the terrorists and the more fear that it generates."

Given the characteristics, terrorism is believed to be a social construction rather than a physical fact, constituted through discourse. Even though the terror is real and performed by real people, the interpretation of such actions could be different. Thus, it influences policy implications because the interpretation could draw a conceptual foundation in the policy-making process (Spencer, 2012).

The terrorist act that happened in Surabaya was highly associated with symbolism to promote fear. In analysing the Surabaya blast, we could not override the riots that happened in Mako Brimob, committed by the cell where Aman Abdurrahman, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah's (JAD) leader was jailed for his association with the planning and the funding of the Thamrin Bomb in early 2016. The riots happened several weeks before the bombings in Surabaya. The JAD leadership was then diverted to Zainal Anshori, East Java's JAD leader. However, Anshori was captured in April 2017 due to his involvement in funding arms moving from the Southern Philippines to Indonesia. This information has been confirmed by Tito Karnavian, the chief of Indonesian National Police. Karnavian claimed that the legal system underwent by the JAD leaders evoked the rage of JAD members in Jawa Timur (Sumandoyo, 2018). Surabaya's terror was perceived as an effort to send messages to the wider audience that JAD could not be ruled out.

What makes the Surabaya blast different from the previous attacks that happened in Indonesia is the actor's involvement, which acts as another display of symbol to promote fear. The first bomb that happened in Bunda Maria Tak Bercela Catholic Church was executed by a whole family consisting of the father, mother, and three children. The third bomb that exploded in Mako Brimob also involved the husband, wife and children, even though the youngest child happened to survive.

Abdurrahman, who was sentenced to death last May, stated that the involvement of children in suicide bombing was a "barbaric act using the name of Jihad" (BBC, 2018). The JAD leader believed that a mom that leads her child in the way to detonate suicide bomb is an act that could never be undertaken if a person truly understands Islam and the guidance of Jihad, as he stated in his Pledoi.

However, a clear message was sent to the worldwide audience regarding the attack. Family, as the most intimate group in social interactions, could not prevent the spread of radicalism. Instead, the family plays a vital part in providing a perspective to children about the use of violence. This kind of attack is new, and the involvement of family members was out of the range of any of the predictions before the terror attack happened in Surabaya.

3.3 Surabaya Attacks: The State of Paranoia

After the bombing, the police, military and the executive's responses illustrate a similar pattern of behaviour. Karnavian declared a joint operation countering terrorism with the military called Koopsusgab (Komando Operasi Khusus Gabungan). This operation was directly approved by the President and by the Presidential Special Staff member, Moeldoko, without any specific time limit to completing the operation. The team, which included personnel of the Army's Special Forces (Kopassus), the Navy's Denjaka specialised squad and the Air Force's Bravo 90 special force, would be put on standby and should be ready to be mobilised any time that terror threats emerged (Jakartapost, 2018). Although the joint force was first designed to assist the national police, this team will be commanded by the TNI commander while any further tasks of special command will be discussed later. Jakartapost claimed that the police looked unconfident at the idea of tackling terrorism, and so called the military for help. Tito's statement and Moeldoko's act followed a recent string of terrorist attacks that thrust the country into a state of paranoia. Moreover, the revitalisation of the joint team did not require any regulation while the parliament was still debating the military's involvement in the counter-terrorism act.

The urgency of involving the military in countering terrorism was implied in the President Jokowi's speech. Jokowi urged the House of Representatives to expedite the deliberation of a draft revision to the 2003 Terrorism Law. The President even raised an ultimatum to issue a regulation (Perppu) to apply to the Terrorism Law if the House failed to ratify the amendment by June (Amnesty International, 2018). For two years, human right activists have strongly campaigned against the law as it grants direct military involvement in counter-terrorism operations and internal security matters. There is a huge insecurity;

if the law tends to threaten human rights in these two aspects, then first, the vagueness of some of the law's wording could be used by the authorities to restrict the freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly or it could be further misused to label peaceful political activities as terrorism. Second, the law erodes safeguards against arbitrary detention and against torture and other ill-treatment, as well as expanding the scope of the application of the death penalty (Amnesty International, 2018). Nonetheless, only twelve days after the bombing, Indonesia's parliament unanimously approved the controversial anti-terrorism law after prolonged deliberations since 2016. The insecurity of human right abuse was then anticipated by presidential decree in which the new anti-terrorism law allowed for military involvement so long as the police requested it and the president gave their approval.

Right after the attacks, the President declared the issuance of the regulation in lieu of the law (Perppu) on terrorism if the House failed to ratify the amendment by June. The President's eagerness to pass the law signifies the state paranoia which indicates an unclear policy in combating terrorism. This act put the public in distress as the police were unable to handle the attacks and the only way to solve the problem was by giving the military greater authority. Even though the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been identified as an international terrorist organisation, Indonesia is not one of the core ISIS operational target. Therefore, military involvement in countering terrorism was unnecessary, even though it is threatening national security (Tempo, 2018). Terrorism-related crimes are regulated in the Criminal Code that lies within the domain of the police. Undermining human rights enforcement for the sake of counter-terrorism indicates the state's inability to manage the terror act. Instead, it confirms the paranoia endured by the state.

3.4 #kamitidaktakut: Grassroot's Responses in the Era of Post-Truth

This paper argued that #Surabayaorawedi is the manifestation of the counter truth that emanated from the grassroots movement. Jokowi's speech right after the attacks was a truth pinned down by the government. The government had the power to symbolise the attacks and define what the attack was. This definition could simply be traced back by examining the government's responses after the attacks. The government perceived the Surabaya attack to be a dangerous threat which terrorising

national security. Terror or terrorism has multiple definitions but what makes it different from other violence is its emphasis on terror. As Dwicahyo stated, any terrifying message that scares society as a consequence of an attack can be as powerful as the actual act of violence (Dwicahyo, 2015). The police and government's inability to tackle the attacks strengthens the terror itself.

In the middle of terror – supported – indirectly - by the government, the Surabaya people offer another perspective. Instead of being trapped in a state of panic and paranoia, the Surabaya people declared that they are not afraid of terrorism. The distinct reaction displayed by the public emerged as a platform that underlies the process of truth creation, proposing a counter-narrative for the prevailing discourse implemented by the government. Therefore, post-truth analysis is essential in understanding the public response regarding the terror.

The idea of post-truth is nothing new. Andrew Kirkpatrick proclaimed post-truth to be the morbid actuality of the postmodern condition where there is no single truth (Kirkpatrick, 2017) In the other word, the truth is perceived as something relative. For those who embrace postmodernism as something to celebrate, this relativism of truth is perceived as a triumph over domineering, homogenising and oppressive discourse in which the truth is emanating from the individual's perspective. It does not mean that post-truth leads to the absence of truth, but inverse to this, it leads to the proliferation of truths. Kirkpatrick compares this multiplicity of truth to the marketplace of ideas. When truth becomes a product, as it has in the marketplace of ideas, street hawkers are bound to emerge in order to sell specific truths. The public's denial of a specific truth simply implies that there is a better product on the market.

The idea is that the offering of truth will never be perceived by the masses if no partial truth has been trusted before. In Foucault's terms, truth can only be perceived as long as the subject, and the object is in the same discourse (Foucault, 2002). For example, in the authoritarian regime, there was only a single truth since the supreme leader had huge power when it came to dominating the discourse. But, in the era of post-truth, every single individual has got the access to be involved in the contestation of truth.

If post-truth is perceived to be a celebration of democratisation, it means that individuals have the choice whether or not to believe or counter the dominant narratives and to create their own truth – Derrida called this method deconstruction (McIntyre, 2018). This truth will then compete in the

middle of the so-called marketplace of ideas. In this stage, rationality and expertise are no longer relevant. The only thing that is relevant is how much power does the subject has. How then can an individual with limited power be able to compete in the marketplace of ideas and offer a new truth?

Thus, it provides a space for social media to take part. Zarzalejos claimed that Trump winning was influenced by the power of tweeting (Zarzalejos, 2017). For those who are sceptical of post-truth, the 'Twitter strategy' was seen of as the winning of hoaxes and lies. For those who were an optimist in post-truth, social media was perceived as the new democracy channel.



Figure 1: Tweet from Cabinet Secretariat
Source: *thejakartapost.com*, 2018

In the recent Surabaya blast, social media has become a crucial battlefield in both spreading and countering the terror. Social media has provided accessible information and updated details about the newest situation and victims. Indonesian netizens have responded to the attack by hashtags aimed to counter the intention of spreading terror (Andipita, 2018). The Indonesian Twittersphere was immediately flooded by resilient hashtags about the incident such as #BersatuLawanTerorisme and #KamiTidakTakutTeroris. Some of them are written

in the Javanese language, stating #SuroboyoOraWedi or #SuroboyoWani. #Suroboyoorawedi has played a vital part in creating civic engagement to address the issue.

Figure 1 stated that “circulating photos of the bombing victims on social media is what the terrorists expect us to do to spread fear among us.” Even though the tweet was officially published by the Cabinet Secretariat Official account, the picture received a massive response regarding retweets and likes from Twitter netizens (Andapita, 2018).



Figure 2. Response from Netizen
Source: Twitter, 2018

As shown in Figure 2, Twitter has been host to volatile statements from its netizens. Surabaya’s football team twitter account said the following: “For all parties who have a bad intention to Surabaya... don’t mess with the city of heroes. You disrupt the crocodile - an animal that represents the symbol of Surabaya city -, Surabaya is not afraid!” The tweet engagement reached 4.797 retweets and 3.050 likes. Another Twitter user put up a post showing a billboard picture in the city. The billboard reads, “Teroris jancuk!” (Fuck terrorists), stating that the Surabaya netizen’s response in counter-terrorism was highly resilient. Faktuals.co (Setyanto, 2018) analysed the Twitter hashtag #Suroboyowani and found that in 5 minutes, 100 tweets were posted containing the hashtag. Also within 5 minutes, the 100 tweets had reached 63.077 accounts with a total 81.235 impressions.

Another impression of the related hashtags was that they had a wide number of engagements. In Graphic 1, we employed tweetreach to analyse the reach of a tweet and its counter-terrorism specific hashtags. The tweets were analysed in July 2018, approximately six weeks after the attack. However, the public still shows a high amount of engagement with posts related to terrorism. We searched for

#kamitidaktakutteroris (we are not afraid of terrorists) and #lawanterorisme (fight against terrorism) and found 4.501 and 245.721 exposure points for both hashtags respectively.

The question that social media has tried to uncover in the relation to the truth contestation encompasses how we are living in the middle of a remarkable increase in our ability to share, to cooperate with one another, and to take collective action, all outside of the framework of traditional institutions and organisations (Obar, Zube and Lampe, 2012). Under the framework of the debate of truth, the public refuse to acknowledge that terrorism creates disruption to the city. Admitting that terrorism has succeeded in spreading mass fear only serves the interests of the terrorist. The public response through social media, when analysed, showed the contrary. Social media activity represents a collective action taken right after the bombings: sending the message that people are not afraid, which renders the act of terror as having failed to terrorise the public.

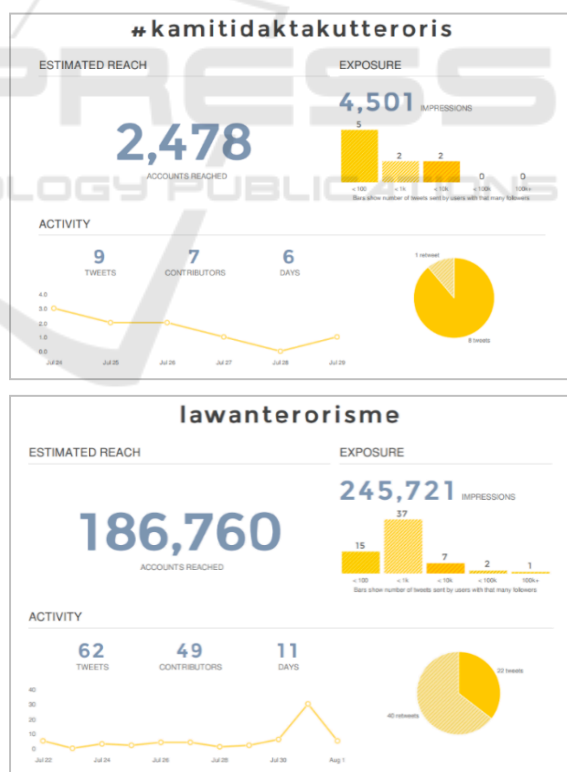


Figure 3: Related hashtags engagement on Twitter

4 CONCLUSIONS

The Surabaya blast resulted in a diverging response from the government and from society. If the dominant narrative mentioned the urge to use full force to counter the terror act, then Surabaya's citizen responded to the counter terrorism by flipping back the idea of terror. The flexibility brought in by social media was successfully utilised to counter the dominant narrative. #kamitidaktakutteroris or #surabayagakwedi, hashtags that went viral, implied public resilience in responding to the terror act. Twitter provides a platform for Surabaya's people to send messages stating that the terror was no longer relevant. What the public perceived became a mainstream view that eventually formed a prevailing narrative in society.

Finally, this paper does not necessarily claim that the tweeting strategy successfully defeats the dominant narrative regarding terrorist attacks. Community efforts to popularise #surabayagakwedi and #kamitidaktakutteroris have, instead, successfully provided an alternative narrative responding to the terrorist attacks in Surabaya, united in a public engagement saying, "we are not afraid!"

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