

# Anthropological Insights for the Study of Security

## Cases in National Threats over Social Media Usages in Indonesia

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Since its inception in the 90s, social media become a primary means of communication today, and as the user base of social media expands over time, so does the threat and insecurity for its users. So much so it recognizes as one of the national threats in Indonesia. Using anthropological approach, this article describes the current body of knowledge in the study of security from anthropological perspective first. And then we submit our results about social media usage among Indonesian teenagers especially when they tackle the issues related to the national security. In the end, we intend to show that anthropology as a methodology as well as concepts or theories can offer so much in the study of security.

*Keywords: anthropology, security studies, anthropology of security, social media*

### Introduction

As information technology rapidly developing since the mid-80s, the peer-to-peer communication medium has become varied as well. Enter the realm of social media, where every people, as long as they have proper internet access and an account of the particular social media, they are good to go, ready to share everything they want, ranging from their personal-daily activities -what meal to eat, what places to go, what movies to watch-, to their thought. While the former activities in social media can be analyzed as an ordinary, innocent attempt of the



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people trying to gain recognition among their peer (or friends list, in this case), the latter is particularly dangerous, especially in Indonesia. At March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, Bapak Wiranto, stated that national security is in threat because of many hate speech and hoaxes towards the government in the social media, and he urges young generations whose active in social media, to help the government tackle this issue<sup>1</sup>. This calling from Bapak Wiranto brings us to a glimpse of what is happening in the practices of people using social media today, which filled with threat and insecurity for its users. And as the user base of the people using social media is growing, the issues of threat and insecurity undeniably expanding ever since.

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This article examines the behavior of teenagers between the age of 18-25 when using social media, particularly when they tackle the issues of national threats and insecurity, how they react, and reproduce the issue. We use the anthropological perspective, especially anthropology of security framework. As for the structure, the article is structured as follows: 1) the literature review of the anthropology and security, and where is this article placed inside the body of knowledge of the field, 2) literature review of social media usage in Indonesia related to the issue, as well as 3) the policy comparison between nations regarding internet policy. Lastly, 4) we describe the results of our research and hopefully can bring some new insights into this issue.

### **Anthropological Study of (In)Security**

Anthropological analysis towards security issue was emerged in the mid-90s, especially when the concept of security was grounded into the term "human security" by the United Nations Development Program in their report<sup>2</sup>. According to UNDP, the term "human security" which defined as 'freedom from want, and freedom from fear' meant to humanize strategic studies, to anchor development research in locally experienced realities, and to offer a tool to gauge the ways societies function from the perspective of their inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. These directions are seemingly anthropological, in the sense that the study of human security should consider the locality of the people where the 'security' at. Following this, the anthropological study of security emerges, according to Eriksen<sup>3</sup>, the study of security in the realm of anthropology even combines many theoretical traditions, ranging from Marx, Durkheim, into a more recent one.

Luckily, the genealogy of the study of security in anthropology was mapped by Samimian-Darash & Stalcup<sup>4</sup>. According to them, there are four trends (or approach) in the anthropology of security issue: violence and state terror; the military, militarization, and militarism; para-state securitization; and security assemblages. These four trends are developed chronologically, starting from violence and state terror approach.

The first approach in the anthropology of security develops within the study which Samimian-Darash & Stalcup<sup>4</sup> said as the anthropology of conflict and violence. Starting to emerge in the 1960s, the characteristics of this particular study is its engagements with functionalism approach. But in the 1990s, the study of the anthropology of security started to mold within the anthropology of conflict and violence by turning the gaze away from functionalism approach into a more “critical” perspective, examining how violence is experienced in everyday life and constructed by social and historical conditions<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the analytical limit of this approach is that insecurity rather than security is the object of study. One of the most astonishing works using this approach is Lubkemann’s<sup>5</sup> ethnography in Mozambique. He narrated the constant fear and uncertainty in the eyes of an ordinary citizen when they displaced so many times to so many places in the middle of Mozambique civil war<sup>5</sup>. In opposite, the second approach in the anthropology of security –military, militarization, and militarism- deals with the security, actors, and industry behind it to understand what constitutes violence and insecurity<sup>6</sup>. For example, Baird<sup>7</sup> researches how security fairs represent current and future trends of state militarization using the distinguished anthropological method, ethnography. What ethnography can bring an addition to the table is its capability to grasp the actors of the industry knowledge and point of view through their practice inside those fairs<sup>7,8,9</sup>. The third approach identified by Samimian-Darash & Stalcup<sup>4</sup> is para-state securitization. Unlike two approaches above, para-state securitization emerges alongside the global processes of democratization, de-statization, and neoliberalism force to reduce the state’s ability to provide security for the population. Thus, the objects of the study are not violence or militarism, but rather, security formations, which defined as a distinctive form of action that increases insecurity because of chances that stem from global processes and the decline of the state<sup>4</sup>. One of the prominent and arguably the most cited security anthropologist whose conducting research in

this approach is Daniel Goldstein<sup>10</sup>; he stated that the post 9/11 security regime is thus presented as a ramification of neoliberalism. By combining the governmentality with the neoliberal model, the state frees itself from the various responsibilities of maintaining its subjects, conferring on these subjects themselves the daily obligations of self-maintenance and self regulation<sup>10</sup>. Samimian-Darash & Stalcup<sup>4</sup> adds, as a result, local, private security groups proliferate and replace state security<sup>4</sup>.

The fourth approach in the anthropology and security is security assemblages approach. It means security as an assemblage of forms of governance and power<sup>4,11</sup>. Deriving from Foucault's concepts of governmentality and the security apparatus, and on the methodology and ethical stance they were produced, it urges anthropologist to underscores the diversity of security forms of action: The particular ways that security works in relation to its subjects, individual, or populations. As security growing up as a totalizing process, many forms of insecurity also follow. But we cannot capture this if it's not crystallized in the forms of action. So, we argue that this particular approach will effective to analyze the source of the insecurity, even if it still in an intangible form, such as thoughts or fear.

Related to Bapak Wiranto statement at the beginning of this article, we see it as a form of action of insecurity, but the threat itself has not yet become manifested, it is still in the forms of fear. And when it stated by a Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, the fear itself become nationalized.

So, how social media usage become such threats in Indonesia? The following section draws the former empirical research findings of the subject matter.

### **National Threats from Social Media: An Indonesian Case**

Over the last five years, the use and popularity of social networking sites (SNS) in Indonesia has dramatically increased. Out of a population close to 260 million, approximately 88.1 million had access to the internet at the beginning of 2016, and around 79 million or close to 90 percent were active social media users. This represented a 10 percent increase from the year before. In terms of social networking sites used by Indonesians, they use international networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, as opposed to many Asian countries of which they have their own social networking sites (e.g., Renren and Weibo in China; Viber in Vietnam, etc.)<sup>12</sup>. In fact, in 2016, Indonesia

is the fourth largest source of Facebook users after the USA, Brazil, and India, and Facebook also the fourth-most trafficked website in the country<sup>13</sup>.

The growing use of Social Networking Sites has many implications to so many things. Tarnizi<sup>14</sup> shows that various Social Networking Sites is used by Indonesian governments to enhance their governmentality practices. They use Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter to increase their transparency by allowing the public to witness how each government unit set up and defended their budget and proposal<sup>14</sup>. Not only that, but in general social media have the potential to extend government service, increase civic participation, gather innovative idea from the masses, and improve government decision making and problem solving<sup>15</sup>. Outside the public sector, at the individual level, Social Networking Sites usages increase and enhance its user's knowledge and sociality through its easiness in accessing information and establishing communication<sup>16</sup>, political knowledge, and relations is no exception. Molaei<sup>13</sup> finds that the level of participation in social media is related to political knowledge among Indonesian Facebookers. Most of the active users of the forum kept themselves up to date with news and information about current affairs by drawing from different sources like Internet websites, newspapers, or television<sup>13,17</sup>.

Not only on knowledge and communications, but social media usage also has important implications for the political process in most countries around the world. Johansson<sup>12</sup> argues that Arab Spring movement originating in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 was made possible through the use of social media. Social media played an important role in overthrowing governments in Egypt and Tunisia<sup>12</sup>. In Kenya, Social Media is used by the terrorist group to recruiting and training their members; they also use it to threaten other opposing groups, such as the national military. This makes the government more active in social media to cease the terrorist practices<sup>18</sup>. Compared to traditional media (e.g., radio or television), social media have the ability to disseminate every information faster to a wider range of readers, in relation to politics, this information is crucial because citizens need access to information to make decisions, especially in elections<sup>12</sup>.

This overabundance of information in political issues often leads to conflicts between people or groups of people. Arab Spring movements show us that the conflicts can become so massive it revolutionizes the whole country. In Indonesia, at 2014 presidential election, both groups

from both candidate often engage in conflicts, either in social media or real life<sup>19,20</sup>, and the fear that this will happen again in 2019 presidential election is inevitable<sup>21</sup>. Not only in the presidential election, at 2017 Jakarta's Gubernatorial Election, the cold war between candidate's supporters also occurs. According to Dewi, Maryani, Abdullah, & Suganda<sup>4</sup>, the tension is reproduced through internet *memes* that circulated in social media via hashtags, one of them is #pilgubdki. The hashtag that posted alongside *memes* aims to categorize social media posts that relevant to the subject. As the *memes* categorized in a single hashtag, every insinuation toward single candidate can be identified easily<sup>4</sup>. And this potentially leads to conflict between candidate supporters.

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### **Internet Policy: A Comparison Between Nations**

Schmidt & Cohen<sup>22</sup>, have categorized many nations internet policy into three types: the blatant, the sheepish, and the acceptable (politically and culturally). The example of the first type of internet policy category is China. According to them, China is the world's most active and enthusiastic filterer of information. As mentioned above, China has their own social media instead of using popular one<sup>12</sup>. This is caused by aggressive information filtering in the country; they have total control over what information circulated in their internet ecosystem. Particular terms, for example, *falun gong* (the name of the banned group in China), are absent from China's virtual public space<sup>22</sup>.

On the other extreme, there are some countries that give total freedom to its citizen's internet usage behavior. For example, Turkey gives total freedom to the nations internet user to the point where they showed responsiveness to public demands thanks to the government openness. This is caused by the country's puzzling policy regarding internet usage. The Turkish government has had an uneasy relationship with the open internet, being far more tolerant than other European countries<sup>22</sup>. The third category mentioned by Schmidt & Cohen<sup>22</sup> practiced by countries such as South Korea or Malaysia. This category is characterized by its specific filtering on a specific topic. For example, South Korea expressly criminalizes public expressions of support for North Korea in both physical and virtual space<sup>22</sup>.

In Indonesia, the Government has authorized a policy regarding the social media usage. Issued at 2008, *Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik* (UU ITE) No.11/2008 regulates any forms of elec-

tronic information and transaction. Including the reproduction of hoaxes or hate speech (article 28), personal threats via the internet (article 29), any forms of hacking (article 30), etc. In 2016, this law changes in some of the articles (UU No.19/ 2016). As stated by Rahmi<sup>23</sup>, even though has some changes, but the law regarding the internet usage has a fatal weakness; particularly, it does not have a supporting procedural law to implement it. In relation to the Schmidt & Cohen<sup>22</sup> dichotomy, Indonesian internet policy falls into the second category. The “sheepish” internet policy is popular with governments that try hard to strike a balance between various beliefs, attitudes, and concerns within their population<sup>22</sup>.

So, from cases above, we can see the relationship between social media and its usage that leads to threat and insecurity by the forms of latent or manifest conflicts especially in the realm of nations political issue. At this point, Bapak Wiranto’s statement seems to be clear enough. But how is exactly anthropology analyzing this particular subject matter?

As stated before, this particular topic of social media is placed inside the security assemblages approach in the study of the anthropology of security. If we are about to use this approach, Samimian-Darash & Stalcup<sup>4</sup> encourage us to use another additional concept or theory related to the subject; in this case, we need a useful explanation that bridges our understanding about human before and after social media. Cyber Anthropologist Genevieve Bell<sup>24</sup> explanation about being human in the data filled world seems appropriate for our research. She stated that there are five traits of human being -in terms of sociality- that remain constant over time even in the age of social media. Those five traits are: 1) human being needs friends and family, 2) needs to be belong to the community, 3) human being constantly searching for meanings over time, 4) we tend to use objects to talk about who we are, and 5) in terms of interactivity with each other, we constantly telling and covering (lying) many things in our lives<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, Bell<sup>24</sup> stated if a technology encourages family-ness and friendships, able to create communities and facilitate those communities to share generally are the successful ones because it extends one’s sociality. If we take a look at those five traits of human sociality, basically, humans tend to belong to many communities, at least one, starting from the circle of family, and it expands to the circle of friends, to the circle of interest and so on. And inside those circles, we share everything to establish our self-reputation that may lead to our status among persons in those communities.

And we argue that the so-called national threat mentioned by Bapak Wiranto caused by social media is circulated in some “online” community, and when Bapak Wiranto believes that young generations are able to avert and ward this issue, we are curious, are the young generations able?

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### Research Method

For this research, we use a mixed method approach in sequential mode<sup>25</sup>. We conduct an online survey first to obtain a general picture about teenagers behavior in social media when they tackle the issue of national threats such as hoaxes or hate speech. The sampling used for this research is non-probability in the form of quota sampling, and the target respondents are those in the age between 18 and 25 years old. Among those respondents, we pick some of them purposively to be interviewed. The criteria of the selected informants are: they belong to many communities, preferably a political community, and they should be an active member of those communities. The reason behind the informant criteria is based on Molaei<sup>13</sup> findings that those who are active in an Indonesian online community most likely is a knowledgeable one, especially when it comes to political topics.

### Results

Out of 60 respondents, about 45 respondents or 75% of them stated that the internet has the potential to threaten its users, both privately or socially. And the sources of threat (in both forms of hate speeches and hoaxes) are found in almost every kind of social media group, mainly in a family group (44.4%), peer group (31.1%), faith-based group (44.4%), and politics-based group (48.9%). This shows that even in an online group that seems neutral (friends and family), the circulation of a post that contains hate speeches or hoaxes still can be found easily.

### Where did you usually find the threat?

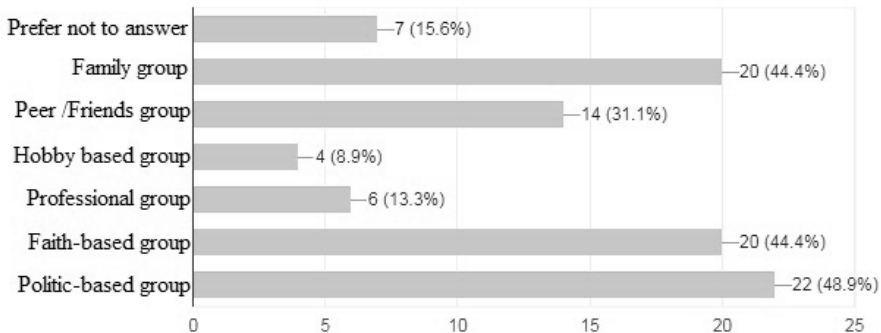


Chart 1 Source of the threat.



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When it comes to how to respond to the issue, the result shows that the majority of the respondents, when they found the threat on the internet (privacy, hoaxes, or hate speech threat), they only recognize the issue, but choose to analyze it for themselves. What is interesting that some of the respondents create a counter post to justify the otherwise threat.

## What would you do if you encounter the threat?



Chart 2 Response to the threat

From the chart above, we can see that not all of the teenagers are aware to justify the issue of internet threat, some of them are ignoring the information.

Note that many of the respondents are also participating in the groups mentioned above, some of them, surprisingly enough, are the initiators of the source of threat groups (faith or politic based group). When we interview them, the reason why they reproduce such threat in forms of hoaxes or hate speech is that they intend to address the post only their opposing groups. It is indeed that many groups (both in physical or virtual) have their own opposing groups, especially when it comes to faith or politic based group. When we asked, why they use social media? The answer is simply because they can access it anytime, anywhere.

For us, this is the main threat, the ability to post infinite words anytime anywhere, plus the existence of the groups that have opposing groups, can create the overabundance of information. Just like a snowball, without appropriate regulation, the stream of hoaxes or hate speeches will always be there, and sadly, always become a threat.

## Conclusion

To summarize, anthropology of security are able to contribute to the study of security through its ability explaining a particular case, though most likely it is a micro case, the anthropological approach offers an explanation of the nitty gritty-ness of human life. This is achieved via methodological robustness (e. g. ethnography) and conceptual-theoretical vastness.

In the first and third approaches in the anthropology of security mentioned by Samimian-Darash & Stalcup<sup>4</sup>, namely violence and state terror; the military, militarization, and militarism; and para-state securitization approach, anthropology excels in offering a new perspective at the “business-at-usual” practice conducted by the object of analysis in the respective approach. Those three approaches highlight anthropological methodology rather than its concept or theory. The “security-ness” of the study appear in the object studied, for example, the ordinary citizen in the middle of war<sup>5</sup>, the security industries represented in the security fairs<sup>7</sup>, or para-state security organization<sup>10</sup> this is what Samimian-Darash<sup>4</sup> called as a critical analytical limitation (2017: 70). The fourth approach in the anthropological study of security –security assemblage approach- has a tendency to highlight both anthropological methodology and concept-theory. This particular approach reduces the concept of security into the forms of governance and power. Thus, the object of analysis is the action taken by the governance or other power –whether nation-state formation or not- to create security or insecurity. In this article, we explain a case of social media usage in creating threat and insecurity in this particular approach.

Speaking about the case presented, we conclude that the forms of security in using social media, manifested in the Law No. 11/2008 and Law No. 19/2016, do not yet succeed in realizing the security among Indonesian social media users. The inability of the law caused by the lacks of the supporting implementation policy. It shows that the policy itself, in Schmidt & Cohen<sup>22</sup> terms, sheepish, in the sense that the Government of Indonesia wants to create a policy regarding internet usage without violating the heterogeneity of its users. This makes the internet users able to freely reproduce any information, even the sensitive one that has the probability to threat and create insecurity to another user. This freedom of reproducing the information through the internet should be filtered, Bapak Wiranto statement should be seen as a call, not only for the teenagers but for the policymakers to create

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an appropriate, responsive to the heterogeneity of Indonesian internet users, filtering system.

In terms of teenagers internet users, our result shows that more than half of them exposed to the hate speech and hoaxes through many social media groups, particularly in religion or political, social media groups, even though they (almost 30% of the respondents) have the initiative to counter the hate speech or hoaxes by creating the counter-post to clarify the situation, but still, the heart of the problem is the filtering system, which is only possible through government intervention.

### Notes

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