

# The Representation of Intolerance Practices in Cyber Space

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**Abstract**—Tribal, custom, race, and religion issues appear to be often played by some individuals. The issues that often arise can spur latent conflict because of the diversity in Indonesia. The chance of the latent conflict is aggravated by the freedom of information access due to the rapid progress of communication development in the current era of information technology. One product of the communication development is the formation of a cyber space in the virtual community. The cyber space seems to offer a freedom of opinion and exchange of information. Kaskus, with its tagline "The Largest Indonesian Community", is an example of a virtual community in a cyber space that offers that freedom. In its development, whether consciously or unconsciously, the freedom tore the harmony with the existence of various intolerance practices found in that cyber space. Therefore, a research using virtual ethnography is conducted to the users of the virtual community, especially at the Foreign News and Policy columns. Social Representation theory by Moscovisci is used to analyze the phenomenon. The results of the study indicate that the user's ability to identify intolerance practices is strong enough but the awareness to avoid such practices is still very weak, as indicated by the discovery of contents which is containing issues of ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group relations (SARA), flaming, and trolling elements.

**Keywords**—cyber space, virtual community, representation, intolerance, netnography

## I. INTRODUCTION

Without responsibility, the Issues of tribes, ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group relations (SARA) can be a potential source of latent conflict. The high frequency of frying these issues can spur latent conflict because of the diversity of SARA owned by the Indonesian people. The opportunity for latent danger is aggravated by the ease of access to information due to the rapid progress of communication in the current era of information technology. Due to this rapid progress, there is one product which is interesting to be studied called virtual community. The growth spur of the virtual community Indonesia is being mediated by The largest discussion forum in Indonesia called Kaskus. This forum allows someone to post an issue and then be

addressed by other Kaskus users, so that a forum for discussion in cyberspace is formed. The existence of this kind of feature, allows the public internet users (netizens) to access various information needed.

Kaskus or in this case as a virtual community is a community that is in cyberspace. Its existence was made possible by the rapid development of the internet which is the result of the formation of convergence between computer technology and telecommunications. According to Raymond Greenlaw and Ellen Hep, internet is defined as a global information system that is connected logically by globally unique addresses based on Internet Protocol (IP), supports communication using TCP/ IP, provides, uses, and makes it accessible in general and specifically.[1]

Internet access that allows users to manage access to information both in general and specifically that is meant by Greenlaw and Hep here is an arrangement that is commonly used by a forum in regulating access to information for members inside. This forum is called cyberspace that allows people to meet, communicate, work, and even shop inside. There is an exchange of information that allows users to exchange information and help each other in terms of forming opinions on something in front of them.[2]

One concept that is still relatively new implemented in cyber space is virtual communities (virtual communities). According to Stolterman, Agren and Croon, "a virtual community is a group of people trying to achieve something as a group of people who are using new information technology as a mean." A virtual community is a group of people who try to achieve something as a group that uses technology new information as a tool. [3,4]

Kaskus with its tagline "The Largest Indonesian Community" which is founded by three Indonesian young people, has developed into a large virtual community in Indonesia. At the beginning of 2011, there were more than 2.5 million members domiciled in Indonesia and abroad and had a range of teenagers to adults. While in 2017 its member have increased into 4,5 million people. [5]

Kaskus hosted a lot of sub topic discussion, one of the most popular is the Foreign News and Policy

columns. As per the title, this columns contains news from abroad and to accommodate the discussion for the members related foreign news and foreign policy. However, in its development, the role of the forum has not been approved properly. The freedom to express opinions are often misused by its members to convey things that are not directly related to the theme/ topic of discussion. Discussion which contains insults lead to the other members which comes from different tribes, religions and customs. Especially when it contains religion aspect, for example, the news about "Death Victims Syrian Toxic Gas Attack Increases to 100 people". The news was approved by many as an event that hurt humanity got discordant responses from the sub forum members, such as whether the news source is coming directly or taken from another source. This post then are commented by the other with "just cover it yourself, dude..." clarified with angry emoticons. Another account commented, " if you want jihad, just go there..." clarified with hand shake emoticon. A truly inappropriate feedbacks are written as if they lack of mutual tolerance for the disaster that occurred.

The form of Opinions at the news article "Death Victims Syrian Toxic Gas Attack Increases to 100 people" become interesting to study especially related to whether social media can or does represent a socio-cultural reality in terms of intolerance? To answer this question, there are two possibilities that occur. First, the content of the media is not a reflection of the social reality of the people but rather an escape from daily reality. Second, the content of media is a reflection of the social reality of the people. Thus, the research are interested in knowing how the role of cyber space as part of new media and whether cyber space represents the practice of intolerance in real life or vice versa. By using an virtual ethnographic method, the researchers try to do the research by observing the contents in the Kaskus virtual community the Foreign News and Policy columns. The theory of social representation was used as the basis for seeing this phenomenon [6]. Social representation explains that there are stages of anchoring and objectifications in the process of social representation. Anchoring is a process that refers to the introduction or association of a particular object in an individual's mind while the objectifications are the processes that refer to the translation of ideas that are abstract from an object into a more concrete particular picture.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research can be categorized as a qualitative type of field research (field works/ research) with an ethnographic virtual approach. Ethnographic research seeks to explore phenomena from the perspective of the subject under study so that there is a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. Using the same thoughts, the research is carried out by giving attention to the behavior of the informant in everyday life and various communication activities that he/she does in the Kaskus's Foreign News and Policy

columns. The various information can then be interpreted so that an understanding of what, how and why it occurs.[7] This thought also forced researchers to plunge into space so that it was close to the subject of research so as to be able to carry out observations of subjects that were unique and distinctive in information seeking as the focus of this study. [8,9]

Kozinet provided a broad enough view to complement Hine's opinion about the definition of virtual ethnography. Kozinets defines virtual ethnography or is more often referred to as netnography as a form of ethnographic research that has been adjusted which includes the influence of the internet on the contemporary social world. [10] The impact of the internet on the social world is the focus of studies in virtual ethnography or Kozinets' naphnography. Netnography must be able to explore more deeply about how big, strong, and broad the influence of the internet is in influencing our contemporary social world.

The research conducted by using the virtual ethnographic method, the data collection techniques and analysis used depend on the needs and problems formulated by the researcher which is the practice of intolerance in Kaskus. Inspired by the research done by Choirul Arif [11], the research is conducted with:

- a. The interview technique is conducted in two stages. The first stage held online with the subject of what is the focus of the research problem. The first stage of data collection will be done by recording communication activities which is done virtually by the Kaskus community the Foreign News and Policy columns, the second stage, carried out offline, to deepen interactions, interviews, and confirm and clarify to the act that is done by the forum members. This online and offline pattern is a pattern that must be done by virtual ethnographic researchers, to prevent information bias and uncertainty of data validity.
- b. Participant observation technique. The participant observation technique in the virtual ethnographic method is done by actively participating in The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns.
- c. Focus group discussion. The technique of collecting data through focus group discussions can be carried out by the researcher, with the intention of getting a more varied description of the data generated from the discussion. This focus group discussion begins with the selection of members of the discussion that have been previously set for the researcher. This process is then recorded by researchers in detail to be used as a basis for deepening and enriching ethnography.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As stated above, the subject in this study were Kaskus users who were active in the Foreign News and Policy columns. Information accessed is diverse, such as information related to Trump and America, information about unique matters abroad, and issues

related to political stability. In connection with this research forum related to the practice of intolerance in Kaskus, each resource person besides being registered as a Kaskus member, he also wrote their arguments or opinions in the comments column regarding certain issues.

In addition to conducting a virtual ethnography of the speakers, the researchers also participated in Forum Group Discussion (FGD) to obtain supplementary data consisting of 4 members in the forum. Regarding the type of information to be achieved, the majority of FGD members mentioned the type of information they were looking for was foreign policy news, entertainment information, racial issues, and the economy. In order to explain the phenomenon occurred at the News/ Foreign Policy sub forum the research used the theory of social representation. The theory itself is divided into two stages, namely anchoring and objectifications.

#### *A. Anchoring*

Based on the Social Representation theory [6] the following are the results of interviews from all speakers. The first process is Anchoring, which is a process that refers to the introduction or association of a particular object in an individual's mind. Each of the speakers gave different opinions about intolerance, including: according to Dadang, denounced something different from what we have and its forms such as words to deeds and also to trying to obstruct. This is supported by the argument of Ratih, interpreting the meaning of intolerance as a form of excessive fanaticism towards something that considers others to be wrong and forms radical, isolating and also intending to attack groups with ideology and understanding. Sugih argues that intolerance is closely related to the content of the news conveyed as a trigger for the splitting of community unity. Meanwhile, Arie stated that the attitude of not believing/ not tolerating differences of opinion, political views, attitudes, or religious differences.

Regarding the reason for the practice of intolerance, Dadang stated that understanding the reason for the occurrence of intolerance comes from the lack of understanding of differences. He considered the form of intolerance can be in the form of words to deeds that are reproachful and also attempts to obstruct. Ratih mentioned the reasons for intolerance because of one's thoughts and not being wise. So that, with an unwise attitude towards someone or a thought will emerge radical notions and practices, isolate and also intend to attack groups with ideologies, understandings or other religions, either directly or indirectly, frontally or closed. Relatively similar to Ratih, Sugih said that the practice of raising small problems by touching on the elements of SARA and other labeling was the reason for the emergence of intolerance. According to him, one form of intolerance is the news coverage is not yet known. Thus, the media is considered as a milestone in confusing community unity. Arie explained in detail about the reasons for the practice of intolerance, which is purely

due to political attitudes. According to him, all things that happened in Indonesia are now made into political commodities and fighting because in today's digital age, followers of social media are money. And the fastest increasing number of followers is one by frying political issues and fighting sheep. This, according to him, is reflected in the case of the 2017 DKI Jakarta Pilkada, there are groups that are siding with certain candidates. Because of this difference, they cannot tolerate the attitudes and actions of different candidates.

The respondent's understanding of intolerance is an attitude that aims to deny or reject things that are contrary to his perception. The emergence of these differences in perception does not arise spontaneously but may be due to an uncaring or indifferent and unappreciative attitude which then raises, to some extent, excessive fanaticism. This excessive fanaticism will later encourage someone to argue that the group or himself is the most correct and which is considered as something wrong. In line with this, norms, teachings, understanding, attitudes and perceptions have been identified as the causes of the emergence of acts of intolerance. [12]

In the opinion of the author, the main foundation in maintaining harmony among religious people is tolerance. The realization of harmony is the basis of the unity of the people and the Indonesian nation can negate the threat of division with all its undesirable consequences. Harmony between religions is one of the main pillars in maintaining national unity and the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. Just as what has been referred to by Harmony is often interpreted as living and living conditions that reflect an atmosphere of peace, order, peace, prosperity, respect, price respect, tolerance, mutual cooperation in accordance with religious teachings and the Pancasila personality. [13]

At least three important elements are found that underlie the harmony of life among religious people, namely: attitude of willingness to accept the existence of differences in beliefs, attitude of willingness to give space to embrace and carry out these beliefs, and the last is the ability to accept then find comfort when other people it is running or worshiping in accordance with its beliefs. [14]

#### *B. Objectifications*

Based on the Social Representation theory [6] the advanced process after anchoring is objectifications. Objectifications are processes that refer to the translation of ideas that are abstract from an object into a more concrete particular picture. The connection with this study is that the researcher seeks to cover several scope regarding objectifications, which are related to the resource argument to the comment column available at Kaskus, especially in The Foreign News and Policy columns, examples of intolerance practices in the column and the respondent's form of mentioning intolerance on the page.

Following are the speakers' arguments regarding the column space The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns. Dadang provided information that he often found intolerance in the comments. He also explained the example of the practice of intolerance that he found like a sarcasm sentence, for example a religion denouncing and religious stereotyping. Of course this is very offensive to the elements of the ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group relations (SARA) because they have given bad comments or bad comments on certain religions in order to harm them.

Futhermore, when researcher observe deeply at Dadang activities in The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns. It seems even though he can identify the example of the practice of intolerance, Dadang

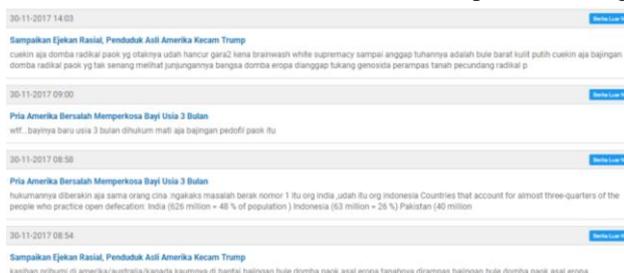


himself still did it.

Fig 1. Dadang's Comment in The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns

Basically, Dadang comments in the Kaskus are still neutral, but then we found two comments in 2017 that show how lack tolerance he was. The first comment was his feedback to the issue "Disguising wearing Burqa, Taliban Attacking Pakistani University Dormitory". He commented, "indeed it should be prohibited, wearing ninja robe is symbol of restraint." In the column he argues that the Burqa or commonly called veiled clothing is a symbol of restraint. He also called it the "ninja robe". This type of comment alludes to the trolling element. Trolling is defined as the activity of uploading posts or messages that are inciting and often not relevant to the topics discussed in the online community. The purpose of trolling is provoking and provoking the emotions of other internet users. Dadang's comments are in the type of trolling because the opinions that are fused in the available comments column have a meaning that is against the issue of the news being conveyed. The pain was created as if it was provoking the burqa clothing as a ninja robe.

Meanwhile, Ratih Explain how he also often finds the practice of intolerance in the comments of The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns. He also explained the form of intolerance practices such as sarcastic sentences towards Islam. On Ratih's history, we found that she once used harsh word to express her



feedback.

Fig 2. Dadang's Comment in The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns

Based on figure 2, Ratih also expressed her opinion regarding a particular issue which was warmly discussed in the Kaskus room. In some of her feedback, she seemed to use words that sounded less polite. There are several words "paok" in her comments. This term is usually used by young people who are new to their teenage world. Usually the term is equated with the term "stupid". So that it would sound very disrespectful if applied to the public domain and intended for certain people.

As well as Dadang, Sugih often find the practice of intolerance in the comments column on the news / foreign policy sub forum. He gave an example like the Anies Baswedan case where he mistakenly use the word "native" when he gave a speech. Negative comments related to the term "native" seem to offend Chinese. In Sugih history, we found that despite he can identify flaming is one of intolerance act, he still do the same to some case. Its shown on his feedback to the "Jangan Remehkan. Ini Kompetisi Resmi untuk Pengemudi Bus di Indonesia" ("Don't underestimate it. This is the Official Competition for Bus Drivers in Indonesia") post, he reacted "Nah, ini baru keren, ada wadah untuk kompetisi. Besok-besok buat kompetisi balap angkot, kalau engga balap becak, ama adu memaki para tukang becak dimedan banyak soalnya" (Now, this is just cool, there is a room for a competition. Tomorrow make a public transportation race, or a pedicab race, and cursing competition between pedicab drivers, there are alot in Medan). The comments can trigger the debate which is very closely related to the definition of flaming. Flaming is an act of provocation, ridicule or humiliation that offends other users or upsets the situation of a place so that a debate arises.

Futhermore, Arie stated that he found a lot of intolerance practices in the comments the Foreign News and Policy columns. He pointed out a commentary from those who claimed to be nasbung (defenders of the Prabowo camp) and nastak (defenders of the Jokowi camp) who repeatedly made impolite sentences. The form or example called Arie is the same as the content of the comments that Ratih made by mentioning the word "paok" in the comments column. It is very clear that the use of the term is considered to be very impolite, especially if it is mentioned in public spaces. This is considered inappropriate to say because it means "stupid". Of course saying the term or word is very unnatural in everyday life to say or mock a certain subject. This is certainly very related to flaming. In addition to generating debate, flaming also refers to the form of mockery or disrespectful greeting directed at a certain figure. Therefore, the use of words that are good and true and not touching the emotions of others becomes very important to note.

In addition, in collecting research data, researchers also formed Forum Group Discussion

(FGD) to obtain additional data. The FGD was formed consisting of 4 people. From the four FGD members, we found that they found intolerance in the comments section of The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy columns. Some of them even found a lot of intolerance practices in the comments column on it. Each member finds examples of intolerance practices that are relatively different from each other, but still the realm of understanding intolerance. The initial name A mentions examples such as "ah, American pig, pretending to teach peace and human rights", while B and C mention examples of intolerance in the comments such as "Nasbung hates Communist China but defends North Korea". The initials C name exemplifies "you deserve your race to be ranked part 2, burn the slanted eyes people" and equipped with pig emoticons and soldiers. The initial name D exemplifies the attitude of demeaning the other party, saying the element of SARA. Example: "the only country in Asia whose dynasty has not been torn down by asu (dog) and its allies because it doesn't follow Asu's will" (The comment is referring America as ASU or dog).

In addition to examples of intolerance practices in the comments column on The Kaskus's Foreign News and Policy columns mentioned by FGD members, there are other things that complement the practice of intolerance in the sub forum comment column, namely emoticons and images. Out of 4 from 4 FGD members said that emoticons are another form that is often encountered and shows the practice of intolerance in the sub forum comment column. However, some of them also mentioned other forms that showed the practice of intolerance in the sub-forum comment column in the form of ridicule words, pornographic images, and memes.

Meme itself is identified as a product of the comments of netizens who try to imitate precisely or even parody, both in the form of being exaggerated or minimized in the satirical sense, information they get from various media. This Meme later became an ordinary item produced by internet users (internet users). To a certain extent memes are used as a unique propaganda media that seeks to lead public opinion towards satirist. [15, 16]

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Basically the research wants to know how representation of intolerance practices in a public space in cyberspace. In the process, research begins by knowing the anchoring process which refers to the introduction or association of a particular object in the mind of an individual. It can be concluded that Kaskus users in The Kaskus Foreign News and Policy Columns are aware of the notion of intolerance. This is indicated by their meaning of intolerance as an attitude expressed to deny a thing that is not in accordance with one's view of a particular object. This difference of view arises because of excessive fanaticism so that other things are considered as something wrong. The form of intolerance practice can be known through the attitude to reproach each other to attack certain groups

with the ideology held. In addition, the role of the media in shaping the news is often considered to be a trigger for disharmony in society.

The second stage in research that seeks to identify the stages of objectification of the speakers. It was found that the resource person was able to identify the practice of intolerance in the virtual community in the form of comments in the form of writings and emoticons that were used by both the resource person and discussion partners. The types of comments detected are the use of sentences and emoticons that contain elements of SARA, flaming, and trolling.

In the opinion of the researcher, it can be concluded that Kaskus, which is already widely known and accessed by many people, needs more attention in terms of freedom of expression. Filters or filtering from both KASKUS users and moderators themselves can reduce the practice of intolerance that is very easy to find and is feared to be endemic to other Kaskus account users. This is a joint task as observers and connoisseurs of cyber space in everyday life to be wiser in using cyber space and wiser in arguing.

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