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## Re-imaging and re-conceptualize Hyper Terrorism in Indonesia: based on the Baudrillard framework

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**Abstract.** Hyper-Terrorism in Indonesia has a strong relationship with the phenomenon of cyber terrorism. One of the primary uses of the internet by terrorist groups is to spread propaganda. Propaganda is a utility of hyperspace that is very useful for terror groups, especially in Indonesia. Propaganda carried out by terrorists is generally multimedia communication in the form of instructions, practical and ideological explanations, and justification or promotion of terrorist activities. These can take the form of virtual messages, presentations, electronic magazines, fatwas of ulama-supporting terrorists, audio-video files, and video games, all developed by terrorist organizations and their sympathizers. The terrorist group uses the internet for funding, training, and propaganda (including recruitment, radicalization, and incitement). In Jean Baudrillard's concept, communication technology has given birth to a world of media that exists in parallel with reality, breaking the traditional linguistic relationship of sign and meaning, which he calls simulacra with hyperreality as the main characteristic. The big problem now is that there is no in-depth study on the definition of Hyper-Terrorism or the parameters in categorizing information as hyper-terrorism as a feature of the 'Simulacrum of Terror.' Examining the stages in the simulacrum of terror by Baudrillard, there is a missing stage between the results of media reproduction and the phenomenon of the simulacrum of terror. This research will take up the gap that Baudrillard missed. Then it becomes crucial to study academically, especially regarding the phenomenon of Hyper-Terrorism itself, namely hyperreality in terrorism propaganda, where the reproduction of information that is published globally brings up a relative representation.

**Keywords.** Hyper-Terrorism, Cyber Terrorism, Propaganda, Baudrillard's Concept, Communication Technology, Simulacrum of Terror

### 1. Introduction

*Hyperreality in terrorism propaganda that occurs in Indonesia has a strong relationship with the phenomenon of cyberterrorism.* One of the cases that emerged was the spread of propaganda carried out by one of the perpetrators of terror on behalf of Avik. At that time, Avik used Facebook to spreading content in the form of videos of ISIS battles that were considered to represent Muslims. The content of the video discusses *akidah* material to the invitation to carry out *amaliyah* actions in Indonesia as one of the resistances to people. In addition, ISIS propaganda experts Bahrun Naim and Bahrumsyah also opened two-way

communication through *chatbots* on the messaging application Telegram. They also often share tutorials on assembling bombs, counter-espionage, to *hacking* actions on computer networks [1]. The spread of other jihad calls was also carried out through the WhatsApp messaging application which contained calls to carry out jihadi actions against Densus 88 and invited Muslims to burn police stations in Indonesia [2].

This phenomenon was mentioned by Baudrillard in an article entitled *The Transparency of Evil* [3], which explained that there is a process of reproduction of symbols and meanings in the news about terrorism. In this case, terrorism aims to provide psychological effects in the form of fear, panic, and trauma on a global scale. Globalization has made the media have an important role in displaying acts of terror and can produce and reproduce global ideology, logic, or consciousness.

Propaganda is a utility of *hyperspace* that is very useful for terror groups, especially in Indonesia. This phenomenon has increased in intensity since the declaration of Daulah Islamiyah. The group uses cyberspace specifically to indoctrinate and even recruit new members. One form is Dabiq Magazine published by ISIS. Dabiq does not have a regular publication schedule and each copy of the magazine usually consists of 50-60 pages. The contents of the magazine are mostly religious doctrines in accordance with ISIS beliefs. Each issue of Dabiq must also be accompanied by images of the ISIS flag and photographs showing how 'powerful' ISIS is.

One of Dabiq's rubrics even mentions the role of women in ISIS, there is even one article about 'tips on how to grieve after your husband dies in battle'. In each of its publications, Dabiq is also often accompanied by *hashtags* to make it easier to find relevant topics. In this Dabiq, propaganda videos can also be found, most of which contain atrocities, which provoke people to continue to sympathize with terror groups.

The emergence of terrorism in society according to Laqueur (1987) comes from various motivations such as religious group protest movements, political upheavals, and community resistance. Motivation, culture, technological development, and the condition of society are elements that cause the emergence of variations in forms of violence. The transition from the use of sharp weapons to firearms, as well as direct attacks to the use of the internet to achieve the goals of terror groups, indicates that terrorists are changing their methods based on the surrounding circumstances.

Calafato and Caruana discuss the transformation of conventional terrorism into *cyberterrorism* by describing how the crime adapts to the conditions of society. Although this only began to be studied specifically in the 20th century, terrorism has evolved over the years and adapted to culture, geography, and social dynamics [4]. *Cyberterrorism* has generated new attention since the emergence of terror attacks on digital infrastructure and the use of cyberspace as a tool to spread fear and terrorism propaganda [5].

The conception of *cyberterrorism* is generally divided into two, namely broadly and narrowly. *Cyberterrorism* in a broad approach can be defined as any use of technology and information by terrorists. Whereas in a narrow approach, *cyberterrorism* is often associated with acts of terrorism with the characteristic of attacks directed against information systems [6]. In this case, perpetrators who commit crimes in *cyberspace* take advantage of loopholes contained in the security of information systems or the negligence of their users.

When *cyberterrorism* occurs, perpetrators exploit *cyberspace* to create fear by involving certain political intentions or ideologies. In detail, Rollins and Wilson explain the phenomenon in two ways, namely *effect-based* and *intent-based*. *Effect-based* occurs when attacks have an impact on the emergence of fear comparable to conventional acts of terrorism.

Meanwhile, *intent-based* is a condition when attacks are based on political motives to intimidate the public in order to fulfill the perpetrator's goals or cause certain damage [7]. In this case, *cyberterrorism* crimes can be seen as a means for terror groups to carry out their activities and as the goal or target of such terror activities.

## 2. Simulacrum of Terror

Baudrillard wrote an essay entitled *The Transparency of Evil* in 1993, in which he explained the simulacrum of terror. This stage explains that terrorism has a global psychological effect in the form of fear, panic, and trauma. In today's globalization, the media has an important role in making acts of terror a spectacle in which it can produce or reproduce ideology, logic, or global consciousness. This causes anger and hatred to develop towards a group, leading to acts of revenge [8]

The process according to Baudrillard ultimately has a symbolic effect, namely the production of symbolic connotations that lead attention or awareness to a single image or interpretation of terrorism. This gives rise to conspiratorial information, namely the world of reality without identity or anomaly. The many multiple interpretations that arise make this can be classified or attributed to anyone and any group, ultimately creating a deception of information and reality, namely the simulacra of terror. There are parties or groups that are given sign value as the perpetrators of terror, even though the actual perpetrators are unknown [9]. The concept of simulacrum of terror that will be used in this research refers to its creation that no longer reflects the real reality in relation to the phenomenon of terrorism.

## 3. Hyperterror

Baudrillard has also seen the emergence of the 'Hyperreal Village', which is the structure of society, where virtual reality is now more real than actual reality [10]. With the existence of virtual realities such as television and social media that display artificial realities that seem to be the real reality and even surpass the real reality. This phenomenon of hyperreality is the dominant face of society today.

This is also accompanied by the emergence of a series of other hyper phenomena mentioned by Yasraf Amir Piliang in his book 'A World Folded' namely Hypercare, Hypercommodity, Hyperconsumption, Hypersensibility, Hypermarket, Hypersexuality, and Hyperspace [11]. However, the 'Simulacrum of Terror' in the Indonesian context and the dimension of Hyper-Terrorism as its main characteristic has never been discussed/observed/researched academically.

The first time the concept of hyper-terrorism was proposed by the French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls during the aftermath of the attacks in Brussels and Paris, he said "We have entered . . . a new era characterized by the lasting presence of 'hyper-terrorism' . . . There will be attacks. Large-scale attacks. It's a certainty. This hyper-terrorism is here to stay. The force of the ideological fascination is formidable, and if we have changed the era it is because this hyper-terrorism is in the heart of our societies."

Gray says in his article that Hyperterror is driven not by the prospect of achieving concrete goals, but by the doomsday myth of a new world. When the vision cannot be realized, hyperterror will continue in some form as long as the practicing group continues to function as an effective force. Gray also lists in his writing one Jihadist organization that successfully combines ultra-violent fundamentalism with hypermodern propaganda methods and the business structure of a global criminal cartel. [12]. The concept of hyper-terrorism in

this research is in line with Baudrillard's thinking, namely the existence of hyperreality in the values and symbols embedded in things related to terrorism [13].

#### 4. **Hyperreality**

Hyperreality, according to Baudrillard in his book *Simulations*, is an excessive simulation of something that never really existed. Etymologically, hyperreality comes from the combination of two words, hyper (excess) and reality (reality) [14]. Therefore, hyperreality can be simply defined as "excessive reality". More specifically, Baudrillard explains hyperreality as an artificial reality that has no reference or origin, and even appears more real than the actual reality [15]. Referring to Baudrillard's explanation, hyperreality is an era formed by a model of reality without origins or actual reality, or a simulation of something that never really existed [16].

In the world of hyperreality, original reproduced objects are mixed with hyperreal objects that are reproduced. Hyperrealities such as mass media, Disneyland, television, and social media become more genuine than reality. It has been mixed with hyperreality models, images, and codes which then metamorphose into a product that controls human thoughts and actions [17].

#### 5. **Hyperreality and Simulacrum in Terror Propaganda**

In-depth studies of the definition of *hyperreality in terrorism propaganda* have not been extensive to date. It also includes the parameters that must be met in categorizing information as *hyperreality in propaganda terror* as a feature of the '*Simulacrum of Terror*'. The discussion of *hyperreality in terror propaganda* has also been raised by Ashghor [18], who explained that news about ISIS is a hyper-terror phenomenon in which all events related to ISIS are reproduced by the mass media to be the main discourse of the post-Al-Qaeda terrorism movement. Therefore, it is also stated that terrorism is a product of social construction and reproduction by the mass media which is an instrument for building a discourse. The discourse on terrorism raised is generally Islamophobic which then refers to the issue of radicalism and terrorism. This discourse is also conveyed through Islamic symbols that have been reproduced by the media.

Examining the stages in the simulacrum of terror by Baudrillard, there is a missed stage between the reproduction of the media and the phenomenon of *the simulacrum of terror*. Baudrillard misses the stage of hyperreality in the reproductive outcome as a key characteristic of simulacra. Hyperreality in this phenomenon of terrorism can be referred to as hyperreality in *terrorist propaganda*. Baudrillard skipped the *hyperreality stage* in propaganda terror where there should be both a major characteristic and a specific situation in the *simulacrum of terror*. The loophole passed by Baudrillard then became important to be studied academically, especially regarding the phenomenon of hyperreality in *terrorism propaganda* itself, namely hyperreality in terrorism propaganda, in which the reproduction of globally published information gave rise to representations of *nisbi*.

The urgency regarding the discussion of the *Simulacrum of Terror* and *Hyper Terror* in Indonesia can be seen in the development of communication technology that gave birth to the media world that exists in parallel with reality, violating the traditional linguistic relationship of signs and meanings that he calls simulacra with hyper-reality as its main characteristic. The logic of online sharing seems to deviate from the need to inform or argue to find a common consensus. This was predicted by Baudrillard for the media at large. On this interpretation, the public can classify or accuse anyone and of any class, to then be given the

*sign value* of being the perpetrator of terror, even if the real perpetrator is unknown. Then it is at this last stage that simulacra occur with the alternation of the actual sign. When simulations are stacked and become unified, then representations are no longer recognizable between the real and the fake or the real and pseudo. In addition, it is at this stage that hyperreality is also present and becomes the main characteristic of simulacra.

This research aims to find out how to reproduce media signs and symbols in Indonesian terrorism propaganda. By knowing how the reproduction of media signs and symbols in propaganda in Indonesia, researchers will be able to find out how *hyperreality in terrorism propaganda* can occur or be created in Indonesia. So, it can find out the form of *simulacrum of terror* in Indonesia. From the three research objectives above, researchers will explore the explanation of theoretical and practical concepts in seeing *hyperreality* in terror propaganda as the main characters in *the simulacra of terror* which focuses on propaganda practices in Indonesia.

## 6. Conclusions

There has been no in-depth study of the definition of Hyper-Terrorism or the parameters that must be met in categorizing information as hyper-terrorism as a feature of the 'Simulacrum of Terror'. Examining the stages in the simulacrum of terror by Baudrillard, there is a stage that is missed between the results of media reproduction and the phenomenon of the simulacrum of terror. Baudrillard missed the stage of hyperreality in the reproduction as the main characteristic of simulacra. Hyperreality in the phenomenon of terrorism can be referred to as hyper-terrorism. Baudrillard missed the stage of hyper-terrorism where there should be main characteristics and certain situations in the simulacrum of terror. The gap missed by Baudrillard then becomes important to be studied academically, especially regarding the phenomenon of Hyper-Terrorism itself, namely hyper-reality in terrorism propaganda, where the reproduction of information is published globally to create a relative representation. Baudrillard argues that this communication technology gives birth to a media world that exists in parallel with reality, breaking the traditional linguistic relationship of sign and meaning which he calls simulacra with hyperreality as its main characteristic. This is predicted by Baudrillard for media in general. The idea of hyperreality and simulacrum is one of the characteristics of today's global consumer culture proposed by Baudrillard, where the image of the product has become more important than the product itself [19].

The discussion of hyper-terrorism has also been raised by Ashghor, who explained that the news about ISIS is a hyper-terror phenomenon where all events related to ISIS are reproduced by the mass media into the main discourse of the post Al-Qaeda terrorism movement. Therefore, it is also mentioned that terrorism is actually a product of social construction and reproduction by the mass media which is an instrument in building a discourse. The discourse on terrorism is generally Islamophobic, which then refers to the issue of radicalism and terrorism. This discourse is also conveyed through Islamic symbols that have been reproduced by the media.

Until Hyperterror is hyperreality as the main characteristic of the simulacra of terrorism, which is the result of the reproduction process of the sign system in the phenomenon of terrorism simulated by the media and assisted by the development of information technology today. This research also discusses more deeply how hyper-terror occurs in Indonesia up to the stage of simulacrum of terror by using the core concept proposed by Baudrillard and studied more deeply with criminology theory, to prevent the occurrence of simulacrum of terror.

This is in line with Baudrillard's thought (1994) which states that everything about the world that is created/simulated by digital technology so that it appears real or even more real than its reality is called simulacra. For the record, the phenomenon can only be referred to as simulacra if it has gone through a reproduction process by the media. Along with Baudrillard's statement, society has moved from the Modern Era with its symbolic logic to the Postmodern Era with the logic of simulation. In the Postmodern Era, the media has made the world of simulation appear perfectly where reality can be reproduced, even manipulated, with one of the main products being media propaganda.

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