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# Public Discourse Regarding *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* Hashtag as a Trust Issue

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## Abstract

This study attempted to describe on how political discourse develops through social media's hashtags. *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag originally appeared to quell another viral hashtag, *#PercumaLaporPolisi*. This study used social network analysis between multiple internet accounts to shed light on how conversations on social media can actually develop into public discourse based on the hashtag *#PolriSesuaiProsedur*. This research became important since it would show the extent of public's trust in the police institution. The research would be conducted on 3 phases. First, big data analysis to see the spread of netizens' conversations related to the *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag. Second, a quantitative survey on 5 regencies/cities in Banten Province. Third, FGD to strengthen a comprehensive outlook related to public discussions about trust in the police. The results of the data showed that the *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag described an issue that was not organic and centered only on one position. The results also showed how people responded to the hashtag and produced a bubble filter effect that encouraged the emergence of homogenous opinions and behaviors in the society.

**Keywords:** Big Data Analysis, Public Discourse, Trust Issue, Hashtag, Indonesian Police

## 1. Introduction

On October 6th, 2021, *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag became a trending topic on the Twitter social media platform. This hashtag emerged after *#PercumaLaporPolisi* hashtag went viral on the same platform and became widespread talk in the virtual world communities. The *#PercumaLaporPolisi* firstly appeared in Project Multatuli's tweet (Multatuli, 2021) along with a link to a news with title, "My Three Children Were Raped, I Reported to The Police, The Police Stopped Investigation". As of October 15, 2021, this tweet has been retweeted 10.600 times, got 1.703 quote tweets and received 18.300 likes (Vice.com, 2021; Suara, 2021; twitter.com, n.d.). The tweet was then followed by other testimonials from Twitter netizens about their experiences when reporting criminal cases to the police.

Few hours after publishing the story, Project Multatuli (2021) reported that their website had suffered from DDos attack. DDos (Distributes Denial of Service) attack is a method whereby cybercriminals overflowing the site's network with so many malicious traffics that websites cannot operate and communicate as normal (Mcafee, 2021).

Due to cyber-attack, the website of Project Multatuli was inaccessible for several hours. Project Multatuli took steps by offered the mass media, organizations or other parties to republish their article on their respective websites. As of October 15, 2021, several media have published the article (suara.com, 2021; vice.com, 2021). This media carried the same narrative, namely urging the police to immediately resolve the sexual violence cases by prioritizing the principles of justice and taking sides with the victims.

As quoted from its website, Project Multatuli (2021) is a collective initiative dedicated on realizing the ideals of public journalism by giving voice to the voiceless, highlighting the marginalized, and reporting the under-reported (Multatuli, 2021). And this article was part of a series of *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* reporting which supported by the Kurawal Foundation.

Project Multatuli website was not the only one that suffered cyber-attacks for publishing the “My Three Children Were Raped, I Reported to The Police, The Police Stopped Investigation” article; posts on Instagram were also temporarily removed by Instagram system due to reports of community guidelines violations. Multatuli (2021) believed that this happened because there were reports from other parties who were trying to stop the spread of the article. Because on next day, an Instagram review said that there was no problem with the content of the article (twitter.com, n.d.). Official account of the Luwu Tiwur Police department (@humasreslutim) labeled the article posted by Project Multatuli as a hoax. This label was given to Luwu Tiwur Police Instagram Stories post on their official Instagram account. The official said that they had received reports of the sexual assault in 2019, but there was not enough evidence to prove that the incident was actually occurred. Thus, @humasreslutim claimed that the article “My Three Children Were Raped, I Reported to The Police, The Police Stopped Investigation” was a hoax.

At same time, the websites of other mass media which also put Project Multatuli articles in their news reports couldn't be accessed by people. Therefore, public vehemently criticized the police performance regarding the overall case. Even so, the *#PercumaLaporPolisi* hashtag remained as trending topic on Twitter for several days. On October 11th, 2021, or 5 days after *#PercumaLaporPolisi* first emerged, another hashtag *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* appeared from official police accounts such as the West Java Police Public Relations (@humaspoldajbr) and East Java Police Public Relations (@humaspoldajatim). This tweet received retweets from another official police accounts. Based on the metadata, it showed that the timestamp for this tweet was at the same time, which was around 9am.

The heated discussion on social media related to the article had developed *#PercumaLaporPolisi* hashtag which later gave rise to a new hashtag, *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* as an effort to counter the hashtag discourse. Various opinions and ideas have flooded Twitter social media. These conflicting opinions and ideas have led the virtual world communities to be more aggressive in giving opinions or on simply responding to tweets.

What made this interesting was that how the conversation on social media, which initiated by the viral hashtag, has built a political discourse about legal institution which spearheading law enforcement in Indonesia. The discourse was certainly not only carried out by general public. Various parties with certain interests did not let go of this opportunity to bring a wider discourse so that other controversial issues were also discussed.

## 2. Method

This research would conduct in 3 phases; big data analysis on social media, quantitative surveys, and focus group discussions. All these with the aim for providing a comprehensive picture of public talks about public trust in the police. In **the first phase**, researchers focused on conversations in Twitter with the hashtag *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* from October 6 to November 6, 2021. Researchers would also be conducting text mining from the mass media at the same time. This research was using Netlytics, a web-based software that collecting data from social media. Netlytic (Index @ *Netlytic.Org*, n.d.) could only provide data of 2500 tweets in one-time process. To make sure the data obtained were more comprehensive, researchers would also use RTweets to process data mining from Twitter. RTweet could provide data up to nine days back (Rtweet@*Github.Com*, n.d.). The data mining process using RTweet would be carried out every five days. After data mining, the next step was data cleaning. Researchers

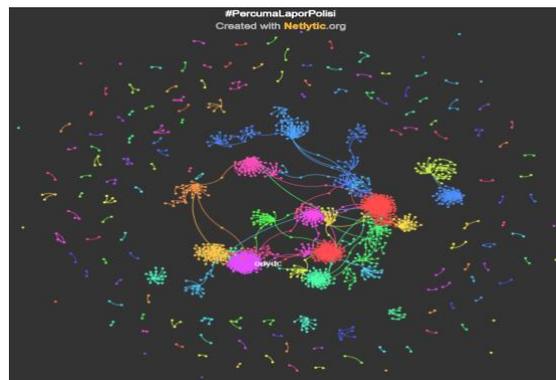
used excel spreadsheet software to clean up data from Twitter metadata (Oauth20\_authorize@www.office.com, n.d.).

The researcher used Wordsmith 8.0 software as a corpus analysis instrument. Wordsmith 8.0 (www.lexically.net, n.d.) was a software package for linguistics, particularly for working in corpus linguistics. This was a collection of modules for looking for patterns in a language. By collecting word frequency data, keywords, index line analysis and other methods, this research expected to be able to analyze social discourse about police institutions. For data visualization, researchers used Tableau, a cloud-based software for analytics and data visualization. Tableau could help to view and understand the data (Tableau-Software@ www.tableau.com, n.d.), hence researchers used it to help getting better understanding of public discourse on Twitter about the police reputation. **The second stage**, the researcher conducted a quantitative survey on the community. Because of the limited research time, this survey has been narrowed down to Banten citizen in 5 districts/cities. The survey was conducted to see the consistency of the conversation between social media and the general public, whether the conversation on social media also illustrated the public's real response to the *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag or not. **The third stage**, in order to get a complete view of the public's discussion about people's trust toward the law enforcer, researchers has conducted a Focus Group Discussion with representatives of community groups in Banten.

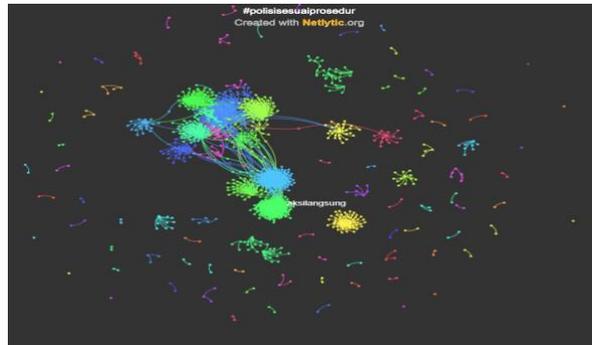
### 3. Results and Discussion

At this part, we would discuss regarding public talks on social media about *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag. This hashtag became a trending topic firstly when @M1\_nusaputra account tweeted it. According to its bio, the account belonged to Yunus Saputra, Head of CCiC Analysis of the Indonesian Police, Cyber Patrol – Virtual Police. Yunus said that the police investigation had followed the procedure for the sexual harassment case. He also said that there was a difference between the actual visum et repertum and the article written by Project Multatuli. Yunus' tweets showed that Fahri Salam, the editor of Project Multatuli, tended to attack Police Institution while the police were in the middle of improving themselves. (M1\_nusaputra @twitter.com, n.d.).

The merging of public communication was one of 16 main featured programs of the National Police Chief (Kapolri) in his 100-day tenure. General Listyo Sigit Prabowo has used a jargon of 'Precision' which means predictiveness, responsibility, transparency and justice. He also promised that the National Police was ready to accept criticism from the public (tempo.co.id, 2021). And with the sexual harassment case has gone viral, the police institution had decided to reopen it (Noroyono, 2021).



Picture 1: Social Network Analysis of *#PercumaLaporPolisi*



Picture 2: Social Network Analysis of #PolriSesuaiProsedur

From the initial description, in the #PolriSesuaiProsedur, there were fewer clusters that appeared and all centered in one position. The initial assumption was that this hashtag was not an organic hashtag, and that buzzers had played a role in increasing the hashtag count numbers. A centralized cluster like this illustrated that there was a systematic and planned effort to make the #PolriSesuaiProsedur as a central issue. The non-organic conversations created in a centralized cluster indicated that the public had less interest to the discourse and was more interested in the previous hashtag, #PercumaLaporPolisi as the central point of discussion. We could see this in the first image which showed how the clusters were created randomly and not centered. The number of clusters created in the conversation between these accounts indicated an organic movement from the virtual world community for discussion.

Indonesian public actually have enormous influence. This was not only about numbers (250 million++ people) but also related to the activities and engagements carried out by the Indonesian people throughout social media which were also equally large. Thanks to that, when Indonesian people talked out about certain issue in their social media pages, it would appear as a huge issue. In 2019, the social media popularity survey showed the results of the 15 most actively used media platforms by Indonesian people. The first position was Youtube, followed next by Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, Line, Twitter and so on.

The use of social media to share information was also utilized later by the mass media to widespread information while giving their readers new informative experiences. Traditional media nowadays readily using online websites to store thousands of news, images, stories, and other information which later piqued the interest of internet users as consumers of their online news sites. Since online news have faster cycle than normal, news makers were demanded to adapt. News reporters and editors are now using Twitter, SnapChat, and other social media as tools to keep their readers curious (Friedman&Sutton, 2019).

The #PercumaLaporPolisi became a trend following the low public trust in the police institution. Various events triggered the peak of the hashtag's usage trend on Twitter. Of course, it would also be wise to state that the decline of public trust in the police was not merely because of the hashtag, but it has been in such bottom-rock position for quite a while, down by 6% (Republika, 2021; CNNIndonesia, 2021; Detik, 2022; Kabar24; Coverage6 2022).

A recent data from Saiful Mujani Research & Consulting (SMRC) published an intriguing score on Police popularity level from 2019 to 2021. From the survey result, SMRC claim that public opinion on Police Popularity decrease over the year. Public opinion on police popularity as "Great/Good" hit the 50,7 the highest score on March 2020 to 44,8 on September 2021. Whilst public opinion on police popularity as "Bad/Worse" increase from 16,8 on March 2020 to 24,8 on September 2021 (Mujani, 2021). This decline in performance came from public opinion, meaning that what were seen, read, heard and considered part of the community's experience were the basis for the assessment. Avid news consumers would have their opinions adjusted based on the construction of the news. At different side, people who were not avid news readers and just following trends, would have different opinions from the avid reader group. Then, where was the community group who only liked to spread the news?

This group was then referred to as the consumption community group. The changes in the pattern of people's experiences from previously experiencing the reality directly shifted to that, in the current digital era, people have

experiences based on the experiences of others they have read through social media or mass media. Thus, the perspective did not come from their own selves but came from other people. Opinion creation and re-creation that kept repeating on social media made people's experiences (which they believed to be real) into pseudo-reality that was created over and over again by each individual. That what happened to *#PercumaLaporPolisi*, the result of public opinion that has gone through the process of creation and re-creation repeatedly through social media. It was not only Twitter, Instagram and YouTube which played important role in the creation process. The trending hashtag was also a real example of the structural re-creation process of the text. It was not only people who have experienced the same incident that spreading the hashtag; people who simply felt sympathy, or had same opinion, or groups of people who disliked the police have participated in spreading the content and hashtag text. This was a characteristic of social media that distinguished it from conventional mass media. The *#PercumaLaporPolisi* hashtag was no longer just a collection of letters jumbled together to achieve the Twitter algorithm system, but it manifested as part of human experience of reality and how it related to other people. In this context, it was about public trust in the police, both individually and institutionally.

Public trust in state institutions was one of the necessary supports in carrying out good governance. Good governance was carried out not only based on the performance of single actor, namely the state/government, but it also needed community involvement, both civil and economic societies. The form of community involvement, according to David Easton's system theory was divided into two; demands and support. We would be discussing more about community involvement in the form of demands and support.

The *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag was trending on Twitter in response to the performance of the National Police which considered not optimal in handling the rape report. The police, which should have provided a thorough investigation, in fact stopped the investigation case. This case first appeared on Twitter based on a tweet published by Project Multatuli through its account. As a result, this hashtag became trending for several days and the account of Project Multatuli also experienced DDoS Attack.

After the emergence and trending of the hashtag, public trust in the police institution continued to decline. A survey conducted by Populi Center showed that from September to December 2021, there has been a decline in the level of public trust in the National Police (this hashtag itself appeared in October 2021). In September, public confidence toward police institution stood at 76.8% and then fell to 76.2% in October, dropping further to 75.1% in November and 75% in December. Although it continued to decline, public trust in the National Police was actually still higher compared to other law enforcement agencies such as the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, the Corruption Eradication Commission and the Attorney General's Office.

The form of public trust in State institutions actually showed how much support given by the community so that State institutions could carried out their activities in giving out public services. With the decline in the level of public trust in the community, this indicated of decrease in the support given to the police. On the other hand, there has been a sizable wave of demands from the community to the police to continue improving, reforming, and striving to optimally handle complaints from the public or police's internal problems themselves. Public became aware about police internal problems more with the emergence of *#1hariIoknum* hashtag which highlighted the action of case-suspected police officers. Public pointed out that how come the institution that should have provided guidelines for righteous and just behavior have human resources with such unfit to be followed behaviors themselves.

Low public trust was also reflected in highly negative sentiment on social media. As a free public space, social media was currently considered as an option to express opinions free of intervention. Despite the existence of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (*UU ITE*), the public were still using social media as frontform for criticizing the incompetent performance of State institutions, one which of course was the police. The barrage of criticism from the public related to the *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* hashtag indicated that there was an expression of disappointment from the public for the institution. In a democratic system this was allowed, moreover freedom of expression was protected by law.

This demand and support from the community should have been utilized by the National Police as a self-evaluation mechanism and showed that they could also improve. Easton explained that the system required a linkage between

one element to another in order to be able to run properly. Community demands and support were only one small part of a governance system, namely the input function. Inputs would be pointless if they were not processed by government officials into outputs in the form of public policies. These public policies were supposed to serve as means to reach the expected outcomes. Reality, however, was not like that. Instead of processing these inputs into public policies that improving their standing, the police actually chose to create a counter hashtag. In good governance, the step taken by the National Police was a spell of more negative sentiment on social media, not solving any problem at all. They were so focused on creating a positive image of the institution instead solving more urgent matter that was unraveling the problems that existing in the society.

When we were talking about public trust in government institutions (not only police/law enforcement), we're basically referring to the components: Commitment, Cooperation, Compliance from the public to the government (Gi-Chon, 2019). This component was encouraging public trust in the organization which in turn encouraged the increase in individual's attitudinal, namely: satisfaction, the same values, the same ideology, empathy, sympathy and individual responses that appear in the form of attitudes (Cooperation and Compliance). However, trust was not an empty word. In public relations, trust meant "A Belief by Publics that an organization is reliable, honest, and stands by its own as well as accomplishes its promised obligations" (Ki&Hon, 2007), and this definition was different from trust in political view which led to the level of public acceptance toward government performance and "righteous" activities. These differences resulted in different anticipation and evaluation responses which, in the end, produced different public opinions.

The *#PercumaLaporPolisi* hashtag, in a simpler context, could be included in the category of public opinion; An opinion that reflected the level of public trust in the police. Opinions that grew from people's experiences and attitudes which came from those experiences. It was a traditional understanding that public opinion was a collection of public sentiments about socio-political issues that could be discussed freely through various communication channels. Currently, through social media, we could see various combinations of mass communication and interpersonal communication which manifesting in various interpersonal debates side by side with mass media information (Neubaum, 2017). This technology was allowing public opinion to form and develop organically in the midst of society.

*#PercumaLaporPolisi* could also be categorized as public opinion formed as a result of the "filter bubble" (Pariser, 2011) and like-minded collectives (Sunstein, 2008) which then producing the same opinion, the same attitude towards an issue. This (seemed) to look normal. Various studies have also found results that we tended to project our opinions on the comments/opinions of others that we read in books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and in this context on Twitter and other social media. In the end, the observations we made on other people fostered the same opinion and point of view in us as observers (even though we might not be directly involved with the issues raised) with the assumption that other people also had the same opinions and attitudes. The hashtag was in this position in the view of public's trust. When the hashtag went viral, it became a trend and was talked about by many people. When there's argument which agreed with it, it would gain followers. When there's argument which disagreed, it would be equally followed. The hashtag has lost its real meaning and has turned into a collective opinion of the community through the bubble filter which existed as member of particular community.

The *#PolisiSesuaiProsedur* was created as a counter effort to the *#PercumaLaporPolisi* hashtag. The latter when viewed from its network analysis could be categorized as public opinion formed as a result of a "filter bubble" (Pariser, 2011) and like-minded collectives (Sunstein, 2008) which then producing the same opinion, the same attitude towards the issue. On the other hand, *#PolriSesuaiProsedur* was a hashtag that formed systematically with the aim of generating new discussions in the virtual community and creating a wave of discourse focused on the image of the Police as a law enforcement agency in Indonesia. When the hashtag went viral, it became a trend and was talked about by many people. When there's argument which agreed, it would gain followers. When there's argument which disagreed, it would be equally followed. The hashtag has lost its real meaning and has turned into a collective opinion by the community through the bubble filter which existed as member of particular community.

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