

## RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN HATE SPEECHES ON INDONESIAN FACEBOOK

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### Abstract

This study aimed to analyze words that were often used by hate spellers in Facebook, the offender of hate speech based on their sex, and the motives of hate spellers involving religious issues in their hatred uploads on their Facebook page. Then, the study applied mixed methods as part of a broader content analysis using qualitative data collection techniques embedded in grounded theory. Then, the research subjects were Facebook users' posts and comments that contains religious issues in hate speech. In addition, the collected data were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were religious issues in hate speeches posted and commented on the Facebook page; meanwhile, the quantitative data were in forms of words containing hate speech that frequently appeared in Facebook such as the word terrorist appeared more than 100 times. Then, to analyse, the researchers applied electronic Nvivo since the use of NVivo software system made the researchers able to compile 'high frequencies' of words and patterns that were directly related to religious issues in hate speech. Moreover, this study indicated that many Facebook users in Indonesia were abusing it as a medium to express hate speech against Islam. The motives for hate speech in western countries differed slightly from those on Indonesian Facebook in which hate speech in the western countries was influenced by a very deep trauma to some terrorist acts aimed at Islam (the forerunner of the birth of the islamophobia group). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, apart from trauma, political elements and setting against are very dominant things, especially when approaching the campaign period for the election of leaders both president and governor. Finally, this research has highlighted that the existence of hate speech on Indonesian Facebook can damage the society's order and the harmony between religious communities that have been fought for so far.

**Keywords:** Facebook, Hate Speech, Islamophobia, Religious Issues

### INTRODUCTION

Hate speech issues on social media, particularly Facebook, become an interesting conversation (Bonotti, 2017; Gelber & Mcnamara, 2015; Temperman, 2011) among Indonesian. Responding these phenomena, the Police of the Republic of Indonesia issued a circular regarding hate speech. It seems like a warning for Indonesian, especially those who use the Internet, to be more careful in expressing their opinion in the public sphere, especially in social media networking such Facebook. Furthermore, in the Circular No. SE/6/X/2015 dealing with handling Hate Speeches in social media signed by Chief of National Police General, Badrodin Haiti, on October 8, 2015, social media networking became one of the monitored means related to the spread of hate speech, especially religion issues. However, what exactly is hate speech? And how do we identify it? (Schofield & Davidson, 2017). Damar Juniarto (cited from Bland, 2014), an activist of the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (Safenet), points out hate speech as a threat to the freedom in expressing ideas. Hate speech disguises in the form of criticism, but basically wants to drop something or someone and spread threats. According to Damar, hate speech levels can range from harassing racial identity, inciting to criminal acts,

getting people to harm or kill others. On the lighter level, hate speech can be a word, a call based on dislike of degrading tendencies and calls for violence.

The last few months, there have been many postings on social media showing these symptoms (Alam et al., 2016; Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernandez, 2016; Ludwig & Ruyter, 2016; Nichel & Borchardt, 2011; Pepper et al., 2012). Some netizens expressed their resentment with the utterance of violence because of racial sentiments. The violence was expressed in the form of raping and slaughtering the person that they hate because of his race (Oldfield, 1996; Silva, 2013). In some ways, hate speech is justified by many things; for example, uncertain political conditions, unbalanced economic reasons or low levels of education. Some cases showed that an educated person often does some hate speeches. It is not impossible for a highly educated person to degrade a person on the basis of his or her racial identity, and then call for an invitation to commit a rebuke to a legitimate government. Therefore, it is important to educate people about digital media literacy. Lawrence (2004) refers to media literacy as the ability to understand, analyze, and deconstruct media imagery. With this capability the public as a media consumer (including children) becomes aware of how the media is constructed and accessed.

The digital media literacy (Llamas, 2015) also needs to be introduced to the younger generation in order to understand the rules that should be obeyed when using social media networks in expressing an opinion or dislike of something (Stevens 1993; Wendel, 2004; Wimmer 2006). The public also needs to be educated in order to distinguish between criticism and hate speech. Questioning government's performance on a problem is not actually a hate speech; however, it calls for hurting and killing government officials because ethnic, religious, racial, ethnic, and group sentiments are a form of hate speech (Bonotti, 2017; Cohen, 2014; Maussen & Grillo, 2014). The press (Van Rooyen, 1994) in this case is also susceptible to the group that will be silenced if the understanding of hate speech is interpreted rashly. Meanwhile, the circular of Police can also be very effective way to prevent or at least stop the lunge of fake media that often called for hatred. It is commonly known that some media labeled by religion often make hate calls (Miotto & Altmann, 2014) and the negative construction of minority groups in Indonesia.

This media often uses religious issues (Malik, 2011; Sponholz, 2016) to spread hatred and untrue news (Wright, 2011). Some media often spread the word without verification or based on non-credible sources. The spread of such media seems like gasoline and fire. Some readers accept the truth of hate news as something that is given. Actually, independent verification work is absolutely necessary to ensure that the information presented by the media is credible. In addition, the verification can only be done by trained people and understand journalism ethics, namely professional journalist (Gene, 2010). Furthermore, La Rue (2013) states that the law should fight the cries of hatred very carefully. The law is necessary in the fight against hatred, and also should be understood the policy of freedom in expressing ideas (Verduyn, 2015 cited in Yong, 2011) and the people can distinguish between criticisms and threats. This study aimed to analyze; 1) words that were often used by hate spellers in Facebook; 2) the offender of hate speech based on their sex; and 3) the motives of hate spellers involving religious issues in their hatred uploads on their Facebook page. Then, the findings of this study

were expected to provide accurate information to the public related religious issues often used by hate spammers in social media. People were expected not to easily trust these issues but they should analyze first before making a conclusion. Furthermore, this study were also expected to provide information to the public related to any motive behind the hate spammers in social media who tended to use religious issues. Having a good understanding, the publics were certainly not easily provoked by serving religious issues on the Facebook page.

## HATE SPEECH IN LITERATURE

Awan (2016) found that Muslims were onlinely maligned through adverse attitudes, narrow-mindedness, hackneyed idea, physical hazard, and online pressurization that all potentially triggered acts of violence or prejudice as they intimidated the secured people. Then, Gelber (2015) reported that hate speech legislation provided the grievance mechanism, a framework for direct public advocacy, and knowledge of the law in public discourse. However, the grievance mechanism imposed a significant enforcement burden on the target community, which is still often experiencing hate speech. He found a reduction in the expression of prejudices in mediated booths. He also did not find any evidence of terrible effects but he found the risk of martyrs of free speech to be marginal. He used the implications of this finding for other countries. In addition, Räsänen et al. (2016) stated that their research highlighted the accumulation of casualties online and offline, the ambiguity of the victims' and perpetrators' roles, and the false distribution of online and offline environments among young people. In this case, so many fake accounts existed in social media so that the data in the field was still very dubious. Hate speech is a sara-containing utterance with the aim of demeaning and dropping certain classes (Meza, 2016; Neier, 2014; Sorial, 2015; Sponholz, 2016). Hate speech meant in this research was the utterance displayed on the Facebook page, all kinds of hate speech in the form of writing, pictures, and memes. The pro-contras arose in the community related to the Circular of the Chief of Police No.SE/06/X/2015 on the handling of hate speech in the public sphere. There were seven forms of hate speech mentioned in the circular; 1) humiliation; 2) defamation; 3) contempt; 4) displeasure; 5) provocation; 6) instigation; and 7) spreading false news. All of these actions had purposes or impacts on acts of discrimination, violence, disappearance, and/or social conflict (Al-Hakim & Dimock, 2012; Askola, 2015; Brown, 2017). Further, it is stated clearly in the circular that hate speech was aimed at inciting and provoking hatred against individuals and/ or groups of people/communities differing in terms of ethnicity, religion, religious teaching, belief, race, inter-group, color, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.

Furthermore, social media is an online platform which facilitates its users easily participating, sharing, and creating content including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums and virtual worlds (Kind et al., 2013; Leopold, 2012; Milton, 2014). Blogs, social networks and wikis are the most common form of social media used by people around the world. Social media that became the focus in this research was Facebook. Facebook is a social networking web founded by Mark Zuckerberg and launched on February 4, 2004 that allows users to add profiles with photos, contacts or other personnel information and could join the community to connect and interact with other users (Indian & Grieve, 2014; Li et al., 2015; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study applied mixed methods as part of a broader content analysis using qualitative data collection techniques embedded in grounded theory. Then, the research subjects were Facebook users' posts and comments that contains religious issues in hate speech. In this case, the researchers analyzed 100 Facebook pages, comments and different posts to obtain data about religious issues in hate speech in social media occurred in Indonesia. Furthermore, the researchers only analyzed Facebook pages between January 2016 and August 2017. In addition, the collected data were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were religious issues in hate speeches posted and commented on the Facebook page; meanwhile, the quantitative data were in forms of words containing hate speech that frequently appeared in Facebook such as the word terrorist appeared more than 100 times.

Furthermore, the research instrument applied in collecting data was a rubric covering a list of words that contain hatred utterance against a particular religion, for example; Islam is terrorism, and Christianity is a dirty religion, and so on. In addition, the instrument applied to analyze the collected data was electronic Nvivo (Auld et al., 2007; Durian, 2002; Hoover & Koerber, 2011; Houghton et al., 2017; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Woods et al., 2016). Nvivo is a computer program to collect research data and to analyze the data (such as AtlasTI, Deedoo, etc.). Nvivo is different with SPSS that calculates the numbers for researchers (although now NVivo also added a statistical ability). The analyzed data were Facebook posts and comments between January 2016 and August 2017 and then was analyzed through NVivo's electronic. The use of NVivo software system made the researchers able to compile 'high frequencies' of words and patterns that were directly related to religious issues in hate speech. All posts and comments were then compiled into groups of hate speech keywords. These keywords were analyzed using the word frequency count created to explore the core issues and recurring themes dealing with the religious tendencies in hate speech on Facebook.

To conduct a Facebook analysis, the researchers searched the data utilizing the keywords Dogs, Pigs, Satanists, Fools, Hypersexual, Trash, Killer, Fraudsters, Kampungan, Terrorists, and so forth. This search was then used to check 100 Facebook pages containing comments and posts that included exclusive criteria related to religious issues in hate speech. After that, the researchers observed the Facebook pages, posts and comments to find out how religion was viewed and targeted by online hate speech. Some of the most common words were utilized to describe religion in an insulting way. As stated previously, this research also utilized NVivo's electronic software since it allowed the researchers to compose and identify comments, writings and patterns that appeared in Facebook. All Facebook posts and comments were imported into NVivo and researchers analyzed the Facebook comments using visualization tools like the NCapture tool, which was a web browser extension that allowed authors to quickly and easily capture web content via social media data such as Facebook for further analysis.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Hate speech in social media (Guiora & Park, 2017; Russello, 2017), especially Facebook, is one of the phenomena in Indonesia that attracts the general public to be discussed (Lim, 2017). Any hate speech uploaded on Facebook spread so fast even within minutes it will be a trending topic among the public. This phenomenon certainly has a negative impact on the life of religious communities in Indonesia because so far the hate speech is associated with a particular religion, especially Islam. Hate speech increasingly culminated in Indonesia after the emergence of the recording of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (called Ahok) about the meaning of Al-Maidah verse 51 on the rule of Islam in choosing a leader (Hatherell & Welsh, 2017; Pinault, 2017) . Ahok's statement was torn into the spotlight for the people and got reactions from Muslims in Indonesia. Even Ahok's statement prompted a major movement, the 411 movement, which demanded the government to prosecute Ahok for his remarks. After this incident, there are several hate speeches directed by both Muslims themselves and Ahok's supporters. Surprisingly, hate speech is related to religion and race (Bonotti, 2017; Leader et.al., 2009; Malik, 2011; Temperman, 2011). This seriously harms the harmony of religious communities in Indonesia.

### Commonly Words Used for Hate Speech in Indonesian Facebook

Based on the data analysis findings, this study indicated that there was a religious tendency in hate speech in social media, Facebook, in Indonesia. This could be observed from the words used in each of their statuses, for example Islam is Animal Religion, Islam Must be Burned, Islam is Dog and Pig, Islam is Devil, Al-Qur'an is Trash, Islam is Religion Bomber, Muhammad is a Pig, and so on. Here were the words commonly used by hate spellers in Facebook;

**Table 1: Glossary of Hate Speech to Islam in Indonesian Facebook**

Words	Frequency
Dog	61
Pig	53
Animal	51
Devil	43
Terorist/Bomber/Murder	92
Hypersex	27
Cheater	19
Trash	12
Liar	24
Misguided	11
Villager	39
Foolish/Stupid	49
Savage	57

The aforementioned listed-words are the keywords that researchers utilized to trace hate speech addressed to Islam. There are probably still many other words that researchers have not found to be due to time limitations of researchers. In addition, some hateful postings have been removed by the Facebook Indonesia so it makes researchers difficult to trace it deeper. The

examples that the researchers show below are just a few examples of hate speech scattered on Facebook.

Figure 1: An Example of Hate Speech (Heaven and Hell in Islam)

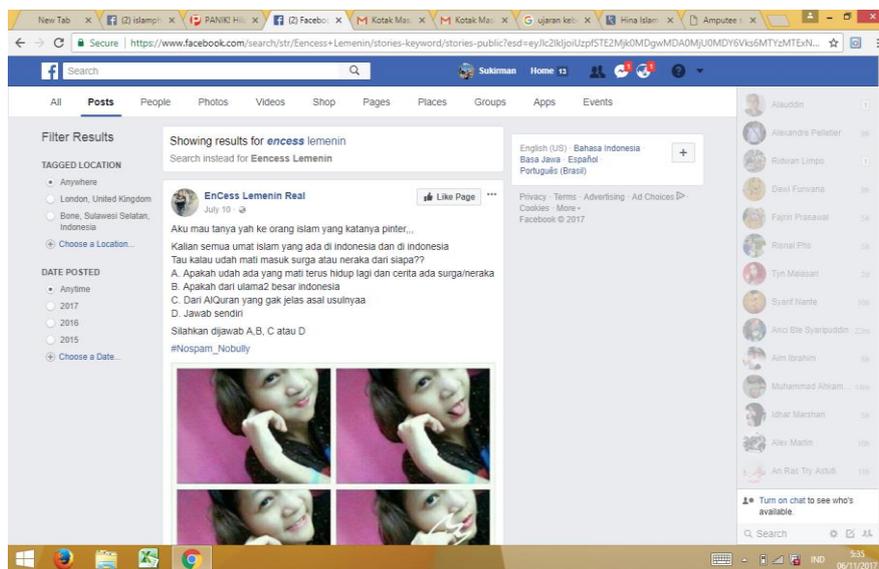


Figure 2: An Example of Hate Speech (Qur'an is Garbage)



Figure 3: An example of Hate Speech (Islamic Religion of Satan)



Figure 4: An example of Hate Speech (Muhammad was a Pig)



Figure 5: An example of Hate Speech (Islam is Savage Religion)



### Perpetrators of Hate Speech on Facebook Indonesia

To know the perpetrators of hate-related speech of religion need a study more deeply by tracing the truth of the profiles of hate speakers. In this case, people cannot immediately deduce the identity of the offender just by looking at their profile, such as profile photo, birth date, gender and so forth. Some cases are revealed, many fake accounts are deliberately made only for using as a medium to deliver speeches that cannot be accounted for. Suprisingly, some facebook accounts are deliberately burglarized by people who are not responsible and then used to upload hate speech to a particular religion, especially Islam. This can be observed in the example of hate speech that researchers previously showed where there were some accounts using the name of Islam and then used to deliver hate speech on facebook, such as in Figure 6

with the account owner's name Taofik Hidayat and Figure 7 under the account's name of Fatima Binti Zubaid. Logically, it was impossible for a Muslim to say such things containing an hatred element against his/her own religion. After analyzing deeply those accounts, the accounts had been taken over by irresponsible people. Therefore, everyone should be more careful in responding to the religious hate speech because public should not be provoked by the utterances so that they succeed in pitting the adherents of religion in Indonesia. This is certainly very dangerous and a threat to the harmony of religious communities in Indonesia that has been built by our predecessors.

**Figure 6: A Fake Account Stating Islam as a Dog and Devil)**



**Figure 7: A Fake Account Stating Muhammad as a Gigolo)**



Based on the analysis conducted by researchers on 100 facebook accounts, there were 73 accounts (both uploaded in the Timeline and Comment form) who had uploaded hate speech against Islam. Some of these accounts had been disabled by Indonesian Facebook because they

were considered to have threatened religious life in Indonesia (Asia News Monitor, Mar 28, 2017; Mena Report, Nov. 18, 2016; WidELITZ, 2013). Disabling these accounts was a real step for the Indonesian government to anticipate the negative impact of hate speech (Asia News Monitor, Jul 14, 2017). So far, the Indonesian government is quite responsive in addressing the hate speech existing in the social media, especially Facebook by providing appropriate punishment to the offenders (Asia News Monitor, Aug 4, 2016). Furthermore, regardless of the authenticity of the account owners who were identified, the account owners were dominated by adolescents and adults, even some parents. Here is the percentage of hate-speechers based on their gender;

**Table 2: Hate-speechers Percentage on Indonesian Facebook Indonesia**

Sex	Percentage (%)
Male	54.79% (40 accounts)
Female	45.21% (33 accounts)

**Figure 8: Deactivated Account due to Stating Islam as an Animal Religion)**



**Hate-speechers Motive in Indonesia Facebook**

A host of motives underlying someone dare to upload hate speech associated with religion in Indonesia. Here are three motives of hate-speechers that researchers analyzed from some accounts that expressed hate against Islam on Facebook;

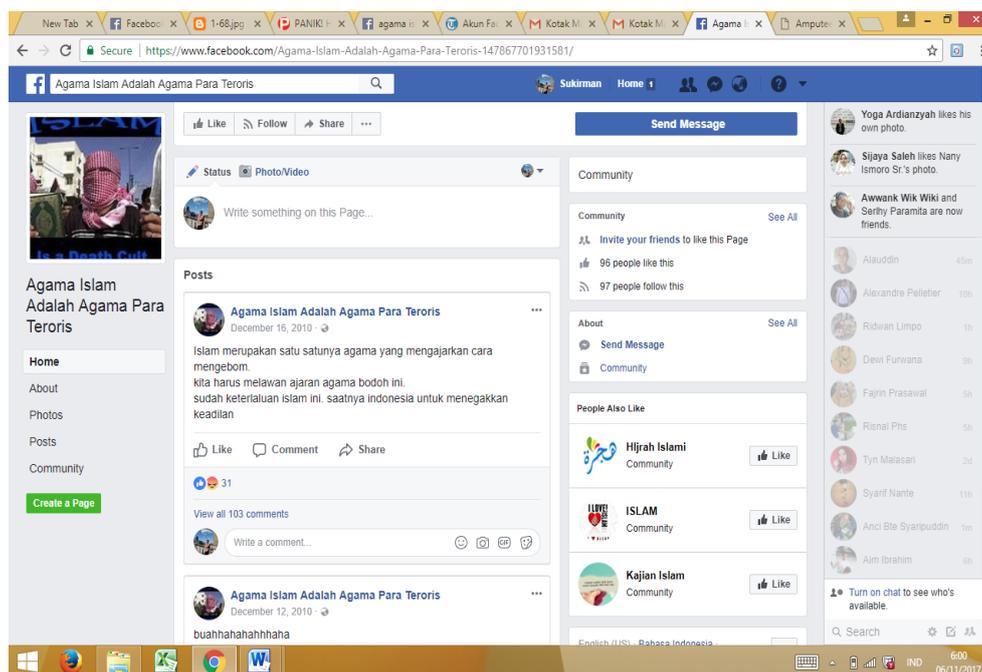
**Trauma**

The number of radical and terrorist acts in the name of Islam can make some people hate Islam. In recent years, Islam has tarnished its name as a religion of peace at the international level associated with cases of bombings and massacres perpetrated by radical groups and terrorists.

So many innocent civilians have been victimized. Many of them lost loved ones due to these anarchic acts. Sadly, this radical group always carries the label of Islam in their action. Thus, the negative stigma of the world community towards Islam is unstoppable due to the deep trauma that they experience (Al-Hakim & Dimock, 2012). Every hearing of the word "Islam" that comes to mind is "terrorist religion, killer religion, barbaric religion", and many more negative terms are labeled to Islam. This deep trauma triggers the emergence of anti-Islamic groups, better known as "Islamophobia" (Awan, 2016). These groups often upload hate speeches to Islam in social media. They are not half-hearted to write on the wall facebook related words that are very disgusting for Islam.

The researchers point out the view as overwhelming. Do not just because of the actions of some people so there is a generally accepted conclusion for a religion. Researchers strongly believe that everyone should know that there is no religion on earth that teaches hatred and hostility. Every religion teaches its adherents to love and care for each other despite having different beliefs. Thus, it is unfair that this Islamophobic group hates Islam only because of the actions of irresponsible people. It is important to note that Islam is a religion of love with peace, a religion that advocates for mutual help in creating a harmonious lives with diversity.

**Figure 9: A Hate Speech Affected by Trauma**



### Politics

One of the biggest motives for the emergence of hate speeches of religion on Facebook was the increasingly heated political temperatures (Agarwal, 2011; Bilewicz et al., 2017; Ezeibe, & Ikeanyibe, 2017), especially in Indonesia. The tight competition of politicians to hold governmental power (Altmeyer, 2014; Van Noorloos, 2013) sometimes makes religion a

medium and a mask to attract the attention and sympathy of the people. The politicians who again compete to win the election always appear as a religious and generous figure in order to get the full support of the community. Suprisingly, their supporters, without a second thought, sometimes take a shortcut by conducting political attacks with religious issues that ultimately trigger the emergence of religious hate speeches that are considered as imaging in social media, especially facebook. The misbehavior of Islamic politicians, such as committing a criminal act of corruption, is also the greatest trigger of hate speech as a form of their disappointment. However, it is unfortunate if personal things are directly generated, let alone the things related to religion and tribe (Putra, 2016).

**Figure 10: A Hate Speech as a Political Attack**



### Setting Against

Hate speech that appears on the facebook wall is not necessarily directly believable truth – it should be observed and traced in advance the truth. It couldnot be denied if there are just irresponsible people who love to harm the harmony of religious life in Indonesia. They deliberately upload hate speeches on Facebook with the aim of provoking certain religious rage to be mutually hostile to other religions. The motives are often associated with political motives to dominate certain areas. Furthermore, hate speech with the aim of setting against is often the case when ahead of the presidential, governors election, and others. Hate speech with such motives should be anticipated quickly to keep people away from the negative influence of political setting against.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study tried to examine the religious issues, especially Islam, in hate speech on Indonesian Facebook. This study indicated that many Facebook users in Indonesia were abusing it as a medium to express hate speech against Islam. In other words, Islam was being stereotyped with

the utterances that could invite or provoke the reaction of Muslims, especially in Indonesia. This stereotypical act certainly had a negative impact on the emergence of Islamophobia groups which consequently many Muslims were treated with discrimination only because of the different ways of how they dress and worship. Furthermore, the motives for hate speech in western countries differed slightly from those on Indonesian Facebook in which hate speech in the western countries was influenced by a very deep trauma to some terrorist acts aimed at Islam (the forerunner of the birth of the islamophobia group). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, apart from trauma, political elements and setting against are very dominant things, especially when approaching the campaign period for the election of leaders both president and governor.

This research has highlighted that the existence of hate speech on Indonesian Facebook can damage the society's order and the harmony between religious communities that have been fought for so far. Furthermore, the findings of this study actually invite all Facebook users to ignore messages and communication containing hate speech so that a high tolerance society can be created. In addition, the results of this study also provide a comprehensive understanding for the society dealing with the motives of hate speech on Indonesian Facebook; as the result, they remain controlled and do not easily provoke by religious issues circulating on Facebook. Finally, Facebook users are expected to remain cautious and more selective in responding to hate speech on the Facebook wall because it could just want to set among religious communities against in Indonesia.

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