HATERS, EDUCATION, AND THE RESPONSE TO HATE SPEECH: A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

Z. Sukawi[1] and M. Elfan Kaukab[2]

[1]Faculty of Communication and Politics, Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an, Wonosobo, Indonesia
[2]Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an, Wonosobo, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The Web 2.0 technology has eased hate speech spreading, although it aims to create communication and information convenience. We formulate a frame enabling a person encountering hate speech to respond by using Durkheim's religious perspective and Machiavelli's politic perspective. The responses are divided into two strategies: the normative compliance strategy, particularly on the religion, and the Machiavellian strategy. The discussion relates the two strategies by employing education as the long-term response strategy to hate speech.
Keywords: *hate speech, education, information technology, Durkheim, Machiavelli*

INTRODUCTION

Despite aiming to create communication and information convenience, Web 2.0 technology has become an easy channel to spread hate speech [1]–[4]. The role of the internet in spreading hate speech is so powerful that some researchers argue that we are now in a hate speech epidemic [5]. Hate speech is one of the factors decreasing the victims' psychological wellbeing. It also drives more suicides [6].

Hate speech is effective in deriving its messages due to its rhetorical components, namely ethos, pathos, and logos [7]. They are related to the hater's credibility (ethos), emotion (pathos), and logic (logos). Efforts have been made to reduce hate speech. The government of various countries issue policies to penalize the perpetrator. Social media providers build technologies capable of detecting hate speech made by their users.

Hate speech, apart from being mediated by technology, is a side effect of freedom of expression. Supporters of democracy, like John Stuart Mill, stated that this freedom is a prerequisite of a democratic society [8]. Nevertheless, Mill also argued that a country might limit the freedom of expression to prevent it from hurting other people. It means that when freedom of expression leads to violence or criminal act, it is unprotected and loses its immunity. Violence means physical injury, death, reputation damage, coercion by fraud and threat, injustice, arrest for no reason, financial loss, and default [9]. This thing conforms to Spinoza's opinion that individuals have the right to speak freely unless when the speech nullifies its social impact [10].

Philosophers have long juxtaposed hatred with fear, sadness, and anger [11]. Descartes regarded it as an awareness of something bad and the urge to withdraw oneself from the object. Spinoza asserted it as a form of sadness accompanied by a perceived external cause, while Darwin saw it as a certain faceless feeling manifested in anger [12]. Aristoteles stated that hatred is a profound anger that leads to the desire to hurt or eliminate the object [7]. From this perspective, suicide is none other than self-submission to hatred and tangible individual's loss from haters' pressure.

However, the suicide level in Islamic and western countries is lopsided. Researchers admit that Islamic teachings play an important role in preventing suicide in Islamic countries, including democratic Indonesia [13], [14]. Islam forbids taking one's own life and curses those who commit it (Surah 4 verse 29-30) by eternal suicidal conduct in the afterlife hell [15]. Therefore, more religious societies have lower suicide rates in Muslim countries [16]. Intense modernization has led to lower religiousness and a higher suicide rate in Islamic countries [17]. The proof can be seen in the fact that although the internet penetrates even deeper in Indonesia, the suicide rate declines.
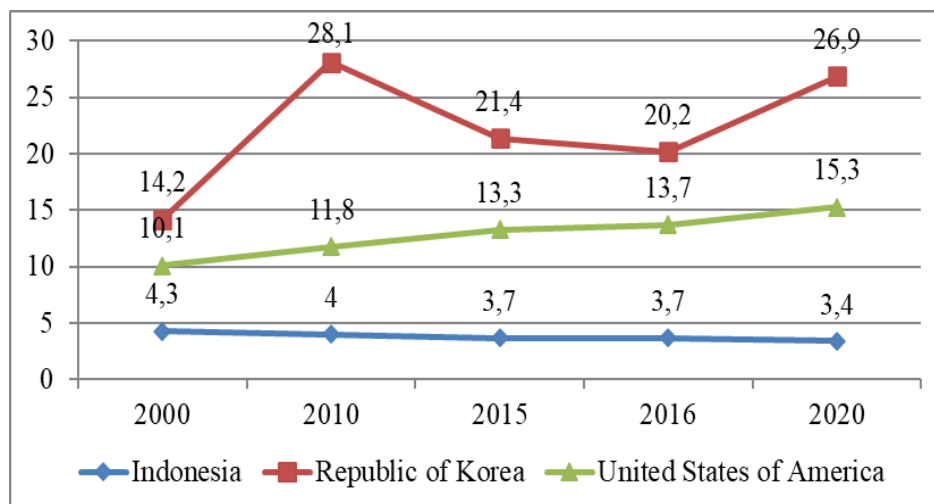
Figure 1. The Suicide Rate per 100.000 Citizens of Indonesia, South Korea, and the United States of America 2000-2020 [18], [19]

For the victims, the best way to avoid hate speech's negative effect is by having a religion. St Augustine from Hippo believed that God controls laws in the universe [20]. If a believer is aware of God's power, hate speech has no power whatsoever. According to Durkheim [21], it is effective because religious awareness relates to that of humans' of the greater power, namely social power. It enables humans to picture something even bigger, the supernatural power, in which God exists. Religions are social cohesions, and therefore, provide social protection for individuals receiving hatred. It is particularly important in a mechanical society, a more traditional form of the organic community. In it, religions are elements of social solidarity which influence anomic behavior in the society [22]. Religions are sources of idealism that organize the society through individuals' restrictions in being offended and offending [21]. Religions are also the power to keep the victims from being suicidal [22].

Hate speech is also justified as a rite of ceremonial disapprobation done by the public to an individual breaking the common norms [23]. Despite its low effectiveness in directing the individual's behavior, this rite brings the society into one union reinforcing the moral codes [24]. In fact, the fatality of the mistake does not depend on the objective severeness. It depends on society's advancement. Thus, in a highly advanced society, a trivial mistake in an unadvanced society will be regarded as a major mistake and will receive severe disapprobation [25].

Freedom of speech and social attachment seems like a contradiction when related to hate speech. On one side, hate speech comes from freedom. On the other side, it derives from social attachment to the common norms. Which one influences and drives hate speech will vary depending on the

context [26]. Religious solutions only work when hate speech comes from the freedom of speech especially because in social media people can unattached themselves from religious and political norms. The issue is what if the cause comes from the violation of social, cultural, and religious norms.

Hate speech collectively comes from a community to one of its members is a matter that cannot be solved by religions. Religions require individuals to obey the norms. How can a person gets help from the party committing hate speech due to his/her own disobedience? The religious solution is a dead end. Thus, alternative strategies or solutions are needed to prevent a person who is receiving hate speech gets the extreme effect, suicide.

This article aims to have a further review of the strategies to encounter hate speech when it comes from the violated social norms. We employ Niccolo Machiavelli's perspective. It offers a political point of view, enabling a person who has both intentionally and unintentionally violated the social norms to cope with the hate speech he/she receives.

THEORY

Machiavelli was a Renaissance political theorist whose ideas are considered as anti-freedom of speech, according to some modern thinkers [27]. That is quite fair as Machiavelli thought that an ideal republic is the one in which the authority censors all the things endangering their power.

Machiavelli's most controversial thesis is that authority may use any means necessary to perpetuate his power. The argument is that in a political world, life is in a situation full of deceits, murders, competitions, intrigues, and invasions. A sincerely kind authority will not survive these. In 'The Prince,' Machiavelli presented a number of kind historical figures whose downfalls were due to the conspiracy of their surrounding people [28].

Nevertheless, kindness is a value of the ideal norm in society. Machiavelli stated that authority does not always have to be kind. He simply needs to look kind in the eye of his subordinates. But, when they plot his downfall, the authority might secretly use cruel ways that violate the norms in a way that the public still sees him as kind and curses the betraying subordinates. If, however, the authority cannot maintain his impression of kindness, he can publicly show his cruelty. He opts for this instead of a kindhearted authority who is weak and easy to be manipulated.

Some of Machiavelli's present adherents bring his thoughts as new norms in democratic politics under neo-Machiavellianism. However, Bellamy [29] argued that true Machiavelli's realism is empowering and in line with society's desire. The 'black art' of Machiavelli's politics aims at 'grandi' instead of 'popolo' (society). 'Grandi' means people who are trying to fulfill their desires by gaining power and using it to oppress society. This way, the public will continue seeing their authority as a moral figure. A society led by such a figure will become more relaxed, active, and empowered. The intruders such as grandi will be gone from the society. Even if they exist, they will get what they deserve, humiliation, and disapprobation from their society. We can see that what was done by Soeharto in Indonesia's new era or that of Xi Jinping in present China describes Machiavelli's ideal ruler.

METHODS

This study employs several approaches, namely library research, life phenomenology, and critical reflection. The library research aims to (1) observe the development of the relevant researches, (2) identify the relevant figures, works, theories, and findings, and (3) identify the development of the

different ideas [30]. The phenomenology method seeks to comprehensively understand the phenomena in life based on their histories. The critical method directs the reflection of the history in the theoretical concepts built from the library research. This means that the library research and phenomenology lead to critical reflection, which in turn generate profound understanding of the matter. The first two stages are achieved in the theory and background of the study. The next part combines the two into a critical reflection.

RESULTS

Social institutions, especially religions, might become a source of stigma for individuals refusing to fulfill society's accepted standards [21]. It clashes social supports and social exclusion to victims of hate speech [31]. This kind of circumstance requires logical steps of active measures.

Instead of being passive, the victims of hate speech can actively take measures, particularly when they do not have society's social support. Active measures might use Machiavellian's approach [28]. It sees competition as the struggle for power. Those who can overcome and predict their opponents using their own logic can take counter hate speech actions. Everything can be done in any ways necessary with ethics beyond the acceptable standards, so long as it is effective in gaining society's support. It allows people to turn in supporting those who they hate. But it can also stigmatize those they hate.

Active responses require an understanding of Machiavellian literation [32]. It was first introduced by Rohlinger [32] as a competence that is necessary to play the Machiavellian game. Rohlinger stated that it is a game in which a society's member learns information about someone or on a terrorist group, then tries to implant his/her faith and ideology in the context. The game aims to predict what a terrorist will do in the future and anticipate it. This technique is similar to the one used by an investigator in ethnography or phenomenology in obtaining data to understand the subject.

In terrorism, it is highly dangerous. An individual can be seen as a real terrorist and treated as one. As a consequence, he has to hide his double identity from society until he feels that the time has come for revealing himself. The point is, he has to be in politics. But in hate speech, it happens the other way around. An individual pretends to be a part of society, and he does not have to hide his pretense. In fact, his true identity is one that has to be concealed.

The output of Machiavellian's strategy varies from the softest to the hardest. It depends on which one is the most accepted by society. The output can be society's forgiving behavior, individual's compliance to social norms, sustainable double identity-forming, or society's reformation through careful internal reshaping in a way that enables society to accept the hated person's point of view.

It works because the hated individual draws the haters into themselves. Durkheim described the emergence of hatred as collective effervescence [33]. At this stage, an individual begins to feel himself out and becomes a part of a larger group. Then, he starts to feel like he can intimidate and show his hatred. The Machiavellian's tactics pull back the individual from the larger group into the same level as the hated person, or even lower. The opposite can also happen, lifting the hated person into the larger group, and yielding a similar effect.
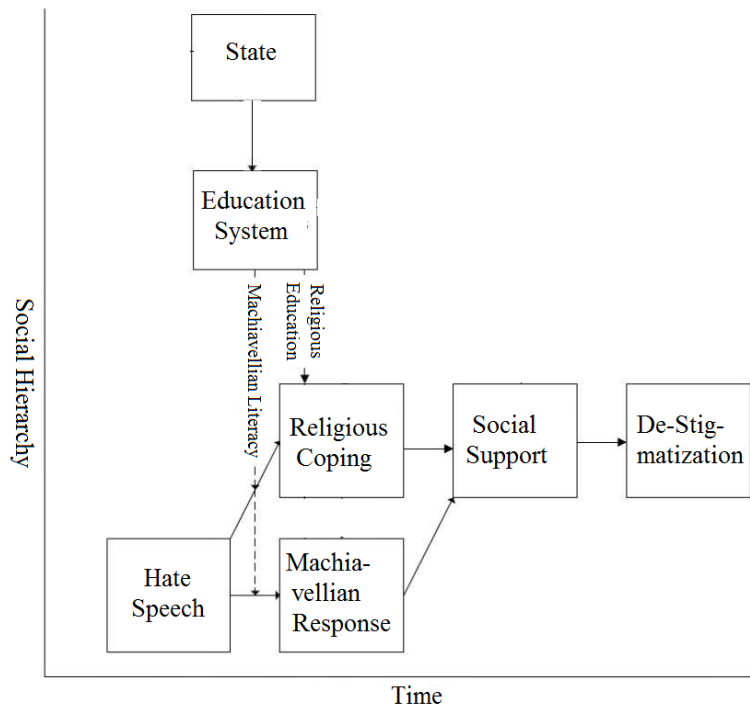
DISCUSSION

Hate speech is an individualist western as well as modern advanced Asian culture that creates social pressure, which at times is unbearable that leads to suicidal behavior. Suicide is a situation in which a person can no longer take hatred, resentment, or harassment from other people [34]. It is not

common in Indonesia, or at least, it is not exposed to the statistical data. There, suicides are due to economic problems, such as poverty and debts.

It has been mentioned earlier that hatred can be overcome by religious or Machiavellian interventions. In Indonesia, the role of religion in preventing an individual's loss from hatred is crucial [35]. Religions are taught from an early age there, which enable individuals to fortify themselves when faced with resentment. It is in line with Durkheim's socialization and integration theory. It describes the important role of education in socializing and integrating individuals into society. Durkheim [36] stated that education is the influence of the adult generation's to members of society who are unprepared for social life by developing their physical, intellectual, and moral, and providing them with particular skills.

In countries where religions are missing from daily life, like in industrialist East Asia (Korea and Japan) or western countries (Europe, United States of America), the possible move to overcome hatred is the Machiavellian way. It is active and requires Machiavellian literacy, which fights to win back a position in society by any means necessary, including the amoral ones. Indonesian people can also use this strategy. Let us see Ahok, for example. He becomes the director of Pertamina after leaving the penitentiary. He was sentenced for breaking the norms and had received hate speech from society. Artists continue doing their good works so well that praise and compliment for them on YouTube and other digital media subdue the hate speech they receive. Thus, people can defeat the system by showing extraordinary accomplishment in compelling one society's norms when others are ignored.

Using the two perspectives, we describe the response strategy to hate speech in Figure 2. It was initially responded to in two ways, the religious coping and the Machiavellian response. Both draw social support and might destigmatize individuals receiving hate speech. The Machiavellian response is lower in social reality as it employs an individual's resource, while the religious response uses the social resource. Higher above those is the education system yielded by a country. It educates people the Machiavellian literacy and religion so that collectively, they can respond well to hate speech.

State

Education System

Religious Education

Machiavellian Literacy

Social Hierarchy

Religious Coping

Social Support

De-Stig-matization

Hate Speech

Machia-vellian Response

Time

Figure 2. Response Strategy to Hate Speech

The education system should teach people religions and Machiavellian literacy to deal with hate speech. It is an urgent matter since Spinoza had stated that hatred and fear are emotions that banish not only an individual's power but also the country forming it [10]. According to Spinoza, a country gains its authority from its citizens' cumulative power [37]. It means that the government should build the policies that will lead to it, which are the emotional and cognitive aspects, positively. Negative emotions, like fear and hatred, should be erased through policies in human development, such as education.

CONCLUSION

The review elaborates on how hate speech arises from the Machiavellian tactics carried out by a hater to gain authority. It can also come from breaking collective norms. Identifying the cause of hate speech is the key to decide which strategy will be taken. If it comes from an individual's Machiavellian tactics, the appropriate response will be social support from the religion or collective social institutions. It is achieved by using the Machiavellian tactics, which are learning the society's norms, applying the right norm, and showing off that the person being hated is a far better member of society. If delivered using effective rhetoric, both strategies will turn the hater into a person despised by society.

It is not an ideal situation because it perpetuates hatred in society. It merely alters the hater into the person being hated. It is a premature short-term solution, which should be taken only when the public has taken one side. If it is in a neutral position, a public figure should become a mediator in reconciling both parties. He could also declare one as right and the other as wrong. Education is the most proper long-term solution. Early education teaching religion and Machiavellian literacy might

prevent a member of society deviates. Even if he deviates, he can still return to society without losing the belief that he had done the right thing by his aberration.

The strategy seems to be amoral and manipulative, but we need to see religions from a sociological point of view instead of a metaphysic system. In the sociological view, religion is the source of interpretation. The winning interpretation is the one best fitting society's emotional and cognitive features through effective rhetoric. It can also win through brutal force carried out by the authority through the Machiavellian tactics. Hate speech is a miniature of this situation. The effort to win the fight against the haters requires Machiavellian awareness and identification of the system supporting the hate. Thus, the hate speech victims can stand for themselves. In the most optimistic situation, it might lead to social transformation, replacing the old world with the new one.

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