

Hatenography On Twitter During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia: Hate Speech Case Against Anies Baswedan

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic's handling was not merely a health problem but created a discourse battle in the social media space. The policies decided by the central and local governments often provoke public reactions in the form of criticism to hate speech. DKI Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan has one of the governments figures whose policies have often been attacked by criticism and hate speech. This study aimed at analyzing the trend of Anies Baswedan's phrases. The phrases related to the handling of COVID-19 in netizen conversations in the Twitter space and collecting patterns of hate speech about Anies Baswedan in pro-government and contra-government accounts connected with the policies of handling COVID-19. This study used a virtual ethnography method against hate speech involving written verbal messages and communication objectives from Twitter users (influencers) who commented on Anies Baswedan's policies in dealing with Covid-19. The captured data come from two groups of accounts, namely government supporter and opposition.

Data exploration used <https://exportcomments.com/> software for comments, while trend data and public psychology (sentiment and perception) used Intelligence Socio-analytics (ISA) from March-August 2020. Data were taken from 42,393 total replies and 1,010,007 total posts for ISA. Qualitative data processing used Nvivo 12 plus to arrange phrases and speech patterns. The result showed that Anies Baswedan associated with COVID-19 had significantly increased since march 2020 and decreased in the following months. The tweets about Anies Baswedan had built public psychology in anticipatory emotions and anger, neutral and positive sentiments. The majority public's perception of Anies Baswedan is disgusting. Pro-government accounts had made Anies Baswedan the theme of conversation in their tweets. The narrative that was built was to criticize and or belittle the governor's policies and actions. Tweets with harmful contents (insulting, condescending, disgusting, swearing, and accusations) were the dominant model, triggering replies in the same pattern, but with more crude, ironic, innocent satirical content using nouns or animal names and other, more sarcastic terms.

Keywords

Covid-19; Anies Baswedan; Twitter; Hate Speech; Virtual Ethnography

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Introduction

Hate speech involving supporters of both groups on social media after the 2019 presidential election is still occurring (Amelia, 2020; Indonesia, 2020). All groups during the 2019 presidential election continue to carry out their actions, even though the presidential election was over. Therefore, there is a split that remains after the 2019 presidential election ends (Kusman, 2020). In practice, these groups do not openly call pro-Jokowi-Amin and pro-Prabowo-Sandi groups, but they have shifted or transformed into different groups. The group that previously supported Prabowo-Sandi transformed into an Anies Baswedan supporter group as the figure they idolized. Their mission is to echo the figure of Anies Baswedan as a presidential candidate in 2024. This change in support is inseparable from the shift in the political map where Prabowo Subianto chose to enter the cabinet circle of the 2019 presidential election winner. Although they also know that Prabowo's figure has the opportunity to advance in the 2024 presidential election. Some of the preceding Prabowo supporters called this a betrayal.

On the other hand, the supporter groups for the 2019 presidential election winners remain solid in maintaining their presence on social media with the mission of supporting programs run by the government and fighting narratives that criticize opposition groups. In practice, they were even involved in throwing hate speech that demeaned the figure raised by the opposing party, namely Anies Baswedan, through speech, phrases, and narratives directed at the main character. If the post-campaign hate speech war is observed, it has different cycles, patterns, and narrative forms (Ahnaf & Suhadi, 2014; Wartakota, 2020). Initial observations implied that hate speech would appear with a high frequency if the supported figures made mistakes in conducting the program, showed an inability to solve problems, and took communicative actions considered illogical in public (Iradat, 2018).

Noise constructed in hate speech was higher during the Covid-19 pandemic (VOA, 2020; Yuliawati & Simbolon, 2020). The issue of a pandemic is about health-related to causes, patterns of spread, and treatment, but also it has sparked a narrative war of hatred on social media on economic issues and other fields related to the handling of Covid-19. This narrative war has brought the public on social media into a statement war using hate speech as an expression of anger, blasphemy, and humiliation of others. There was a significant increase in hate speech on social media, causing the National Police to close 480 accounts deemed to be throwing hate speech to the government and certain parties (Amelia, 2020; Ibrahim, 2020).

Of the ten dominant issues that surfaced during the pandemic, local government policy has received much attention in the social media space. Influencers or public and social media figures have enlivened the discourse on the efforts of the local government to deal with Covid-19. Discussions have emerged about the spotlight on the regional government, for example, the friction of handling Covid-19 between the Central Government and local governments, such as the depiction of the conflict between President Joko Widodo and DKI Governor Anies Baswedan. This research result showed that the local government's performance has coverage as much as 441,837 news and tweets on Twitter as many as 1,377,806 conversations. Nationally, this data ranks number two in news and tweets among ten other significant issues (Herlambang & Bajari, 2020). However, the vortex of criticism of the regional government and the focus on its performance is more focused on the figure of Anies Baswedan, the Governor of DKI, compared to other governors such as Ridwan Kamil and Ganjar Pranowo. As stated by Suara.com, Anies is the most frequently discussed result, but not necessarily the most favorite. Based on observations on each social media platform conducted from 9 May to 8 June 2020 with data sources ranging from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube to online-based mass media, Anies received 64 percent as the most popular figure compared to RK and Ganjar (Raharjo, 2020).

The discourse on Anies is dominant because considered a figure who is always at odds with the center and a figure whose policies are always hindered by the central government. This aspect causes news about Anies always enlivens the social media space and is responded by influencers (Liputan 6.com, 2020; Warta Ekonomi, 2020).

According to a communication perspective, the emergence of hate speech can be seen from the increased production of words and discourse wars between supporters through conventional media space and social media space (Bajari & Kuswarno, 2020; Chetty & Alathur, 2018; Jakubowicz, 2017; Jubany, 2016). Nowadays, social media is the political elite media to gain support (Kruse et al., 2018; Rogers et al., 2020). On the other hand, social media is also a space for

users to express opinions about political issues and elite behavior (Pohjonen & Udupa, 2017; Weimann & Brosius, 2017). A worrying aspect is that users and political elites often hate speech to insult groups, figures, and supporters of their opponents (Franciska, 2017; Teja, 2017).

Social media has become a means of political campaigning in the convergence era to construct the loyalty of supporters and humiliate opponents. Pohjonen and Udupa (Pohjonen & Udupa, 2017) mention that "the legal-regulatory terminology of hate speech has become an important category in efforts to recognize aggressive speech expanding on online media." Social media is accused of being the cause of the war that bridges hatred between groups (Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016). The play of offensive language seems to satisfy the desire to "kill" or "beat" the other party without having to commit physical violence (Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Hine, 1994; Krisneepaiboon, 2015; Simaibang & Bajari, 2019; Troike, 2004; Uzun & Aydın, 2012).

Seeing the high use of social media (Twitter) for the war of hate speech about Anies Baswedan concerning the handling of Covid-19, this study tried to (1) analyze Anies Baswedan's trend regarding the handling of Covid-19 in the vortex of netizen conversations in Twitter space and (2) know hate utterances patterns about Anies Baswedan in pro-government and contra-government accounts concerning policies on handling Covid-19.

Method

This study used a Virtual Ethnography method that combines network analysis and multimodal content analysis from the text, images, and links based on the communication aspect (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Ethnographic communication used a variety of analytical software for each type of analysis and data interpreted by distance and near reading methods (Bakry, 2011; Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Dicks et al., 2005; Kalou & Sadler-Smith, 2015).

This study tried to explain hate speech involving written verbal messages and the purpose of communication from Twitter users (influencers) who commented on Anies Baswedan's policies in dealing with Covid-19 as the central discourse. The discourse is portrayed from two groups of accounts, namely supporters of the government and the opposition.

This study used <https://exportcomments.com/> software to massively retrieve data about content and interactions on individual Twitter pages through its algorithm. Meanwhile, trend data and public psychology (sentiment and perception) used Intelligence Socio Analytics (ISA) about Anies Baswedan and Covid-19 discourse from March-August 2020. Data were taken from 42,393 total replies and 1,010,007 total posts for ISN and four selected accounts for qualitative analysis. Data were taken from six Twitter accounts from two groups representing pro-government (Joko Widodo) and contra-government (usually Anies Baswedan supporters) support groups. Qualitative data processing on selected accounts, the first stage using Nvivo 12 plus. This stage produced the forms of hate speech key phrases that were used, the relationships between the phrases or words in the complete sentence.

Result And Discussion

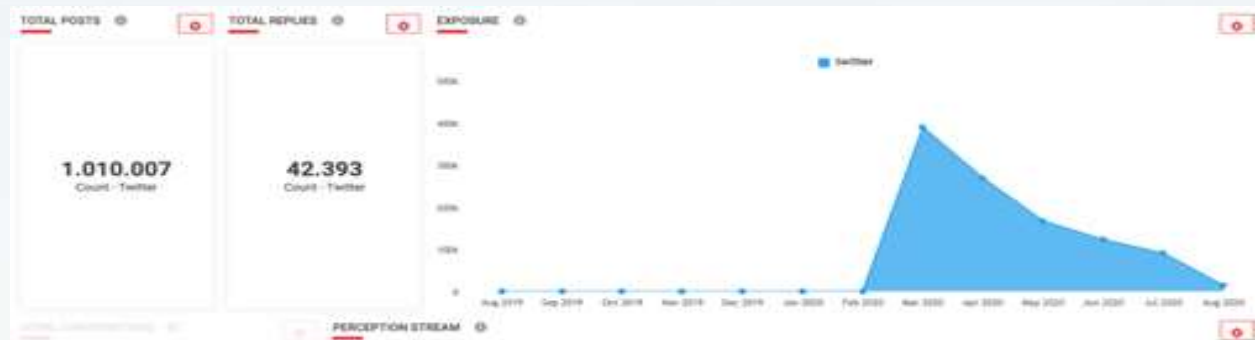
Anies Baswedan's Trend Is Related to The Handling of Covid-19 In the Vortex of Netizen Conversations in The Twitter Space.

Pro-Government

Many pro-government accounts or supporters of President Joko Widodo raised issues that attacked the policies of the DKI government or DKI Governor, Anies Baswedan, in their Twitter space. It is undeniable that hate speech appeared because it was provoked by the account owner's thread that posted individual sentences or images of the policies or actions of precise figures. In this case, Anies Baswedan's policies as Governor of DKI Jakarta was considered a status thread (Twitter) that had received a high response from their followers, both pro and contra. These threads became threads or chain messages containing expressions, criticism, or hate speech between followers or netizens in the account owner's space.

Big data analysis used Intelligence Socio-Analysis (ISA) from March, since the announcement of the first and second cases, until August. The research collected 1,010,007 tweets on Twitter about Anies Baswedan related to Covid-19. The tweets about Anies with Covid-19 reached 42,393 total

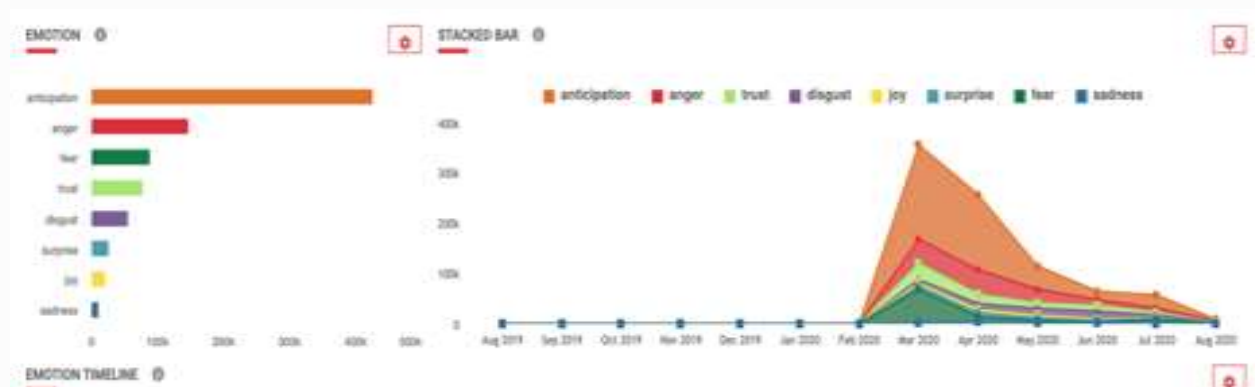
replies. The peak of the tweets occurred at the end of March and towards April when Anies Baswedan began taking steps for handling Covid-19 in DKI Jakarta. After that, those tweets continued to decline. This data can be seen in the following Graph 1.



Graph 1. Total Posts and Total Replies Trends about Anies Baswedan regarding the Handling of Covid-19 from March to August 2020

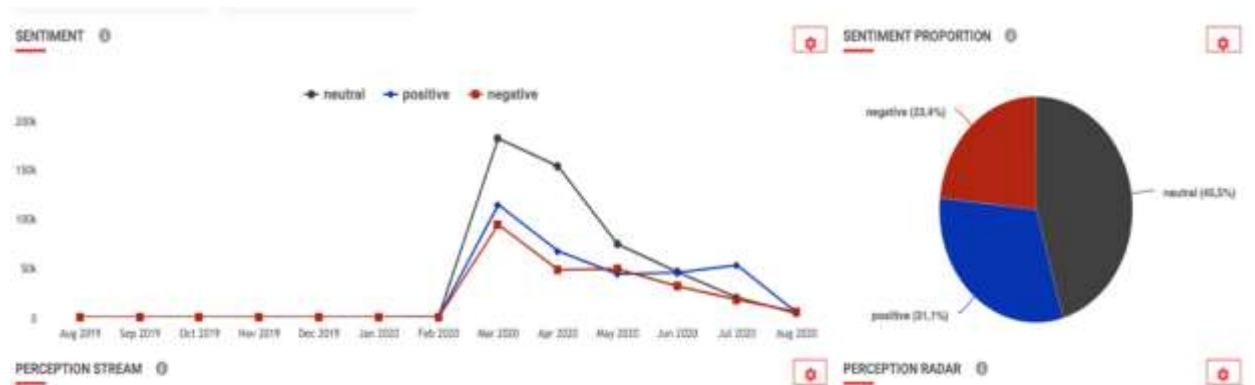
Source: Result of data analyzing

Graph 2 presents the emotions of netizen when responding to tweets about Anies Baswedan, both as a person and as a regional head. In the majority, the emotions felt were anticipatory netizen with the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by anger in the second position, trust, disgust, joy, surprise, fear, and sadness.



Graph 2. Emotional Trends on Netizen Twitter Users about Anies Baswedan regarding the Handling of Covid-19 from March to August 2020

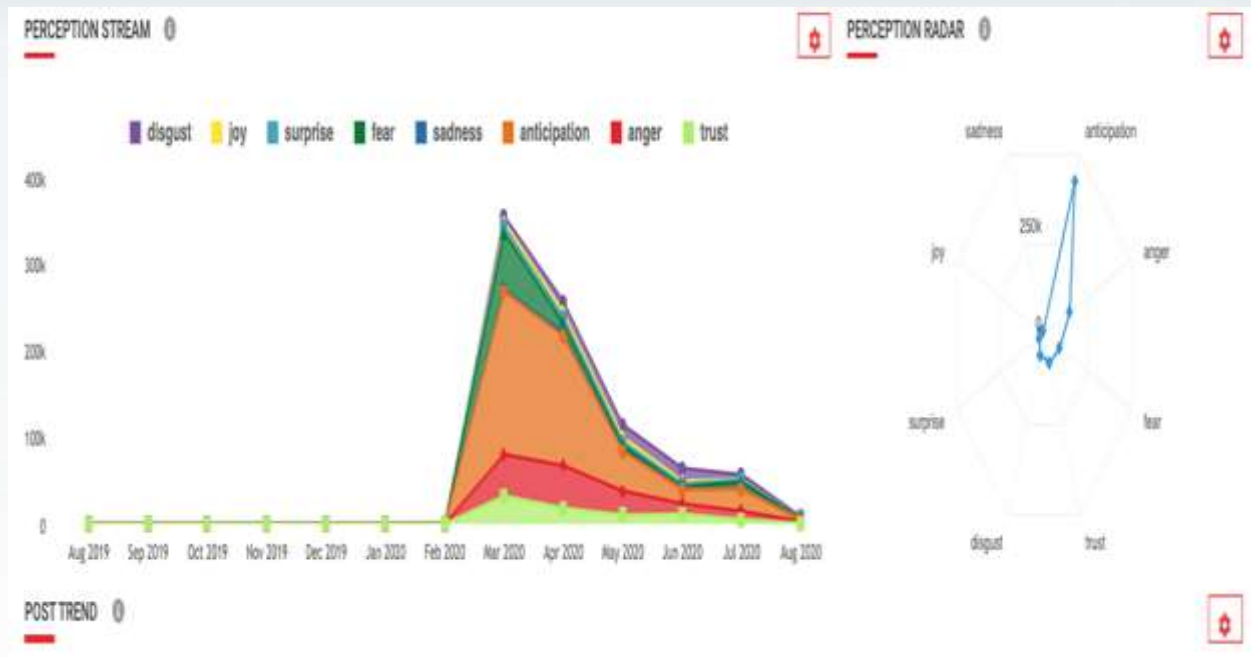
Source: Result of data analyzing



Graph 3. The Analysis of Netizen Twitter Users Sentiment about Anies Baswedan regarding the

Handling of Covid-19 from March to August 2020

Source: Result of data analyzing



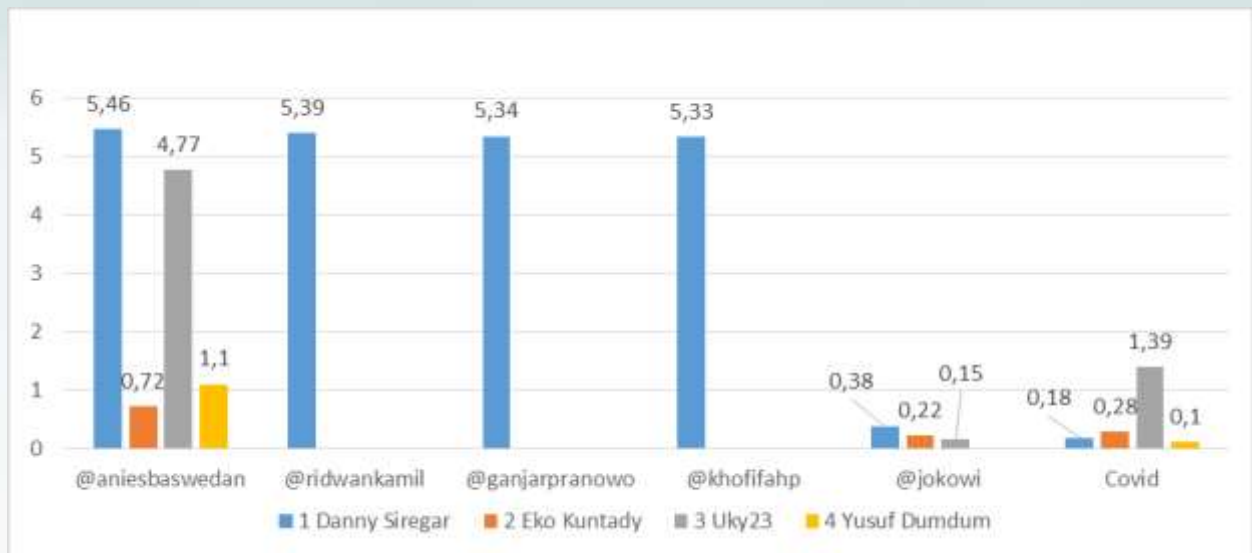
Graph 4. The Analysis of Perceptions of Netizen Twitter Users about Anies Baswedan regarding the Handling of Covid-19 from March to August 2020

Source: Result of data analyzing

Graphs 3 and 4 present an analysis of sentiment and perceptions on Anies Baswedan's tweet regarding the handling of Covid-19 from March to early August 2020. The result shows that based on sentiment analysis, most people exist in the neutral group at 45.5%, followed by positive sentiment at 31.5%, and the negative sentiment at 23.45%. The results show that the public judges in the neutral position towards Anies Baswedan's work based on his tweets and replies. Meanwhile, for the perception analysis, the highest position in disgust, followed by fear and anticipation.

If the result is further analyzed by sorting pro-government and opposition accounts, there are different perceptions about Anies Baswedan regarding the handling of Covid-19. In conclusion, pro-government accounts appeared to be more active in attacking Anies Baswedan with issues related to Covid-19 by comparing his steps with other governors. The results of this analysis were conducted with a smaller scale of analysis towards 197,034 twitter accounts, 5,931 tags (#), and 529,604 tweet activities on Twitter (Herlambang, 2020). One of the expressions that vigorously attacked DKI Governor Anies Baswedan in handling the Covid-19 pandemic was that Anies Baswedan was considered to be doing more imaging and not maintaining people's emotions to panic (Herlambang, 2020). Meanwhile, the opposition accounts considered Anies to be more active and responsive in handling Covid-19 (Herlambang, 2020).

In the next stage, this study analyzed qualitatively on six accounts (four pro-government and two opposition accounts). At the initial stage, a mapping of Anies Baswedan's representation in tweets and replies observed quantitatively was carried out. Graph 5 shows that the presence of Anies Baswedan, either directly mentions on his account (@aniesbaswedan), or the tags #anieskeren, #anieskere, #anies, #anus, #Anies, #amis, or #baswedan always appeared in the accounts being observed. Anies Baswedan is a popular figure mentioned by those observed accounts. Other local governments that were also heavily mentioned by the observed accounts were West Java Governor Ridwan Kamil, Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo, and East Java Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa.

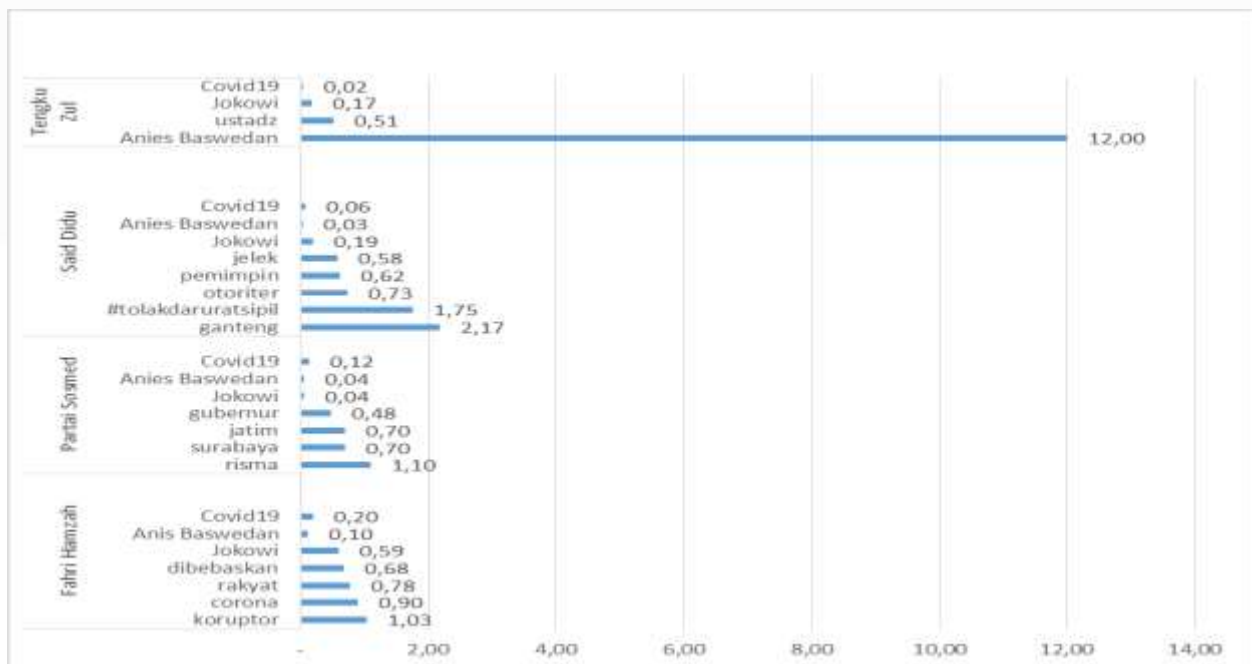


Graph 5. The Frequency of Phrases Emergence (Accounts, Name, and Nickname) in the Selected Twitter Accounts

Source: Result of data analyzing

Contra Government

Graph 6 depicts a vortex of mentioning Anies Baswedan's name in a Twitter virtual room conversation on accounts that are considered contra government. If it is paid attention, mentioning Anies Baswedan's name is not as high as in the pro-government Twitter accounts, which are assumed to have criticized Anies Baswedan a lot, resulting from hating speech. Another figure who appeared in these accounts was the President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko Widodo. The data presented in Graph 6 is different from Graph 5. Graph 6 does not emerge from other figures who appeared in comments on the observed accounts and the analyzed thread.



Graph 6. The Frequency of Phrases Emergence (Accounts, Name, and Nickname) in the Selected Twitter Accounts

Source: Result of data analyzing

Opposition influencer accounts appeared to be more active in appreciating Anies Baswedan and the provincial government's steps in opening data on developing the Covid-19 outbreak to the public (Herlambang, 2020). This finding further confirms that the opposition accounts are the loyalists of Anies Baswedan. Anies have tried protecting their movements that are concerned with the issue of the caliphate.

Patterns Of Hate Speech About Anies Baswedan in Pro-Government and Contra-Government Accounts Regarding the Policies of Handling Covid-19

Pro-Government

The contents of the pro-government accounts analyzed were from four Twitter accounts, namely @dennysiregar7, @eko_kuntadhi, @Uki23, and @yusupdumdum. Those four Twitter accounts were considered siding with the government and attacking opposition groups. This group is also called "buzzerrp" meaning that the government pays the buzzer group.

The first analyzed thread was Denny Siregar's account @dennysiregar7. The tweet said, "When @aniesbaswedan spent 130 billion for Corona fund, @ganjarpranowo sped up with 1.4 trillion. Anies was prestigious. He hurried with 3 trillion and smiled, leaving Ganjar. Suddenly his lips trembled, @ridwankamil overtake with 18 trillion. @KhofifahIP is still far with 264 billion. Who will win at the end of 2024?) This tweet tried to disparage Anies Baswedan in handling Covid-19 progressively. The tweet itself quoted CNBC's news regarding West Java Governor, who had prepared 18 trillion funds. This news was used to disparage the DKI governor, who only spent 3 trillion funds.

The response to the account mentioned above certainly raised the pros and cons. Comments that appeared to disparage Anies Baswedan varied widely, ranging from his manner to his logical sentence. Some people simply said a hateful swearing using an animal's name, a complete sentence of humiliation, or a more simple and vulgar insult.

One of the opinions has led to the vortex of the feud between Anies and the central government and then ended by criticizing Anies. Based on these comments, there was no need to emerge Anies' agreement with the central government because everything has positive and negative sides. However, it is difficult to find the positive sides of Anies Baswedan. Furthermore, other opinions conveyed criticism that there was no need to create a heated atmosphere regarding Anies' conflict with the central government. Anies would not catch the virus because Anies Baswedan always washed his hands. The mention of washing hands was a metaphor to show that Anies often escaped responsibility.

However, some followers disputed @Dennysiregar7's tweet. They constructed logical sentences with proofs, even without mentioning the source. For example, the sentence "@Dennysiregar7 @aniesbaswedan @ganjarpranowo @ridwankamil @KhofifahIP Anies 130 billion HAS ALREADY BEEN in the hands, then share it. One trillion has signed a budget. 2 trillion budget is in the process of signing—meanwhile, 1.4 trillion Ganjar WILL. Likewise, with RK, 18 trillion WILL. Please trace the signing date if you don't believe it. You may be stupid, but do not incite).

The second thread belongs to Eko Kunthady (@eko_kunthady). His tweets criticized the policy of the Governor's Regulation regarding the Covid-19 budget that is "Based on the Governor's Regulation, Jakarta has only relocated a budget of IDR 844 billion for handling Covid-19. The Jakarta APBD is the largest in Indonesia, Rp. 89. He boasts to budget Rp. 3 trillion. Instead, those whom tantrums mentioning Rp. 5 trillion. But lie!" The thread provokes "d by mentioning the words tantrums and lies in the regulations that were decided.

This tweet generated various responses. If it was classified, there are three groups of responses: contra, neutral, and supportive. The contra attitude towards tweets is, for example, "instead of talking a lot, Eko Kunthadi should show achievements to match Pa Anies, and persuade Eko Kuntadhi to realize, and leave efforts to earn a living by inciting people because his wife and children eat his money."

Tweets from Eko Kuntadhi succeeded in building an opinion that led followers to accuse and blame Anies Baswedan. Hate speech is usually delivered by including adjectives or call words that are rude/disrespectful or a series of sentences containing very harsh criticism aimed at accusing other people of wrongdoing, insulting, degrading, and provoking others to commit acts of

violence.

The following tweet from the account @Uky23 regarding the funeral of Covid-19 victim in Jakarta, "Mr. @aniesbaswedan, is there any scientific evidence that the difference between this month's and last month's funeral can all be concluded from COVID? Or just bullshit? Why not DHF (dengue hemorrhagic fever)? DHF kills more than COVID, it comes together with COVID, but it is 'ignored.' It could be DHF)." This tweet has succeeded in building the pros and cons regarding the funeral of Covid-19 victims.

Most opinions agreed with @Uki23's tweet that the logical conclusion taken about the funeral was rushed, resulting in condescending, accusing, and fraudulent accusations. Netizen's opinion accused Anies Baswedan seeking a political stage, accusing a liar, imagery, insulting swearing, politicizing verses and corpses, and appearing hashtag #gubernurterbodoh and #4niesGabenerPembohong.

In addition to supporting tweets, some responses tried to construct logical conclusion by building scientific arguments to support policies, for example, by quoting the results of Anies' research and actions to be careful with people who die as people under observation (ODP) and people without symptom (OTG). Tweets criticized the account @Uki23 and the others being too focused on Anies Baswedan, not on other regional heads.

Furthermore, the fourth account observed belongs to Yusuf Dumdum (@yusuf_dumdum). The tweets were about Anies Baswedan's statement regarding the rapid test and rescuing residents. According to the account owner, Anies Baswedan's statement violated logical principles. It was not appropriate to be grateful to the increasing number of cases because the rapid test was increased, and so the more people who were admitted to the hospital. The content of his tweets might be right that Anies Baswedan's logic was wrong. However, based on the news, there were misinterpretations. The word to be grateful meant that the government was increasingly able to see the actual condition statistically; hence, the number of residents could be saved if they were handled by the hospital early.

The tweets indeed yielded too many comments that cornered the Governor of DKI with the same way of thinking as the account owner that Anies Baswedan was only good at processing words and building rhetoric, and was called the most stupid governor correctly. Even netizens built their own "theory" about the relationship between statistical trends and citizen safety.

Municipal Government (Opposition)

The accounts being analyzed belong to Said Didu and Ustad Tengku Zulkarnain. These two accounts were chosen because their tweets were directly related to criticism of President Jokowi and praise for Anies Baswedan. Said Didu is known on social media for frequently posting provocative remarks that led to complaints from national figures who joined the government. The uploaded tweets usually attack figures that he hates ranging from Minister Luhut Binsar Panjaitan to President Joko Widodo. The analyzed tweets were considered provocative by degrading someone's physical appearance and dignity. The tweet said, "As I said many times: almost all authoritarian leaders are not handsome #tolakDaruratSipil). This tweet opposed government policy on civil emergency decisions and had the hashtag #tolakDaruratSipil.

For netizens who were against the government, the message was captured and interpreted to explain critical political figures who had been bullied by their physical appearance. So that humiliating or insulting utterances emerged, leading to disrespectful words such as ugly, stupid, idiot, or not smart. When he dies, he is not handsome, cruel in the style of Khmer Rouge dictator General Polpot, *peking* lacquey, Polpot from Solo, "*planga-plongo*," stupid, like Pharaoh, and or dwarf-like funnel.

However, the tweets mentioned above had caused a strong reaction from other netizens who thought that those tweets were an expression of hatred for the President, as it is known that Minister of Industry, Rini Sumarno, from his position as Commissioner of PT Bukit Asam Tbk, dismissed Said Didu. Since then, he had often criticized the government. Most people criticized Said Didu for being wiser and more helpful by not insulting the President.

The last tweet from the contra-government influencer was a tweet from Ustadz Tengku Zulkarnain. This controversial figure from the front of the Indonesian Ulama Council is known to be vocal in criticizing the government and has great respect for Anies Baswedan. Tweets from @ustadtengkuzul contained praise at Anies Baswedan, which made netizens against Anies angry.

The tweet said, "Why are they furious when I post praise to Anies, huh? They can write their opinion on their account; they do not have to JOLT and curse on my account ... Let me test it again. Raise the tag: #AniesKeren Let's see how many of them join or jolt?"

For Anies' supporters, the tweet, as mentioned above, aroused sympathy by writing the hashtag #AniesKeren added by a sentence of support for his politeness and praying for the Jakarta governor's health. Some of the compliment comments were accompanied by insulting to Chinese (*bachin*) ethnic, writing of the hashtag #SiJaeKeyen, *Togog* (cunning puppet characters), fear of hell, authoritarian government, and *buzerrp* (paid buzzer).

However, many government supporters, of course, criticized and blasphemed Tengku Zulkarnain with accusations that they were jolted by blaspheming or provoking at Tengku Zulkarnain or Anies himself by saying Anies was a spoiled governor and needed attention. Then, the response that humiliated Anies Baswedan was by saying that the governor who waited for hours just wanted to meet Erdogan, called Anies Kadrun, and Ustad Tengku Zulkarnain stupid, disrespectful, and worthy of going back to school.

Conclusion

The results of this study conclude that; the trend of saying that Anies Baswedan is associated with Covid-19 has significantly increased since March 2020 and sloped in the following months to August 2020. The tweets about Anies Baswedan have built public psychology in the form of anticipatory emotions and anger. The majority sentiment is neutral, accompanied by positive sentiment, and the majority public's perception is disgusting against Anies Baswedan. All pro-government accounts have mentioned Anies Baswedan and built replies that include the word Anies Baswedan or other variants, while the oppositional account does not do it.

The result of the ethnographic analysis shows that the pro-government accounts have made Anies Baswedan both personally and as governor as material for conversational themes in their tweets. The built narrative was to criticize and or belittle the governor's policies and actions. Tweets with harmful contents (insulting, condescending, disgusting, swearing, and accusations) were the dominant model, which also triggered replies with the same pattern, but abusive content is more crude, ironic, innuendo and predominantly uses nouns or animal names.

Limitations And Study Forward

This study has limitations in methodology, instrument development, and the definition of the main concepts of hate speech, data processing, and reading of qualitative data. Methodologically, the use of two data collection (quantitative and qualitative) has difficulty combining the results and conclusions. The problem of different definitions of hate speech (cultural bias) requires more vigorous efforts to formulate it explicitly. The problem of qualitative data processing limited to reading semi-automatic data (using analytical software and manual reading) has constraints in the readings' validity and reliability.

Understanding the limitations as mentioned above, it is hoped that future studies, a standard protocol will be developed to integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches in a virtual ethnographic study. Besides, it seeks to develop a formulation approach to hate speech that is sensitive to the culture in which the study will be being conducted. It is also hoped that the study on the ethnography of hate speech in the social media space will be conducted on other issues or discourses by reading more massive and more in-depth social media data.

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