

# The Representation of French Products Boycott in the Contradictory Viewpoint of Indonesian People on the Online News Portal

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## ABSTRACT

The development of mass media news in online portals is increasing, including the issue of French Products Boycotts, which is due to the French President Emmanuel Macron's statement on supporting the publication of the Prophet Muhammad. This study attempts to analyze the representation of the French Products Boycott issue on online news portals, the effect of media bias on the news, and Muhammad's cartoons, and the racism of the crisis of Islamic religion. Macron's remarks sparked criticism around the world. The Indonesian people responded to this statement by boycotting French products. This study aims to reveal the impact of the news in the social context of society. The study is conducted by using the qualitative method. The object of this research is the newspaper article of BBC News Indonesia. The data is collected by documentation study and analyzed using a critical discourse analysis of the Teun A. van Dijk model. The findings show that. 1) Stigma against Islam and Islamophobia in media coverage. 2) The influence of media alliance in the representation of the French products boycott in the mass media. 3) The influence of French secularism viewpoint towards Islamophobia in the news. 4) The impact of the French products boycott and demonstration news in the mass media. This study should contribute to news analysis that contains arguments and perspectives that can provide social networking insight to the community in responding to issues and information in the news from online mass media.

**Keywords:** *Critical discourse analysis, French products boycott, representation, stigma of Islamic religion.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of the French Products Boycott has become a controversial affair in the world that was provoked by a statement of Emmanuel Macron, the French President, who stated that 'Islam is in crisis' (BBC News Indonesia, 2020). The news is explained there is a statement that sparked controversy, thereby The Muslims was angered. Subsequently, it was also reported that Macron fully supports the publication of caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad created by Charlie Hebdo magazine.

It is explained by Waskito (2015), that Charlie Hebdo is a weekly news magazine based in France. According to that research, this magazine is a socialist left-wing. In 1982, Charlie Hebdo magazine was suspended, then reactivated in 1992. Meanwhile, in

2015, several members of Charlie Hebdo magazine under Stephane Charbonnier became victims of terrorism. Furthermore, Emmanuel Macron's attitude certainly shows hatred towards Islam. Consequently, the stigma against Islam emerged with an attitude of hostility or prejudice to Muslims or known as Islamophobia.

Islamophobia is a term for a hateful movement against Islam or anything related to Islam. In KBBI (Agency for the Development of Language and Books, 2020), Islamophobia relates to the phobia of Islam along with the Muslims. Furthermore, Moordiningshih (in Amalia & Haris, 2019) explains that Islamophobia is a manifestation of fear in the form of anxiety experienced by a person or social group towards Islam and Muslims that originates from a closed view of Islam and aggravated with a prejudice that Islam is an "inferior"

religion which considered as inappropriate to influence the values that already exist in society.

The French products boycott and demonstrations in several countries against France are a response from Muslims to the actions taken by Macron. Disputes on understanding within the scope of religion have always been a sensitive matter for one or several groups. The French products boycott is caused by differences in the understanding adopted by both the French government and Muslims. According to Mudzakkir (2013), in many cases, Muslims are considered to be "religionize" political life, while France is a country that fully supports secularism in the state. Jamaluddin (2013) explained that secularism has the primary goal of separating human affairs from religious affairs. Mudzakkir (2013) claimed that the French interpretation of secularism is known as "Laïcité." It is more than just a form of separation of state and religion. It also contains the idea that the state should encourage the privatization of religion and the dissemination of civic values in the lives of citizens.

In Indonesia, there have also been similar boycotts before, such as the boycott of American products on the underlying of America being an ally of Israel since Israel's attack occurred in Gaza Strip, Palestine. Indonesia also participated in this action. Ridyasmara (2009) also briefly touched on the issue of boycotting Israeli products, boycott actions were carried out roughly by hitting the American product outlets, and demonstrations were also carried out. This action is quite effective and can be proven when McD, one of the American brand products, suffered a loss of 350 million US dollars. Sudarsono (2018) later explained the effectiveness of the action, that the boycott had a significant impact on the American economy and Indonesia.

Online media portals have become media of information in portraying the issue of the French Products boycott, one of which is the well-known media, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) News. Handoyo (2015) explains that BBC News Indonesia has been a website that provides international information since 2012. The site is subordinate to the BBC News center in the UK, which provides news on sports, crime, politics, science, economics, and others. The news content on BBC News Indonesia is a translation from the BBC News central website, which has gone through translation and subtraction of unnecessary information. This is intended for reporting efficiency.

BBC News Indonesia reported on the French products boycott carried out by several countries. The boycott was summarized in a story with the headline "Protests against the French President continue Thousands of people are 'outraged' by Macron's statement". In short, the news contains actions taken by the Indonesian people in response to Macron's actions.

Indonesia is a country that has trade cooperation with France; however, participating in boycotting several French products. The Indonesian Ulema Council also called for the French Product boycott by issuing a Kep-1832/DP-MUI/X/2020 dated October 30, 2020. In addition, the public also participated in boycotting French products on online portals; also, demonstrations were carried out in several locations, including the French Embassy in Jakarta.

These issues are reported in the media that are certainly formed from specific goals or existing social conditions. Eriyanto (2011) explains that discourse cannot be excluded as if the text is valueless; on the contrary, the text is a small part of the larger structure of society. Boycott action will certainly affect the economic sector, diplomacy, or others. The Indonesian government also claimed that the actions taken by Macron are considered to be able to provoke the division of interreligious people in the world. This statement was conveyed directly by the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, in a press conference broadcasted through the Presidential Secretariat's YouTube channel (Presidential Secretariat, 2020).

Based on this explanation, several problems have been contrived, specifically as follows.

- 1) How do the online media portals portray the issue of French products boycott from both two different perspectives?
- 2) What is the role of media insight to the community in responding to issues in the media?

Based on the formulation of the problem mentioned, this study aims to reveal the representation of French products boycotts in online media portals in a contradictory viewpoint and the role of media insight to the community in responding to issues in media.

## **2. METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. The researchers use a qualitative descriptive method to intensify the description of critical discourse analysis in studying news. According to (Moleong, 2016), qualitative research is intended to understand the phenomenon of things experienced holistically by the subject of the research, done by way of description in the form of words and language. Therefore, the research report will contain data to provide an overview and explanation of the presented report. In this study, the researchers aimed to reveal one of the social phenomena related to the issue of the French products boycott that caused dismay in the world community, especially in Indonesia, on the online media portal BBC News. Pascarina (2018) explained that BBC News is the world's largest and oldest broadcasting organization. In addition, the organization already has

several web portals that are easily accessible. The goals of this organization are to inform, educate, and entertain its audience.

Furthermore, BBC News is available in multiple languages, including Indonesian. Therefore, anyone can read the information without restriction. The BBC News Indonesia news portal was chosen because it is the biggest and the most established broadcasting foundation in the world. Moreover, BBC News cooperates with trusted, high-quality content providers to make the news it produces trustworthy and free from hoaxes.

The data used in this study are primary and secondary. The primary data used is news on the BBC News portal titled "Protests against the French President Continues: Thousands of People are 'Angry' at Macron's Statement," which was uploaded on October 29, 2020. While the secondary data used are derived from literature related to the research study; for instance, the news from Kompas.com entitled "MUI calls for Boycott of French Products to Indonesian Muslims" and the CNBC Youtube video. The collection of both types of data uses documentation techniques.

The data analysis technique used is Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis models. The researchers use the Teun A. van Dijk model because, in this model, the relevant theory is found to be utilized in analyzing a discourse, specifically the news in online media portals. In Teun A. van Dijk's model, three dimensions or construction are analyzed; including the text dimension, which is related to the analysis of the text structure in news, how social cognition is related to the production process in news which involves individuals/groups, and social context that is related to relationships between discourse and knowledge developed in society. In applying the analysis technique, the researchers use the research flow of the Miles and Huberman model. According to Sugiyono (2019), activities and qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continuously until it completed so that the data is saturated. Activities in the data analysis model of Miles and Huberman consist of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Text Structure**

##### *3.1.1. Macrostructure (Topic or Theme)*

The topic or theme in the news is the contradiction of secularism and the stigma against Islam. This fact represents the anger of Muslims over Macron's statement that "Islam as a religion, is facing crisis across the world" and his actions in supporting the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in Charlie

Hebdo magazine. Macron's statement as a form of freedom of speech in the media has created contradictory viewpoints among Muslims worldwide, including in Indonesia, resulting in anger, criticism, and boycotts, demonstrations, and rage in social media. The topic discussed in this research using Van Dijk's framework in news discourse will be supported by several topics: the anger of Muslims represented by the French products boycott and demonstrations in several French embassies caused by Macron's statement and the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. In Indonesia, Muslims held a demonstration in front of the French Embassy carrying a caricature poster featuring Macron as a demon with a red face and pointed ears.

##### *3.1.2. Superstructure (Scheme or Plot)*

In general, news has two broad scheme categories. First, the summary is generally marked with two elements, namely the title and the lead. Second, the Story is the content of the news as a whole (Eriyanto, 2011). The news discussed summarizes that, due to Macron's statement, thousands of people from several Islamic groups demonstrated and boycotted French products outside the French embassy in Jakarta on Monday, November 2, 2020. Afterward, the Story on the news is that the same actions have also been carried out by Bangladesh and Pakistan involving thousands of people. The action has occurred because they were triggered by Macron's statement and support acts for the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad through Charlie Hebdo magazine.

##### *3.1.3. Microstructure*

The microstructure usually refers to a local definition that leads to the model of context, especially in the discourse of events (Haryatmoko, 2017).

##### *3.1.3.1. Semantic (Background, Detail, Purpose, Presupposition, and Refutation)*

The background on the news is that it discusses the anger of Muslims worldwide, especially Muslims in Indonesia, against Macron's contradictory statements stating Islam as a religion facing crisis across the world and supporting the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad through Charlie Hebdo magazine. The details in the news are: (1) Muslims around the world, including in Indonesia, undertake the action of French products boycott due to Macron's statement and his support for the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in Charlie Hebdo magazine as a form of freedom of expression in the press. (2) The view of French secularism is contrary to Islamic values. The purposes of the news discourse are (1) Boycott actions, protests, and criticism of Muslims against Macron's statement, which was triggered by two attacks in France

that correlate with the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. (2) Differences in viewpoints of secularism and Islamic values which must be respected, Macron should not have supported the publication of the caricature of Prophet Muhammad, which should not be portrayed, therefore, makes the Muslims offended.

The presupposition in the news discourse about the reasoning behind the actions of thousands of people protesting and boycotting French products was grounded by Macron's statement, which was considered to have insulted the Prophet Muhammad. As for the refutation of the discourse, it was explained that Muslims were outraged because of Macron's statement. Then, at the end of the news text, the author also explains the case from a different point of view. Macron's statement about Muslims facing a crisis is not entirely wrong. Both statements indicate the refutation of the news text through the concluding statements of the author.

3.1.3.2. Syntax (Form of sentences, Coherence and Pronouns)

The form of the sentence used in the news discourse is a deductive sentence because it conveys the discussion in the core of the news. In addition, the news uses active and passive sentences. The active voice form is "They **protested** against the attitude of President Emmanuel Macron which they **called** 'Islamophobia' and called for a French products boycott". Their words indicate that the '**thousands of Muslims in Indonesia**' as the subject, the word **protest** means to demonstrate, and the word **called** means to shout a boycott of French products. In addition, there is a passive sentence "He **states** this matter in a press conference which was held after his meeting with a number of representatives of religious institutions...". In this case, what he said was referring to a statement made by President Joko Widodo, who condemned the actions and statements of President Macron, which caused the rage of Muslims and dividing religious groups.

The elements of coherence in the news are: (1) Macron's remarks angered many Muslims worldwide, (2) Hundreds of people expressed their anger by placing a photo of Macron on the highway to be run over by vehicles, (3) Macron addresses the issue with a secularist perspective and ignores Islamic teachings, (4) Indonesia issues a diplomatic note for interreligious dialogue to occur, (5) The Indonesian government does not prohibit calls for boycotts but prohibits anarchic actions which would harm bilateral relations between the two countries. In the news discourse, several pronouns were found, including (1) He considered that Macron's response did not show sensitivity to Muslims who believe in the holiness of the Prophet Muhammad, in consequence of his figure should not be drawn. The pronoun refers to the Middle East observer, Yon

**Table 1.** Lexicon in the news of the French products boycotts on the BBC News Indonesia portal.

Word	Other Words
Condemn	discern, accuse
Hostility	conflict, enmity, contention, quarrel
Censure	criticism, comment, and accusation
Integrate	unite, merge
instability	precariousness, unstableness
consensus	agreement, approval, consent, ratification

Machmudi. (2) They protested the attitude of President Emmanuel Macron, which they called 'Islamophobia' and called for a French products boycott. The pronoun refers to the thousands of Islamic groups who rallied outside the French Embassy in Jakarta.

3.1.3.3. Stylistic (Lexicon)

The lexicon indicates how a person chooses words from the various possible words available. A fact generally consists of several words that refer to facts (Eriyanto, 2011). The lexicon contained in this news is in table 1.

3.1.3.4. Rhetoric (Graphic and Metaphor)

The use of an image that reads "Macron is a Satan, not a human" with Macron's image in red and the shape of a pointed ear illustrates the anger of the Muslims who demonstrated. The use of the word 'cast' in the sentence "Through the Indonesian Ambassador to France, Indonesia also cast a diplomatic note..." means to send a diplomatic note to France.

**3.2. Social Cognition**

The main focus of this news is on the reactions and opinions of the Indonesian people in responding to the issue of the French products boycott, which draw contradictory views. In addition, the narrative in the news text is built from the construction of the attitude of the Indonesian Muslim community and the world who protested Macron's statement. In mass media, the owner of the online portal BBC News is Helen Boaden. Helen Boaden has access to news in several countries to create an online news portal, one of which is BBC News Indonesia. As reported from the University of Oxford article page entitled "Helen Boden Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism," Helen as director of BBC News, studied mass media and studied politics and public policy (Nielsen & Rasmus, 2021). Moreover, Helen Boaden established BBC News in several countries in England and Indonesia. Therefore, this matter proves that it is easier for everyone to access reliable news that does not applaud with anyone; in

other words, everyone would assume that the news is neutral.

### **3.3. Social Context**

#### *3.3.1. Stigma against Islam and Islamophobia in media coverage*

Stigma and stereotypes against Islam are mainly caused by the November 9, 2001, terror incident carried out by extremist groups in the name of Islam (Jasafat, 2014). This stigma is reinforced by media information that discredits Islam and Muslims with presenting distortions of the truth of Islam. Information in the Western media which always associates extremist groups in the name of Islam, increasingly leads to public opinion about the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims that causes Islamophobia (Shadid & Van Koningsveld, 2002). The phenomenon of stigma against Islam has led to an increasing in Islamophobia in France. McQuail (2010) stated that Islamophobia by French society is considered a reality in life that consistently correlates with culture, especially media culture. The concept of media culture will certainly lead French public opinion in responding to Islamophobic discourse, which has already been customized with society's social norms.

Macron's perspectives and opinions regarding his statement "Islam as a religion is facing crisis across the world" and supports the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad indicate that France has discredited Muslims, had zero-tolerance, and insulted the beliefs of Muslims. This opinion was reinforced by the terrorisms' case and the murder of three residents at the church in Nice. This perspective is supported by the prejudice that occurred in the CNN broadcast on Sunday, November 11, 2015, a journalist named Vouse questioned the existence of Muslims who condemned and deplored the attacks in Paris at that time. Muslims have condemned and deplored the actions of extremist groups on behalf of Muslims, including the campaigns on social media.

#### *3.3.2. The Influence of Media Alliance in the Representation of the French products boycott in the Mass Media.*

One of the French newspapers, *Le Monde*, always uses news construction that includes civic solidarity and individualism (Hotckiss, 2010). This was studied from the news of September 11 in the era of conflict related to security. News channels in France have an orientation highlighting the French government and politics. It is the same with the incident on October 30, 2020, the terror and murder incident in a church in France. A murder incident also occurred on October 16, 2020, killing a teacher in northern France for showing a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad in the middle of

teaching. The partiality or media alliance of the French media certainly supports the French government, which aimed to eradicate terrorism.

In the Indonesian media, the media alliance towards the news construction is different between the journalists of BBC New Indonesia and Kompas.com. A reporter for BBC News Indonesia showed a neutral attitude by interviewing various parties who took part in the pro and contra against Macron's statement, which led to the French products boycott. This is in accordance with the media's vision of impartiality. Meanwhile, Kompas.com responded to this issue by taking part with one of the sources who urged the public to act on the French products boycott. For them, insulting and harassing the Prophet Muhammad cannot be categorized as freedom of expression in the press. Based on the statement, the two continued to respond to Macron's Islamophobic statement that the Indonesian people boycotted French products.

#### *3.3.3. The Influence of French Secularism Viewpoint Towards Islamophobia in the News*

The concepts and principles of French secularism show the separation of governmental affairs from religious affairs, which means that religion does not have a policy in government affairs, and the government cannot interfere the religious activities (Bohlen in Amrod, 2020). French secularism influenced and discredited French Muslim society. In addition to Macron's statement about Islam in crisis, the French government previously banned Muslim women from wearing the hijab and burqa to identify the Islamic identity (Conway, 1997). As a result, French secularism through Macron's statement causes religious intolerance and reinforces the Islamophobic movement in reporting the information in the media as a form of freedom of expression in the press. The reason is that France refuses to be influenced by the enlargement of Islamic views that contradict the secularist values, especially from the way France presenting the news, which became one of the strategies to maintain the secularist views.

#### *3.3.4. The Impact of the French Products Boycott and Demonstration news in The Mass Media*

The French products boycott was also caused by French secularism, which discredited Islam by regarding and generalizing them terrorists, resulting in a stigma against Islam in the form of Islamophobia. Armstrong, (2015) stated that Islamophobia is defined as groundless hostility towards Muslims behaving to be in fear and hatred towards all or some Muslims. The impact of Macron's statement regarding the stigma against Islam and Islamophobia has caused Muslims worldwide to

condemn the act, including in Indonesia. The Indonesian Muslim community does not use French products as a representation of the boycott. In addition, demonstrations were also carried out at the French Embassy in Jakarta and criticized them on social media. This happened due to the anger of Muslims over Macron's manipulation over the French secularism through Islamophobic statements and support for the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad through the support of the publication of the Prophet Muhammad caricature in the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo which insults and belittles Islam.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In this study, it can be concluded that in a news study about "Protests against the French President Continues: Thousands of People are 'Angry' at Macron's Statement" in the online media BBC News Indonesia, which was published on October 29, 2020, there are three things that can be observed based on Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, which is in terms of text structure, social context, and social cognition. Based on the results of this study, it can be described as follows. (1) The media report on Macron's statement regarding the stigma of the Islamic religion provokes controversy and raises the anger of Muslims across the world, one of which is in Indonesia. (2) There is the influence of the media alliance in representing the issue of the French products boycott in the mass media. The mass media referred to in this study is the online media BBC News Indonesia which Helen Boaden owns. She established the BBC News in several countries; one of them is Indonesia. This certainly makes it easier for everyone to access reliable news which does not abet with anyone and that the news is neutral. (3) In the social context of news, a secularist view of the French state separates political/governmental affairs and religious affairs. This has eventually made the French state have an attitude of religious intolerance and supportive behavior on the Islamophobic movement in reporting the form of freedom of expression in the media. (4) Controversial news discourse led to contradictory viewpoints, demonstrations, and the French products boycott as a response by Muslims against Macron's statement. Therefore, these arguments and perspectives can provide media insight to the public in responding to all forms of information in online reporting in the mass media.

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