Islamic Turn in Malay Historiography: 
\textit{Bестиан аль-Шатиин} of 17th Century Aceh
Jajat Buhanudin

The Political Dynamics of Islamophobia in Jokowi’s Era: A Discourse Analysis of Online Media Reporting
Bambang Irawan & Ismail Fahmi Arrauf Nasution

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ISSN: 0215-0402
E-ISSN: 2355-6145
STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492; E-ISSN: 2355-6145) is an international journal published by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, INDONESIA. It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular, and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines. All submitted papers are subject to double-blind review process.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has been accredited by The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia as an academic journal (Decree No. 32a/E/KPT/2017).

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has become a CrossRef Member since year 2014. Therefore, all articles published by STUDIA ISLAMIKA will have unique Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA is indexed in Scopus since 30 May 2015.

Editorial Office:
STUDIA ISLAMIKA, Gedung Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Jakarta,
Jl. Kertamukti No. 5, Pisangan Barat, Cirendeu,
Ciputat 15419, Jakarta, Indonesia.
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;
E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id
Website: http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika

Annual subscription rates from outside Indonesia, institution: US$ 75,00 and the cost of a single copy is US$ 25,00; individual: US$ 50,00 and the cost of a single copy is US$ 20,00. Rates do not include international postage and handling.

Please make all payment through bank transfer to: PPIM,
Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia,
account No. 101-00-0514550-1 (USD),
Swift Code: bmriidja

Harga berlangganan di Indonesia untuk satu tahun, lembaga:
Rp. 150.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 50.000,-; individu:
Rp. 100.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 40.000,-. Harga belum termasuk ongkos kirim.

Pembayaran melalui PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, No. Rek: 128-00-0105080-3
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Abstract: This article investigates the online media reporting of Islamophobic policies during the presidency of Joko Widodo, Indonesia’s current president. The study comprises a critical discourse analysis, which identifies three reporting dimensions, namely micro, mezzo, and macro. The article finds that discriminatory policies against Indonesian Muslims have triggered the emergence of news of Islamophobia in government policies. Politically, this causes Islamophobic propaganda, which, for the government, is a form of discourse struggle, the aim of which is to secure public support. Reports of government-backed Islamophobic propaganda moved the government to amend some of its policies, and facilitated the emergence of counter-narrative news, which refuted these accusations of Islamophobia. This study also shows that accusations of Islamophobia against the government are a result of the trauma many Muslims experienced, historically, long before the Jokowi presidency.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Jokowi, Online Media, Discourse Analysis, State.

Kata kunci: Islamophobia, Jokowi, media online, Analisis Wacana, Negara.
According to Jonas R. Kunst (Kunst et al. 2016), the term “Islamophobia” (Kunst, Sam, and Ulleberg 2013; Najib and Hopkins 2019; Saeed 2007) is actually directed at Westerners or non-Muslim Europeans who dislike Islam and Muslims living in their countries. Islamophobic Westerners even show a sense of hostility toward Islam (Choma et al. 2016); in fact, a narrative of the Indonesian government’s Islamophobic stance has continuously been pitched by political opposition through various media. Media is considered a highly effective means to shape public opinions and discursive contestations (Törnberg and Törnberg 2016). Islamophobic propaganda has been used in political contestation, and has expanded to various issues, including populism, identity politics, and even the politicization of religion. Populism, according to Jansen, is a political behavior wherein political actors exist and are capable of mobilizing commonly marginalized social groups to be able to actively conduct factual and controversial political acts (Hadiz 2016; Jansen 2011). The two crucial components of populism are mobilization and discursive contestation (Evin and Gisclon 2016).

Several online media outlets have explicitly mentioned several Indonesian government policies they considered discriminatory against the Muslim community. Among these policies are the unilateral banning of Islamic websites (Hariyanti 2015), the burning of a flag with Allah’s name written on it (Saputri 2019), legal discrimination and persecution against oppositions (Rizal Ramli: Jokowi Dikelilingi Islamophobia 2018), hindering and cancelling sermons given by proselytizers (da‘i) (Burhanudin n.d.), the issuance of a joint decree—signed by 11 ministries and state agencies on Radicalism (Persada 2019), the issuance of a regulation by the Minister of Religious Affairs on Qur’anic Study Groups (Majelis Taklim) (Hidayati 2019), the discourse on abolishing materials with themes about jihad and the caliphate (Ashar 2019), and the discourse on the formation of Mosque Police (Retnaningsih 2019).

The claim that the Jokowi administration has administered Islamophobic policies developed momentum following the blasphemy trial and conviction of the former governor of Jakarta, Basuki “Ahok” Tjahaja Purnama (Kurniawan 2018). Indeed, the mass mobilization witnessed on 4 November 2016 and 2 December 2016, respectively known as the “411” and “212” Action to Defend Islam (Aksi Bela...
Islam) rallies in Jakarta revealed the extent to which religion was capable of being politicized in contemporary Indonesia. Given the lessons learned from the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election (Pilkada), wherein Ahok’s gubernatorial rivals actively politicized religion, and which ran parallel to the incumbent governor’s blasphemy trial, certain individuals and groups utilized issues of ethnicity and religion in 2018 and 2019 to an even greater degree (Gueorguiev, Ostwald, and Schuler 2018; Kurniawan 2018). Several dichotomies and terminologies were introduced, for instance, Allah’s party against Satan’s party, the Mecca axis against the Beijing axis (Friana 2018), and the religious blasphemer axis against the religious defender axis. The use of religion and religious figures to mobilize popular support continued, as was arguably most apparent with the #2019GantiPresiden (#2019ChangeThePresident) Campaign. This campaign was a manifestation of the public’s criticism of the Jokowi government, which the campaigners deemed less than satisfactory, even more so because, at the time, Jokowi’s regime was considered to be defending the allegedly blasphemous Ahok (Kurniawan 2018, 477).

According to Nurdin (Nurdin 2017) and Farrell and Petersen (Farrell and Petersen 2010), Indonesians increased use (Hui 2010) of online media (Hooley, Marriott, and Wellens 2012, 47; Lefever, Dal, and Matthíasdóttir 2006) has facilitated their ability to express anything. Online media makes it possible to constantly acquire information concerning various realities (Cantrell and Lupinacci 2007). The realities presented before us by the media, however, may not be a valid or accurate description of reality; rather, they may have been shaped, framed, and polished in a particular manner. By conducting framing analysis we can see how online media dictates how we perceive reality. (Krotoski 2010, 1). The concept of framing is used by media to illustrate a particular event by highlighting certain aspects while simultaneously concealing other aspects. In practice, the media employs framing by cherry-picking certain issues and aggrandizing them while ignoring other issues; by emphasizing specific aspects of a particular issue while playing down or even discarding other aspects (Fairclough 1995a, 1995b, 1989). Consequently, the use of language is understood as an act that wields power. Language is deliberately controlled and implemented; it is no longer something unconsciously expressed (Fairclough 1998). It is therefore possible to find contentions
of interests or ideologies within language, because language itself is produced through the process of struggles among economic, political, and social interests in society (Hildan Azizi 2016, 54).

Certain groups might consider such discursive conflicts disconcerting, insofar as they tarnish the group’s image. Those that feel disparaged might respond by using counter discourses or certain social movements to convince the public that the initial discourse is untrue. This is process of action-reaction via communication takes the form of text and reproduction. For government supporters, text is produced to disseminate their ideology and to foster public loyalty and encourage participation. Such reproduction of texts by the powers that be is countered with a reaction in the form of text reproduction, which is \textit{a priori} in nature, and thereby diversifies the relevant texts. In the perspective of political marketing, these texts function as a kind of commodity that is nicely served on store window displays. Consumers can examine, compare, and assess them before deciding to accept, reject, or keep silent (not make a decision) (Fairclough 1995a, 1995b, 1989).

Among various studies relating to the dynamics of the Jokowi administration’s political policies, Mietzner (IPAC 2019; Mietzner 2018) found that the Jokowi administration had erroneously responded to the unprecedented Islamic-populist mobilization in Jakarta at the end of 2016 by criminalizing the populist Muslim group. This was considered a breach of established legal norms. Subsequently, Broven (Ekayanta 2019) criticized the administration’s policies on infrastructure development, which overlooked the lives and rights of affected citizens. Ari Ganjar Herdiansah, Luthfi Hamzah Husin, and Hendra (Herdiansah and Husin 2018) also concluded that social media has become a preeminent space of contestation, utilized by Islamic groups and organizations to project their political stances to the government. Social media can also be used to reinforce the discourse on the politicization of religion, which has the potential to be at odds with democratization. Moreover, research by Ida Ayu Wadanthi Purnama Dewi et al. (Dewi, Prasetyo, and Sudjoko 2015) concluded that throughout Jokowi’s presidency, his voters have had a pessimistic perception of his credibility as president. Such doubt reached its peak when Jokowi appointed Budi Gunawan as the sole candidate for the position of Head of National Police. Furthermore, Hasbi Aswar found (Aswar 2018; Manan 2019; Wibowo and Santos 2018) that the discourse used by Jokowi’s government and
his political allies to ban *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) was not based on security and legal concerns at all, but political motives and interests instead. Power (Fossati 2019; Panuju 2019; Power 2018) portrayed the 2019 general election as a contest between two candidates, Jokowi and Prabowo. The deteriorating quality of Indonesian democracy becomes even more problematic in the global context of democratic recession. Finally, Hasanah and Mardikantoro (Hasanah and Mardikantoro 2018) analyzed online media news reports relating to the first hundred days of the Jokowi-Kalla administration. Their research found that news texts on the first 100 days of the Jokowi-Kalla administration presented Jokowi as a president who did not keep his promises, and who is controlled by the supporting political parties.

In light of previous studies, it appears that no research has been conducted on news reports of the Jokowi administration’s Islamophobic policies in online media. The qualitative research method, with a critical subjective paradigm, is used in this study. Data in the study were collected using documentation and literature. The data comprise primary data, which included media news texts obtained from *Republika*, *Era Muslim*, and *Tempo*, written by journalists, and secondary data acquired from references or literary sources relevant to the topic. Online news data were subsequently analyzed using Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis model (N Fairclough 1995a), namely using the three dimensions: micro-structure (textual analysis), mezzo-structure (discourse analysis), and macro-structure (socio-political analysis). Another of Fairclough’s key concepts employed is the searching and tracking of those factors that gave rise to the Jokowi administration’s Islamophobic discourse from the perspectives of power and history.

**Micro-Structure Analysis (Textual Analysis)**

Fairclough describes the micro-level analysis as a description of text (N Fairclough 2001, 91), for example, the use of vocabulary, syntax, and language structure, which refers to the style of style (N Fairclough 2001, 91–116). The following step is to interpret the meaning of all vocabulary that shape a complete summarized unity of the entire text’s meaning (N Fairclough 2001, 120; Halliday and Martin 2003).

In terms of the reporting of the government’s Islamophobic policies in online media, it is limited to four thematic points, which triggered
the government to disseminate Islamophobic propaganda. The four points are: 1) the banning of Islamic websites (Nasional Republika); 2) the persecution of a public figure in the #2019GantiPresiden campaign (Era Muslim); 3) the handling of radicalism among civil servants (Republika); and 4) the data collection of Majelis Taklim (Nasional Tempo).

What follows are analyses of the linguistic aspects of news texts relating to the government’s Islamophobic discourse.

News Headline: “MUI: Banning of Islamic Websites Triggers Islamophobia”

The Chair of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia – MUI) Information and Communication Division, Sinansari Ecip, said that banning of Islamic websites by the government may trigger excessive fear. This condition is often known as “Islamophobia”. “This is understandable as the Muslim community is very concerned about the reemergence of a movement with a phobia of Islam,” Sinansari asserted in a written statement in Jakarta, Tuesday (31/3).

He considered the banning of Islamic media websites to have triggered a massive and simultaneous reaction from the Muslim community. Sinansari mentioned that the banning of Islamic media websites should be carried out cautiously, by involving relevant institutions such as MUI, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and other Islamic mass organizations, so that the decision to ban them is truly credible, and does not pose any risk of loss to the media involved. “And [so] it does not create unrest among the public,” he stated (R. Burhani 2015; Hariyanti 2015; Indrawan 2015).

Collectively, the vocabulary used in the above news report gives rise to the following understanding: the government is the actor banned Islamic websites. Sinansari Ecip considered this act authoritarian and reckless, as it did not involve multiple parties. The act could be interpreted by certain Muslims as Islamophobic, on the part of the government. Additionally, the banning of such Islamic media could have a negative impact on the mainstream media itself, and could trigger public unrest. The repeated use of the word “banning” shows that both informants – mainstream media outlets side and the claimant – were similarly concerned with this government policy. The media and speaker identified themselves as part of the Muslim community, which felt denigrated. Accordingly, the news report clarifies the series
of complete sentences wherein the government is the subject, the act of banning is the predicate, while the media and the mostly Muslim readers are the disadvantaged object.

The textual structure of *Nasional Republika* media does not only contain a description of the event, it also provides a description of the cause and effect of the Islamic website banning policy. The media used transitive grammar by choosing to use a member of MUI as a participant. The media also used grammar in the form of the verb modality “should” to provide input regarding measures that the government must take. The vocabulary of *Nasional Republika* covered three things, namely: a) it used experiential vocabulary to reinforce feelings, such as fear, unrest, loss; b) it used attitudinal vocabulary to provide an assessment, namely: trigger, reaction, and simultaneous; and c) it used metaphors to strengthen the news content, namely Islamophobia, massive. The intent of *Nasional Republika* by reporting the banning of Islamic websites was to paint the government in a negative light. The strategy adopted by this media outlet was to amplify the negatives and minimize the positives. The parity of language use between *Nasional Republika* and the claimant is based on the fact that both maintain a similar ideology.

**News Headline:** “Rizal Ramli: Jokowi Surrounded by Islamophobia”

Eramuslim.com – Former Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs Rizal Ramli accused President Joko Widodo’s supporters of being anti-Islam, otherwise known as Islamophobic. In addition, he also stated that Jokowi is surrounded by people who dislike Islam. He mentioned this when speaking about Neno Warisman, a figure in the #2019GantiPresiden campaign, being prohibited from entering Batam several days ago. Rizal harshly condemned the decision. “The other day, Neno was hounded, tomorrow I will instruct them to pursue Ratna Sarumpaet, the following day Poppy Darsono, in a month Mbak Rachma,” said Rizal jokingly at Resto Pulau Dua, Senayan, Jakarta, on Wednesday (1/8). Rizal believed the decision affected Jokowi’s electability as the incumbent because the perpetrators were Jokowi supporters. “There are a lot of people around Mr Jokowi who are Islamophobic, foolish, and have committed missteps. His electability dropped to 30 percent,” he added. Furthermore, Rizal hopes the persecutors will be arrested by the police just as terrorists are. “In
the case of terrorism, there’s no need to ask about their religion and ethnicity, just arrest them, now that’s fair,” he stated (Rizal Ramli: Jokowi Dikelilingi Islamophobia 2018).

The word “Islam” was repeatedly mentioned by the speaker (Rizal Ramli) in numerous variants: “anti-Islam”, “dislike Islam”, “Islamophobic”. The repetition of the word “Islam” in the news piece may be construed as emphasis on the fact that Islam is a part of the representation and identity of the informant, hence Islam is an issue requiring a substantial response. The word “anti-Islam” is defined as disliking and rejecting, as well as hating all things associated with Islam. The words “otherwise known as” is a form of metaphor depicting Jokowi’s regime as anti-Islam and Islamophobic. The words “dislike Islam” carry a similar meaning as anti-Islam. While the word “Islamophobic” was used in an accusatory manner, directed at the government for its alleged excessive fears and dislike of Islam. The words “foolish” and “committed missteps” are an expression of the informant’s anger at the Jokowi regime. If these words are combined, they will, subsequently, form the following understanding: the prohibition of a public figure in the #2019GantiPresiden campaign by Jokowi supporters is a form of Islamophobia, anti-Islam, terrorism, and foolishness. Based on the textual analysis, the news report above is an active sentence reporting that there are individuals (i.e., Jokowi’s supporters) engaging in acts (i.e., prohibiting activists) with a particular target in mind (i.e., the opposition group).

The textual structure made by Era Muslim presents an extremely negative description about the prohibition and persecution of a public figure in the #2019GantiPresiden campaign by Jokowi supporters. This media also used grammar in the transitive form by choosing Rizal Ramli as the actor. It also used grammar in the modality form by using words such as “hopes”, “condemned”, “just arrest”, “now that’s fair”, to suggest measures the government should take. The vocabulary in the Era Muslim news covers two things, namely: a) it uses attitudinal vocabularies to give assessment, which are: “foolish”, “committed missteps”, “anti-Islam”, and “dislike Islam”; b) it used metaphors to strengthen news content, namely “Islamophobia” and “terrorism”. The ideology of Era Muslim media in reporting the persecution of a public figure in the #2019GantiPresiden campaign presents negative imagery and attacks the government. The strategy adopted by this medium
is to amplify the negatives and minimize the positives. The parity of language use between Era Muslim media and the informant is based on the fact that both maintain a similar ideology.

News Headline: “Fadli Zon says Joint Decree of 11 Ministers is an Islamophobic Policy”

Member of Commission I of the House of Representatives, Fadli Zon, criticized the issuance of a Joint Decree (Surat Keputusan Bersama – SKB) by 11 Ministers on Radicalism. Fadli believes the policy gives the impression of fear of the Muslim community. He said the Muslim community will be offended by that regulation. “Because, who are considered to be exposed to radicalism? Surely the Muslim community. This intends to back the Muslim community into a corner. I think that’s an Islamophobic policy,” said Fadli in the Parliamentary Compound, Senayan, Jakarta, on Tuesday, 26 November 2019 (Puspita 2019).

The word “offended” in the narrative, as stated by Fadli Zon, means hurt, disappointed. Offended is a passive structure that conceals the doer or the person/subject who offends the object. Accordingly, if the two words are combined and the doer is revealed, then the narrative will be that the Muslim community is offended by the Jokowi regime. “Surely the Muslim community” is written in the text, the word “surely” being a modality indicating the stance and authority of the informant ensuring that it is the Muslim community that is considered the target of the accusation of being a perpetrator of radicalism. The words “back into a corner” mean to pin down, to taint, to disadvantage, to marginalize. The Muslim community here is seen as being cornered with the issuance of the radicalism regulation in lieu of a law (Perppu). Based on the textual analysis above, the above sentence is a passive voice informing that there is an actor (i.e., the government) acting (i.e., issuing the radicalism regulation) and there is a target (i.e., the Muslim community). The word “Islamophobic policy” mentioned by the informant means that the radicalism policy is purposely issued on account of the government’s fear of Islam.

The textual structure of Republika presents negative news and raises negative issues within Jokowi’s administration of handling radicalism among civil servants. This medium used grammar in the transitive form by using Fadly Zon as the actor. The modality structure used was, “surely the Muslim community”. The media’s vocabularies cover three things,
namely: a) using experiential vocabularies to strengthen feelings, i.e., offended; b) using attitudinal vocabularies to give assessment, i.e., to corner; c) using metaphors to reinforce its statement, i.e., Islamophobia. Republika’s ideology in their reporting is portraying the government in a negative light. The strategy adopted by this media is to amplify the negatives and minimize the positives. The parity of language use between Republika and the actor, Fadli Zon, is based on the fact that both maintain a similar ideology.

News Headline: “Fadli Zon Considers Data Collection of Majelis Taklim a Form of Islamophobia”

Fadli Zon stated that the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 29 of 2019 on Majelis Taklim (Qur’anic study groups) is an Islamophobic regulation. The regulation, issued on 13 November 2019, requires the collection of majelis taklim-related data. “I think the regulation has been exposed to Islamophobia. So, I don’t know what is happening with the elites, particularly in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and in some other places,” Fadli said, at the Parliamentary Compound, Senayan, Jakarta, on Tuesday, 3 December 2019 (Amirullah 2019).

The words “Muslim community” were mentioned up to three times by the speaker, Fadli Zon. The repetition of the words “Muslim community” and “Islamophobia” in the article sends a strong message. The narrative of the Muslim community presented by the informant is a religious calling, a call for Muslims to congregate as a single entity. The text intends to show the readers that the speaker, explicitly, and the media, implicitly, represent Islam. Based on the textual analysis, it can be construed that the above news narrative is an active sentence explaining that there is an actor (i.e., the Ministry of Religious Affairs), action carried out (i.e., collection of majelis taklim-related data), and a target (i.e., majelis taklim groups in particular, and the Muslim community in general).

The textual structure of Nasional Tempo again presents a negative perspective of the Jokowi administration in relation to the collection of majelis taklim-related data. It uses grammar in the transitive form by using Fadli Zon. The modality structure used was, “I think”. Its vocabularies cover two things, which are: a) using attitudinal vocabularies to give assessment, namely: “particularly in the Ministry of Religious Affairs”; b) using metaphors to reinforce its statement,
namely: Islamophobia. *Nasional Tempo*’s ideology seeks to present the government in a negative light. The strategy adopted by *Nasional Tempo* is to amplify the negatives and minimize the positives. The parity of language use between *Nasional Tempo* and the speaker is based on the fact that both maintain a similar ideology.

**Mezzo-Structure Analysis (Discourse Analysis)**

In the mezzo-structure analysis, interpretation was conducted to process the discourse, which includes aspects of text production, distribution, and use. This section analyzes how certain informants and media workers produce texts. Accordingly, by employing discourse analysis we will not only understand how news article content is written but how it is delivered as well (Norman Fairclough 2003; Norman Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

Online media news reports on the banning of Islamic websites, as mentioned in data (1), led to pros and cons. People protesting the banning of Islamic websites considered the government had acted recklessly and restricted freedom of speech, and consequently, those that were banned could not accept their websites being considered radical.

According to Fairclough’s analysis, all discourses produced cannot only be seen as mere discourse (N Fairclough 1995a). They undoubtedly carry ideological, political, or other motives. Language is not limited to being a technical tool of communication, but also practices of ideology and power. Having different ideologies will lead to different media outlets publishing news reports on similar events with differing impressions offered to the public with proclivities that are more in line with the ideology that the respective media outlets follow. In such an approach, the dominant group considers discourse a medium used to persuade and communicate to the public about the production of power and their dominance so that they are portrayed as legitimate and true.

A text, as Van Zoest (Zoest 1996, 24) writes, is never detached from ideology and it has the ability to manipulate readers to lean towards that ideology. This is associated with critical culture. It is not surprising that ideology is subsequently considered one of the points of attention, alongside awareness and hegemony.

The banning of several Islamic websites without any confirmation was surely based on the power ideology of maintaining the status
The Political Dynamics of Islamophobia in Jokowi’s Era

On the other hand, the opposition groups’ anger, caused by the government’s banning of the website, was not uninfluenced by certain ideologies. The banning of Islamic websites was instead utilized by some opposition groups as an opportunity to discredit the government. As commonly understood, the media often does not only present information as it is, it also ushers in content bearing certain ideological values. The government considered the content of the Islamic websites they banned to contain certain ideology that may influence the readers, thereby reinforcing a negative stigma about the government.

It is quite apparent that Islamic websites refer to a particular religion. Meanwhile, religion is considered a hot, sexy, and strategic issue by mass media; it is seen as an instrument to mobilize readers. This is achieved by producing and reproducing ideological values originating from religious understanding.

Pros, cons, and commotions pertaining to the banning of Islamic websites, according to Fairclough’s theory, were created by the competing factions to seize discursive dominance in political contestation. Discourses were framed and politically manipulated by government supporters and opposition groups with the ultimate intent of gaining public support. On one hand, the government implemented the ban due to the fact that some of the websites contained issues of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations), slander, and radicalism teachings, or they were critical of the government’s performance. On the other hand, the opposition groups used this issue to dominate the discourse by cornering the government while seeking sympathy and public support.

The following discussion refers to the claim made by Rizal Ramli that the government is being Islamophobic, as mentioned in point (2). Ramli’s anger is considered inseparable from his political action, which indeed stood on the side of the opposition that constantly criticizes numerous government policies. His anger at the government in relation to the prohibition and persecution of those who are campaigning #2019GantiPresiden was a political act executed to seize discursive dominance and gain support from those against the government. Obviously, there were groups that supported #2019GantiPresiden and those against it. The prohibition of those campaigning for #2019GantiPresiden to speak in public should be observed as a contestation between the opposition group and the supporters of the
incumbent. The narrative of Jokowi’s Islamophobic administration made by Rizal is inseparable from his position as a former minister of the Jokowi regime who was subsequently dismissed (Dipecat dari Menteri Kabinet Jokowi, Rizal Ramli: Kalau Saya Buka Terang-Benderang Nanti Banyak yang akan Malu 2020). Every group, including Ramli, tried to gain access to the media so that news articles and texts relating to the hashtag #2019GantiPresiden could be presented within the packaged frame and in accordance with the speaker’s political interest.

The next discussion refers to the data in point (3) concerning the news of Fadli Zon criticizing the issuance of the Joint Decree (SKB) by 11 ministers on Radicalism. Fadli considered the policy exemplified the government’s fear of the Muslim community. In line with Fadli, Mardani Ali Sera felt concerned that the implementation of SKB 11 would deviate from the principles of handling radicalism when implemented among civil servants (Apparatus Sipil Negara – ASN). Mardani stated the government should provide space for differences within ASN’s working environment. “The ASN also has the right to express their opinions since they are also citizens. And I am saddened by this SKB because it can significantly go off the mark along the way,” Mardani stated at the Parliamentary Compound, Senayan, Jakarta, on Monday (25/11/2019) (Puspita Sari 2019).

Fadli Zon repeatedly talked about the Muslim community in public spaces. Something stated repeatedly undoubtedly contains certain ideology and motive. Fadli’s claim that there is Islamophobia within the government is a political act executed to dominate the discourse and gain public support. Fadli identified himself as a figure representing Islam and defending the Muslim community’s interests, as well as a politician opposing the government. Hence, Fadli maintained his role with two ideologies, the ideology of Islam and the ideology of power.

The following discussion refers to the theme in point (4) that discusses the news report about the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 29 of 2019 on Majelis Taklim, which Fadli considered an Islamophobic policy. The regulation, issued on 13 November 2019, required the collection of majelis taklim-related data.

News reports about the collection of majelis taklim-related data by the government occurred during a specific situation within a limited period. The news has now subsided and disappeared from public discourse.
The issue gained prominence leading up to the 2019 presidential election and it had pros and cons. The government, however, is yet to collect *majelis taklim*-related data. Instead, *majelis taklim* groups have been emerging and they freely hold Qur'anic study sessions any time they want without any concern. Therefore, the framing of news reports about the collection of *majelis taklim*-related data was produced by the media and their informants restrictively during that specific context, situation, and time.

The discourse on the government's Islamophobia in the news texts/articles produced by online media from various opposition groups or reports were subsequently distributed to other news websites after going through the editorial staff, and then consumed by the public, which were accessible by searching the internet or visiting these news websites.

All the data, from point (1) to point (4), delivered by the informants via online media are inseparable from the speakers' ideological beliefs and knowledge. No discourse is truly neutral or distinct from the speaker's ideology. Ideology is a belief system – either a community's collective belief or unique group schemata, which is arranged from various categories reflecting identity, social structure, and group stance. Ideology is the basis of social standpoint. Knowledge is belief that has been accurately validated. Belief becomes knowledge once it is accepted and maintained by the group. In certain conditions, there is knowledge that has not evolved into ideologies despite it being collectively maintained by a group. Such knowledge in discourse analysis is called common ground. In the production of discourse, knowledge structure influences and controls semantics and other discourse mechanisms. This is because knowledge is not only associated with the speaker, it also correlates with other knowledge that the readers and listeners maintain.

Readers of media, as posited by Norman Fairclough (Norman Fairclough and Wodak 1997), are actually interpreters of the news they read. They certainly maintain their views based on their respective experiences, which surely differ from the experiences of other readers. Despite reading the same news article, their experiences, based on the knowledge they have, will form distinct interpretations. Whatever forms of discourse are being consumed, they can present substantial differences between individuals as members of a group, social class, or other social associations. An individual's consumption of a discourse
may even form a sense of intimacy or closeness among fellow members and a sense of distinction from other groups. Such situations are sometimes deliberately created over and over to prolong power, to capitalize on popular support, or for material gains.

**Macro-Structure Analysis**

The third dimension is the macro-level analyses, which are based on the argument that social contexts existing outside of the media affect how the discourse is introduced. The editorial room or journalists exist in neither a sterile environment nor a vacuum, as they are also defined by external factors. Socio-cultural practice analyzes three elements, namely economy, politics (particularly relating to issues of power and ideology), and culture (particularly relating to values and identity), which also affect media institutions and their discourse. Discussion on socio-cultural practice involves three levels, which are situational, institutional, and social levels. The situational level refers to the situation’s context and production. The institutional level refers to the influence of institutions, both internally and externally. Meanwhile, the social level refers to more macro situations, such as the community’s political system, economic system, and cultural system as a whole (Norman Fairclough 2003; Norman Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

**Situational Level**

Texts of the news, headlines, and narrative of the government’s Islamophobia discussed from point (1) to point (4) were produced under specific conditions and situations. The incessant propaganda relating to the government’s Islamophobia in the media, with all its contiguous factors, is inseparable from the broader circumstances. The Ahok blasphemy conviction and the parallel Jakarta gubernatorial election is a case in point. There, the then-governor of Jakarta, who was despised by certain Islamic groups, was ultimately found guilty of blaspheming the Qur’an and, therefore, the Islamic faith. Several mass mobilization efforts, namely the 411 and 212 “Action to Defend Islam” demonstrations, were convened to pressure law enforcement officials to arrest Ahok for a statement he had made on 27 September 2016 in the Thousand Islands district, prior to the Jakarta gubernatorial election. The politicization of the statement, which they considered blasphemous, triggered detractors of Ahok and Jokowi to propagandize
the Jokowi regime as a defender of Ahok, particularly given Ahok had partnered with Jokowi as the latter’s deputy governor when Jokowi was Jakarta governor prior to assuming the presidency in October 2014. The wave of dissent against Jokowi progressively escalated. Although indirectly correlated, the banning of HTI during Jokowi’s regime in the same year had prompted the narrative of the oppression of the Muslim community, wherein numerous groups were misled by the malicious slander that Jokowi is a son of a PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) member. He was therefore considered as being hostile toward Islam and Islamophobic. Given these conditions, the destructive force of the 2019 presidential election had much greater amplification power than the 2014 one did (Friana 2018).

Thus, the emergence of allegedly Islamophobic propaganda from the government was triggered by several conditions, notably the 2014 presidential election, the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, and the 2019 presidential election. The repeated failures of the opposition group in seizing a victory in the elections have resulted in an increasingly heated situation. The Islamophobic propaganda against Jokowi’s regime has been more massively disseminated due to increasing internet use, the rise of Islamic populist groups, the trauma of Muslim massacres before the Jokowi era, and the advent of policies made by Jokowi’s regime that are considered unfavorable to Islam.

Institutional Level

The influence of institutions is significant in the production of news reports relating to the government’s Islamophobia. The news media institutions produce, for example, is influenced by numerous factors, including advertisers, total circulation/ratings, and competition among various media outlets. This is also the case with the government’s allegedly Islamophobic propaganda, which was produced based on the demand and order of certain institutions. None of the texts made public by the media were neutral. They were all informed by the interests of certain institutions, whether they were media institutions, state institutions, NGOs, political institutions, or religious institutions, all of which have their respective interests. News is a form of public propaganda and an opinion maker. In the industrial era, the media has also evolved into a political, social, cultural, and economic power. The media is an institution with the power to disseminate information. The
media has become a relatively powerful communicator and has become adept at winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the masses. The power of the media has enabled it to construct a new reality and there is arguably no other institution that enjoys the same power as the mass media.

Therefore, accusations of Islamophobia made against the government in the media were produced due to institutional demand. The politicians who perpetuated the narrative that the Jokowi regime was Islamophobic may very well have been backed up by the institutional interests of parties for the purpose of amassing power and political capitalization, as well as enhancing their own electability and bringing down the ruling regime. Pressure from religious institutions who sought, among other things, the enforcement of Islamic sharia in Indonesia, most likely promoted the narrative that the ruling regime was Islamophobic. Hence, most of the online media news articles discussed in points (1) to (4) contain underlying interests that their respective institutions sought to achieve. Based on the above, the propaganda of the government’s Islamophobia is considered laden with power motives and interests of certain social groups. Accordingly, the narrative that the Jokowi regime was Islamophobic is not neutral; rather, it is biased, and has its own patent ideological inclinations. As a result, the media-constructed reality is no longer seen as true reality; rather, it is perceived as a constructed reality. This view is supported by Schulz, who initiated the concept of social constructionism, which is based on the argument that our daily lives are not absolutely ours, but the results of intersubjective relations (Littlejohn 1992, 190).

The Islamist propaganda aimed at the government must also be viewed in terms of the relationship between ideology and discourse, which is an essential point of Fairclough’s theory. Inspired by Foucault, Gramsci, Althusser, and Bourdieu, Fairclough asserts that ideology is linked to discourse and discursive practices, and this frequently occurs subtly and unsuspectingly, rendering the subject to consider it natural and true. Through the mechanism of naturalization, ideology restricts social and cognitive practices of individuals and the community. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the subject loses their agency as they too have the critical reflective capacity to question discursive practices and their ideology. This is in line with the concept of hegemony, which leads to ideological contestations among various groups, which they negotiate and through which they exert their dominance to gain
public acceptance and hegemonic power. The construction of meaning upon reality through language, in terms of meaning about the world, social relation, and social identity, is ideological because of the pretense of establishing relations of domination in society.

Social Level

The discourse of the government’s alleged Islamophobia in points (1) to (4) reported in the media is often determined by a factor of change in society. People’s habits, the way they think and act, their choices of words, their ideologies, their perspectives, all define the way in which they express themselves. This is also the case with the Islamophobic propaganda of which the government was accused. It was produced to achieve political capitalization, notwithstanding that most Indonesians are Muslims. It is not uncommon for the media to produce news reports that cater to the tastes and traditions of their audience. Accordingly, news produced by political elites often follow the will of their supporters.

The propaganda of the government’s alleged Islamophobia is considered extremely effective in arousing the religious sentiment of Muslims. On this basis, the narrative and sentiment regarding Islam became a part of a discourse that had continuously been articulated, and this resulted in the supporters of the government regime wanting to maintain power for a second term, to not only rely on Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), but to seek to engage with Muhammadiyah, as well.

At this point, the discourse on the government’s alleged Islamophobia, as expressed by the government’s opposition, could be deemed successful, at least insofar as it influenced Jokowi’s vice-presidential nomination. Jokowi had initially considered Mahfud MD, Muhaimin Iskandar, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, and Tito Karnavian, but his decision to nominate KH Ma’ruf Amin as his vice presidential candidate revealed that Jokowi sought to placate and win the votes of the right-wing Islamist populace, which had voted for Anies Baswedan, rather than his political ally, Ahok, in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election (Panuju 2019). To disprove the opposition’s accusation that his administration was Islamophobic, Jokowi’s campaign team ultimately nominated the then-78-year-old Ma’ruf Amin, who had previously stood in opposition to the government and was instrumental in Ahok’s political demise. Indeed, as MUI chairman, Ma’ruf incriminated Ahok
by issuing the infamous MUI Religious Opinion and Stance (*Pendapat dan Sikap Keagamaan*), which claimed Ahok had blasphemed the Qur’an, and also gave damning, albeit spurious, evidence at trial (Peterson 2020, 141-148). Nonetheless, some considered Jokowi’s decision to nominate Ma’ruf Amin as his vice-presidential candidate as devaluing the spirit of diversity and nationalism. Aside from the successful use of Islamophobia jargon in influencing Jokowi’s vice presidential candidate nomination, Ma’ruf’s presence arguably inoculated Jokowi from any further accusations or slander that he was anti-Islam, Islamophobic, and anti-ulama (A. N. Burhani 2018).

The accusations of Islamophobia made against the government moved government supporters to create a counter-narrative. This is in line with Fairclough’s theory that the advent of discourse produces a new discourse. The counter-narrative to the government’s Islamophobia can be found in several media, including “Jokowi amazed being called anti-ulama” (Gatra 2018), “Jokowi ranked 16 out of 500 most influential Muslims in the world in 2018” (Purnamasari 2018), “Jokowi ranked 13 out of 500 world’s most influential Muslim in 2019” (Hasan 2017), “Jokowi constructs several vertical housing in Islamic boarding schools” (Febrinastrri 2019), “President Jokowi makes Micro Waqaf Banks Official” (Presiden Jokowi Resmikan Bank Wakaf Mikro di Kendal - Post Kota Pontianak 2019), “Jokowi known as devout worshiper” (Fardiansyah 2019) and others.

Using the logics of Althusser (Althusser 1993), the above process of discourse production and reproduction indicates the state’s dominance in eliminating discourses that undermine its credibility. By using Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, a discourse should be examined within the contexts of power and history. That is why the narrative on the Jokowi administration’s Islamophobia should essentially be examined using the two perspectives. According to the perspectives of power and history, Indonesia has never been conflict-free, be it political or religious conflict. Indonesia also has a long history of human tragedy pertaining to the relationship between the rulers and the people. There were ruling regimes with a phobia of certain Islamic groups, that declared their desire to eliminate these groups by using repressive and vicious measures. These bloody incidents undoubtedly left deep wounds and trauma throughout the Muslim community.
A few examples include the cruelty of King Amangkurat I, who was the son of Sultan Agung and the ruler of the Kingdom of Mataram. He disliked those ulama who meddled in politics. His hatred of ulama peaked when he was informed that ulama had participated in an uprising. Given the power and authority he wielded, he felt he could do anything. His arrogance made him cruel and heartless, which resulted in his massacring between 5000 and 6000 ulama (de Graaf 1987) in less than 30 minutes (Chalik 2011; Kiswanto 2016).

Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno, sentenced Kartosuwiryo to death for his adherence to hardline Islam. At the same time, Soekarno embraced Hatta and Nasir, as he considered them moderate and lenient (Yatim 2008, 306). This is how the term *Nasakom* (*Nasionalisme, Agama, Komunisme*—nationalism, religion, communism) came to be (Suhelmi 1999). It seems that Soekarno’s character was not much different to President Jokowi, particularly in his second term. He imprisoned Abu Bakar Baasyir and isolated Habib Riziq Shihab for their hardline Islamist stances, while Jokowi embraced Ma’ruf Amin who he considered a moderate (Rustanta 2019).

There was also the bloody tragedy that led to the deaths of hundreds of ulama in the 30th of September Movement (G30S/ PKI) incident toward the end of the Soekarno era (Arta and Purnawati 2017). There were also several unforgettable bloody historical accounts during the Soeharto era, such as the incidents in Tanjung Priok (Hamid 2008) and Lampung (Akmaliah 2014), the military operations in Aceh (Jayanti 2013) and other regions that resulted in the deaths of a large part of the Muslim community, particularly ulama. A series of bloody tragedies throughout several periods of rulers before Jokowi have induced trauma to the Muslim community, which in turn makes it easy for them to accuse the government of being Islamophobic when regulations they consider discriminatory against the Muslim community are enacted.

By using critical discourse analysis, the current research has found that Islamophobia propaganda disseminated online has been biased and undermined ethical principles of journalism. The four online media analyzed in this study have displayed excessive illustrations and overgeneralizations that are not in line with the facts on the ground. These four media outlets constructed news reports that were extremely subjective, unprofessional, and provocative, and they are only affiliated with groups that oppose Jokowi’s administration. The illustrations they
gave were often irrelevant with the objective reality on the field. These online media did so by using ambiguous expressions that resulted in multiple interpretations. The accusation of Islamophobia made by the four online media is based on hatred of Ahok while he was Jakarta governor, and their alignment with supporters of Prabowo who failed to become president.

Conclusively, this Islamophobia propaganda can be understood based on three variables. First, the narrative of Islamophobia is a reaction made by populist Islamic groups that did not accept Ahok as governor of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta. Second, Islamophobia is a manifestation of the unwillingness of Prabowo’s supporters to accept Prabowo’s failure in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections. Third, Islamophobia is a form of identity politics and discursive battle waged by these online media propagandists aimed at destabilizing the Jokowi administration. The Islamophobia narratives in online media stem from hatred of the Chinese ethnic minority, which is considered to be widely accommodated by the Jokowi administration, subsequently prompting ideas concerning the rise of socio-religious groups, as witnessed in the 411 and 212 “Action to Defend Islam” demonstrations, which led to practices of religious intolerance throughout Indonesia, where the majority are, in fact, intolerant of the minority. The four online media above are trapped in the Islamophobia discourse disseminated by the West. The Islamophobia propaganda spreads easily via the news, which is largely dominated by religious politicization.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the micro-dimension (texts) of the news narrative on the Jokowi administration’s alleged Islamophobia was triggered by policies that are discriminatory against the Muslim community. This is associated with discursive contestation, with the struggle for position to gain public sympathy, and a part of the political strategy in securing electorates. Nonetheless, news containing propaganda about the Jokowi administration’s allegedly Islamophobic policies had a significant effect, insofar as it changed some of the political policies of the political elite in government. Although the Jokowi regime cannot be considered an Islamophobic regime per se, some of its policies in the online media news text analysis were considered discriminatory against certain Islamic groups, as well as against groups...
that criticize or did not support Jokowi in the presidential election. The Jokowi administration has a phobia of their critics and a phobia of political Islam groups. The mezzo-analysis (discourse analysis) indicates that the Islamophobia propaganda directed at the government is a form of discursive struggle to seize public support. News articles alleging that the Jokowi regime is Islamophobic were largely produced by groups that oppose the government. These articles were produced and reproduced to adjust with the developing conditions at the time. That is why the content of Islamophobia-related news produced by the media was actually made to align with the discourse of groups that disliked the Jokowi administration.

Meanwhile, the macro-dimension analysis (socio-political analysis) indicates that the production of articles about Jokowi’s Islamophobic administration was simultaneously influenced by situational, institutional, and social elements. Some political policies such as the decision of choosing Ma'ruf Amin as vice president, as well as the rise of Islamophobia counter-narratives found in the media produced by government supporters, are proof that measures taken by the government were very much determined by the developing discourse at the time. Accordingly, Fairclough’s theory, which states that society is constructed in discourse and discourse is constructed in society, is validated. In Fairclough’s theory of intertextuality, the accusation of Islamophobia made against the government was caused by, among other thing, the Muslim community’s sense of trauma due to its history of oppression and bloody tragedies, which they endured long before Jokowi took office. This resulted in the Muslim community becoming extremely sensitive and prone to making accusations of Islamophobia against the government when regulations they deemed discriminatory against the Muslim community were enacted. The media’s reporting of the government’s allegedly Islamophobic policies, however, only captured the reality of some, which is a far cry from a universal reality. If we are to understand the true meaning of media-reported news, reconstruction of that news cannot rely on a single method or approach.
Endnotes

• We would like to express our gratitude to all our colleagues who have corrected, provided precious suggestions and input, and lent us literature to inform our research. We would also like to extend our utmost appreciation and gratitude to Mr Hywel Coleman (University of Leeds), Prof. Dr. Iswandi Syahputra, MA (lecturer at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta), Dr. Yusuf Rahman, MA (Dean of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta), and Anonymous reviewer who have read our manuscript and provided invaluable input to the article.

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DOI: 10.36712/sdi.v28i3.17589
The Political Dynamics of Islamophobia in Jokowi’s Era


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ستوديا إسلاميكا عضو في الإنجابات الناضجة في الأدبيات الأكاديمية) منذ 2014، وبالتالي فإن جميع المقالات التي تنشر مرفقة بمعرّف الوثيقة الرقمية (DOI).

ستوديا إسلاميكا مجلة ملموسة في سكوبس (Scopus) منذ 30 مايو 2015.

عنوان المجلة:
Editorial Office:
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;
E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id
Website: http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika

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للافراد: 75 دولار أمريكي، ونسخة واحدة قيمتها 75 دولار أمريكي.
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داخل إندونيسيا (روبية): PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia No Rek: 128-00-0105080-3 (Rp).

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