

THE REPRESENTATION OF A BLASPHEMY PROTEST IN JAKARTA IN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS

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First received: 30 September 2017

Final proof received: 30 January 2017

Abstract

The way political protests and civil (dis)order are reported in news discourse has been of interest to critical linguists (e.g. Brindle, 2016; Hart, 2014). Representations of an event in the media are typically influenced by political stances of news institutions and therefore representations of the same protest can be different in different news media, depending on the ideological framework in which they operate. This present study differs from the previous research in the sense that its data are taken from several news media in the country where the protest occurs or local newspapers, and from international or foreign newspapers which seem to have less political motives. It aims to investigate the representation of a blasphemy protest in Jakarta in both local and international press by using transitivity and van Leeuwen's social actor representation (SAR) model. The data were taken from five Indonesian news texts and five International news articles. The findings suggest that the International newspapers have a tendency to delegitimize the protest by portraying it as discrimination towards minorities and a benefit for terrorist groups. Additionally, they construct the protesters as extremists and a source of clashes and violence. On the other hand, although the Indonesian news media also appear to delegitimize the protest and the protesters, the constructions are not as radical as the foreign media.

Keywords: representation; blasphemy protests; transitivity; social actor representation; news discourse

On 04th of November 2016, Indonesians witnessed one of the largest demonstrations that ever occurred in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. Local newspapers reported that approximately 200,000 people, who were arguably all Muslims, joined the protest. The demonstrators demanded the prosecution of Jakarta's current governor (at the time of writing), Basuki Cahya Purnama or more known as Ahok, for blasphemy. The governor Ahok delivered a speech on 27th of September 2016 that was seen by some Muslims and Muslim organisations as an insult to Islam's holy book, the Qur'an. Indonesian Muslim scholars did not reach an agreement whether the speech was religious defamation or not, but a formal complaint had been lodged. The protesters accused the president Joko Widodo, more known as Jokowi, of intervening the case and protecting the governor. Ahok is the president's political ally and was formerly the deputy governor under Jokowi from 2012 to 2014. This rally significantly divided public opinions. Some people believed that the protest was purely about justice and equality before the law. On the other hand, it was also seen as a test for democracy in Indonesia and a threat to Indonesia's ideology that upholds diversity because the governor is a Christian and an ethnic Chinese, a minority group in Indonesia. Additionally, the event was also considered to bring political motivations as Ahok was running for re-election in February 2017. The

protest itself largely ran peacefully but after nightfall there was a clash between the police and the protesters, causing one man died and both the protesters and the police injured.

This paper aims to investigate how the rally is discursively constructed in local and international media by using transitivity and van Leeuwen's social actor representation (SAR) model. It begins with a discussion of theoretical and methodological framework underpinning this research. Further, it describes data and methods before presenting analysis and discussion. Lastly, it provides a conclusion of this study.

This study is grounded in the vein of critical linguistics (henceforth CL). This approach is mainly concerned with the theory and practice of representation and draws largely on systemic functional linguistics (henceforth SFG) (Fowler, 1996). For critical linguists, all representation is mediated, shaped by the values ingrained in the means employed for representation (Fowler, 1996). The aim of CL is then to apply grammatical analysis to demystify the ideology embedded implicitly in the overt propositions and "to expose misrepresentation and discrimination in a variety of modes of public discourse" (Fowler, 1996, p. 5). One of the issues that has been addressed by this research is the way political protests and civil (dis)order are reported in news discourse. Largely, it has been found that press coverage of

demonstrations and civil actions tends to highlight violent incidents that occurred, instead of focusing on the causes of the protests (McLeod & Hertog, 1992). Additionally, demonstrators are often constructed as perpetrators of violent actions while police or state authorities are primarily portrayed as casualties of such violent acts (Fowler, 1991; Hackett & Zhao, 1994) and non-violent protectors of civil order (Montgomery, 1995; van Dijk, 1991). Hence, when the police resort to violence, their role is likely to be mitigated and their agency tends to be obscured.

It should be noted, however, representations of an event in the media are typically influenced by political stances of news institutions and therefore representations of the same protest can be different in different news media depending on the ideological framework in which they operate. For instance, Hart's (2014) investigation into the representation of the G20 protests in 2009 in London concluded that *The Telegraph* which holds more conservative values tends to legitimise the police's actions by constructing the police as agents of peaceful processes and in the same time delegitimise and criminalise the protestors by focusing on representing them as agents of violence such as looting. On the other hand, in *The Guardian* which has more liberal political orientations, the police are attributed to the responsibility for violence that took place and constructed as aggressors who respond violently to tackle protestors, thus delegitimising the police response, while the protestors are legitimated by presenting them in peaceful processes and representing the protests as political instead of criminal actions.

Also, in a more recent study, Brindle (2016) found that representations of a protest movement called *The Sunflower Student Movement* in two major English-language newspapers in Taiwan, *The China Post* and the *Taipei Times*, differ as each of the newspapers is ideologically affiliated with different political parties. In *The China Post*, the protests are mainly seen as violent, bringing about disruptive effects on the Taiwanese economy and being unrepresentative of the major population, while in the *Taipei Times*, the protests are depicted as an action of safeguarding democracy and receiving general support from the public. What may be underlined from these previous studies is that language offers alternative choices in constructing events, and different ways of editorials in reporting an event can bring distinct representations and thus differences in ideology (Fowler, 1991).

The above-mentioned studies mostly discuss the representations of a particular demonstration in two different local newspapers which have different political orientations. Thus, differences in representations may be expected. This present study, however, differs from the previous research in the

sense that its data are taken from several news media in the country where the protest occurs or local newspapers, and from international or foreign newspapers which seem to have less political motives.

Transitivity

Transitivity as a part of experiential metafunction in SFG proposed by Halliday (1985, 1994) is a crucial tool in analysing representations. Indeed, Fowler (1991, p. 71) points out that it is "the foundation of representation". Transitivity refers to a system of grammar that "construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.170). Unlike the term *transitivity* in traditional grammar in which verbs are divided into transitive and intransitive verbs, determined by whether they have an object or not, in SFG it focuses primarily on differences in meaning between numerous types of process designated in the clause (Fowler, 1991) and the content meanings of "who did what to whom" (Thompson, 2004, p. 86). Additionally, it offers a set of options for referring to objects around us and how they act on, interact with or connect to each other (Hart, 2014; Thompson, 2004). In this way, three canonical components are distinguished within the transitivity structure of clause: *Participant*, *Process* and *Circumstance*. At the level of lexicogrammar, *Participant* is typically realised in the form of noun phrases; *Process* is expressed in verbal groups; and *Circumstance* which is optional is canonically realised in adverbial and prepositional expressions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Among these three potential components, the process is the 'core' of the clause (Thompson, 2004) and the entry point in any experiential or ideational analysis (Hart, 2014). This can be because "which process type is chosen to signify a real process may be of cultural, political or ideological significance" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 180).

Further, Halliday (1994) proposes six kinds of processes in the English transitivity system, which appear to signify how we categorise 'the goings-on' around us. The major process types are *material*, *mental*, *relational* and *verbal*. The other minor types include *existential* and *behavioural* processes, which are located at each of the boundaries. Moreover, these six processes have their own particular types of participants. For instance, material processes always involve one participant who has a role as the doer of the action, called *Actor* or *Agent*, and may also involve a *Goal* or *Patient* if the action affects or is being done to another participant. Transitivity then makes options available and different choice made by the writer carries ideological implications (Fowler, 1991). In such way, the transitivity system can provide an insight into the writer's point of view of an event, action or a situation (Li, 2010) and may also offer the means of analysing how the reader's

perception of the text meaning is tailored to a specific direction (Simpson, 1993).

However, in representing social actors, the writer also has a number of options that are not covered in functional participant categories of SFG. Therefore, this study also adopts socio-semantic categorisation proposed by van Leeuwen (1996) to analyse the way social actors are represented.

Social Actor Model

The social actor network model proposed by van Leeuwen (1996) is more motivated by sociological classifications, rather than linguistic operations or categories. This is primarily because “[t]here is no neat fit between sociological and linguistic categories” and if critical linguistic analysts over focus on the latter, other relevant forms of representation may be overlooked (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 24). In the following paragraphs, a partial and brief outline of this social actor model will be described, focusing on the representational choices that are the most relevant to this present study.

The first is exclusion. Social actors can be excluded or included in a text depending on the speaker’s interest, communicative purpose and intended audience or readership (van Leeuwen, 2008). Exclusion can sometimes be extremely radical, excluding both social actors and their actions. This can specifically be identified in a comparative study on different representations of the same social event or action, but not in a single text analysis. Moreover, when social actors are excluded but the activities that they are involved in are included, they can be suppressed with no references at all in the text or they can be backgrounded or de-emphasised which means that the excluded social actors are still mentioned elsewhere in the text. Suppression is often realised through passive agent deletion and nominalisations. It should be noted, however, some exclusions are not ideologically motivated but they can be just considered irrelevant to or already known by the reader.

Speakers can also portray social actors as a general class (genericization) and as a group, assimilation, which is distinguished into two major types: *collectivisation* and *aggregation* (van Leeuwen, 2008). Aggregation is when social actors are treated as statistics using quantifiers, while collectivisation is when they are simply collected together using plural or mass nouns. From an ideological point of view, both collectivisation and genericization may help impersonalise social actors and sustain social stereotypes (Hart, 2014). Furthermore, social actors may be represented as anonymous or unspecified individuals or groups (indetermination) by typically using indefinite pronouns, and can be determined (determination). In the case of determination, individuals or groups can be nominated (nomination) or categorised

(categorisation). When social actors are nominated, they are typically constructed as having a unique identity and usually realised by proper nouns. Nomination can also be “titulated” either through *honorification* by adding titles or ranks or *affiliation* by typically involving a functional role in a specific organisation.

Moreover, in categorisation speakers may describe social actors in terms of shared characteristics, functions and identities with other people. Here van Leeuwen (1996) differentiates two main types of categorisation: *functionalisation* and *identification*. The former happens when social actors are constructed in terms of an activity they do such as an occupation, while the latter occurs when they are described “in terms of what they more or less permanently are” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 42), instead of what they choose to do. Identification is then broken down into three types: *classification*, *physical identification* and *relational identification*. Classification refers to a condition when social actors are defined “in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 42) including religion, gender, age, race, ethnicity etc. It is essential to note, however, that classification groupings are historically and culturally liable to change (van Leeuwen, 2008).

METHOD

The data were collated from ten news articles published in Indonesian and western press before and after the protest occurred (02 November 2016 - 05 November 2016). The idea of examining the news reports prior to and after the protest is an attempt to achieve a whole picture of the rally as depicted by the newspapers. Each text was purposely selected based on the significance of its contents when one news institution produced more than one news report about the protest or because it was the only news report about the rally published by the news organisation. The ten articles consist of five news articles published in a major English daily newspaper in Indonesia and Indonesian news agency, *The Jakarta Post* and *Antara News* respectively, and five news reports published in various International newspapers. For local newspapers, the articles were collected from their official websites while the articles in foreign newspapers were taken from the online database Nexis UK since not all the International newspapers are freely available online.

The Jakarta Post is chosen because it is the largest daily English language newspaper in Indonesia and has been described as “Indonesia’s leading English-language daily” (Eklof, 2004, p. 14). Its main targeted readerships are educated Indonesians and foreigners. Moreover, during the

presidential election campaign in 2014, it overtly endorsed Jokowi (Kurniawan & Utami, 2017), which may show its political stance towards the current government. *Antara News* is a state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of State-owned Enterprises of Indonesia and the only authorised Indonesian news agency which provides news reports for several domestic and foreign news institutions. Because it is owned and financially supported by the government, it may be difficult for the *Antara News* to remain unbiased in reporting news (Romano & Seinor, 2005). Thus, both newspapers may be seen as news organisations that have a tendency to support the current government.

Furthermore, the selected international newspapers are those from English-speaking countries and non-Muslim majority countries: Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The newspapers are mainly selected as they have a large circulation in their own countries. In addition, it might be interesting from an ideological point of view since all the demonstrators are Muslims and Muslims are frequently represented negatively in the western media, especially in American, British and Australian Press (see Awass, 1996; Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005; Baker 2012; Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery, 2013; Richardson, 2004; Said, 1997).

The data were analysed by using transitivity and van Leeuwen's social actor representation (SAR) model. The first step of the analysis included the identification of the process types as well as the participant roles that are assigned to different social actors. This transitivity analysis puts emphasis on uncovering how agency and process are attributed to various social actors in a text. Next, socio-semantic categorisation proposed by van Leeuwen was applied to identify how the news media represent social actors. Then, I compared the results of local and International news texts and tried to explain how their different choices in constructing the social actors or events can bring different ideologies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Protesters as Religious Fundamentalists

The most salient negative representation of the rally seems to be the portrayal of the protesters as religious fundamentalists. This, however, only occurs in the international press. The construction is realised by classifying them as Islamist groups and Islamists, as exemplified in texts (1), and (2).

- (1) *Security forces in the Indonesian capital Jakarta are on high alert in preparation for a Friday rally by hardline Islamist groups against the city's non-Muslim governor (The Guardian)*
- (2) *"Kill the blasphemer": Islamists march on palace [The Australian]*

The word *Islamist* appears to carry negative connotations by itself. Indeed, in the Corpus of Contemporary America (COCA), the word *Islamist* is significantly collocated to the word *radical*, *militant*, *extremism*, *extremists*, *terrorism* and *terrorists*. Thus, this representation probably serves to add a sense of violence to the protesters. It can also be seen in (1) that hardline Islamist groups are described as a *circumstance* that causes security forces on high alert. This may contribute to construct the protesters as nuisances since when the police are placed on high alert, they are typically prepared to deal with something dangerous. Additionally, in (2), which is the headline in *The Australian*, the writer quotes directly the verbiage of the protesters that shows a violent intention, "kill the blasphemers". According to van Dijk (1988), the headline can function to signal and summarise the macrostructures of the news text and information placed in the headline is best remembered by the reader. In this way, the writer, in this case, may orient the reader to think from the beginning that the protesters are aggressive and have a violent tendency.

In addition, the demonstrators are referenced by utilising extreme belief terms such as *hardline*, *hardliners* and *hard-core*, classifying them as a group of people who have an extreme belief or as fundamentalists. Such word occurs 11 times in all international news texts under investigation and at least once in each news. This portrayal also tends to occur in a negative context. In (3), for example, hard-core protesters are ascribed to a negative material process. "refusing to disperse", suggesting that they are unruly and disobedient as the law states that they are supposed to disperse before nightfall.

- (3) *Clashes broke out between police and hard-core protesters who refused to disperse following nightfall (Daily Mail).*

Those representations, on the other hand, are absent in the local newspapers. They are mostly classified as *Muslims* and *Islamic groups* without any reference to *Islamists* or to the extreme belief words (e.g. *hardline*, *hardliners*, *hard-core*). This marked difference appears to suggest that western newspapers still relate *Muslims* to *extremism*, which may perpetuate negative stereotypes of Muslims in western countries. Furthermore, the demonstrators are mainly described by using aggregation, which is also used in the international news texts. This can be seen in (4), (5) and (6).

- (4) *Around 100,000 protesters demanded the prosecution of Jakarta Governor... (The Jakarta Post).*
- (5) *Meanwhile, House Speaker Ade Komarudin has praised 200 thousand Muslims for holding the peaceful rally (Antara News).*

- (6) *Thousands of people are due to move into the capital to protest against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama... (The Guardian).*

What might be underlined from these examples is that the number of the protesters varies in different news texts, indicating that it is only estimation. Nevertheless, it may be significant to note that in (7) *The Guardian* also aggregates members of Nahdlatul Ulama (Indonesian largest Islamic organisation), who are statistically higher from the protesters, and ascribes them to what Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) call a circumstantial verb “support” in a negative construction.

- (7) *... Nahdlatul Ulama, has told its 40 million members not to support the protests (The Guardian)*

This kind of verb identifies a relationship between the participants. In this case, the members of Nahdhatul Ulama are disassociated with the protest. Since aggregation can indicate consensus opinion (van Leeuwen, 2008), this representation thus may be employed to describe the rally as not receiving support from the majority of Indonesian Muslims.

The Protest as an Advantage for International Terrorist Groups

The construction of the protest as an advantage for terrorist groups occurs in both domestic and foreign media. The reporter mostly detaches him/herself from taking responsibility for the report by employing the voices of social actors or assigning verbal processes to social actors. However, verbal processes in news discourse can also enable the journalist to attribute information to sources (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), which may eventually make the information more reliable and convincing. In (8) and (9), for instances, the writer includes the voices of Sidney Jones and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham. Both social actors as *Sayers* are represented by means of affiliation.

- (8) *Earlier this week Indonesia-based terror analyst Sidney Jones, from the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict [said] Islamic State militants had also called for followers to use the rally to "fan the flames of jihad" across the country (The Australian).*
- (9) *Last month, al Qaida's branch in Syria, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, said that Indonesia should sentence Ahok or it would "sentence him with bullets" (The Guardian).*

Also, in (10), the voice of Ryamizard Ryacudu is employed.

- (10) *Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said ...*

that his office had received information that sympathizers of the Islamic State (IS) radical movement would join the massive demonstration scheduled for Friday against Jakarta Governor ... (The Jakarta Post).

He is constructed by means of functionalisation, highlighting his position as Defence Minister. Both affiliation and functionalisation in this context may also serve to legitimate the assertions. Moreover, the attributed voices which show that the rally can be capitalised on by terrorist groups can function to create fears of violence and thus delegitimize the protest.

The Protesters as a Source of Clashes and Violence

The construction of the demonstrators as a source of clashes and violence in the western news texts is primarily realised by presenting them as *Agents* of negative or violent material processes and *circumstances* of reasons for the clashes. This representation at the same time seems to legitimate the police violent action, firing tear gas. The police are presented as conducting the action only reluctantly, that are forced to do it in response to the violent actions of the protesters. In (11) and (12), for examples, the demonstrators are constructed as *Actors* of material processes “broke through” and “threw” respectively which carry more negative connotations.

- (11) *The protest was initially peaceful but deadly clashes erupted after demonstrators broke through police barricades and security barriers in an attempt to enter the presidential palace before they were stopped by officers firing tear gas, police said (The Independent).*
- (12) *Setiyono [Jakarta police spokesman] said police responded after protesters near the presidential palace threw stones, bamboo sticks and bottles (The Daily Mail).*

In (13), the process “tried to enter” appears neutral, but the representation of the protesters as “a mob” may add negative implications to the process.

- (13) *MetroTV reported that a mob tried to enter the housing complex where Jakarta Gov. Basuki 'Ahok' Tjahaja Purnama lives in northern Jakarta but were stopped by police, who fired tear gas (The Daily Mail).*

The term “mob” in the COCA and the British National Corpus (BNC) is strongly connected to more violent verbs such as *attack* and *kill* and other negative words such as *angry*, *lynch* and *violence*, thus entailing negative discourse prosody. Furthermore, although in (14), one of the action is reciprocal verb, *clash*, which also appears neutral, the protesters who are introduced earliest in the

clause may shoulder more responsibility for the clash since according to (Hart, 2014), the left “field of vision” or spatial left is generally associated with negative valence.

(14) *But after nightfall, some protesters **clashed** with the police and **set fire** to at least two vehicles (The New York Times).*

However, it might be significant to note that in this portrayal the reporter mostly applies a distancing technique by employing voices of the social actors. In (11) and (12), the writer uses the police voices while in (13) the voice of local TV is employed.

In addition, in (15) the police are also represented positively presumably by means of *Symbolisation*. Symbolisation “occurs when a ‘fictional’ social actor or group of social actors stands for actors or groups in nonfictional social practices” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 48).

(15) *Indonesia's '**Robocop**' police take to the streets in violent battles with protesters who accuse Jakarta's governor of 'insulting the Koran' (The Daily Mail).*

In this case, Indonesia’s police are symbolised as “Robocop”, a fictional hero in an American film. This can be because *The Daily Mail* merely highlights the uniform of Indonesia’s police that is similar to Robocop. However, ideologically, this representation may contribute to construct the police as ‘heroes’ in the battles and the protesters as ‘villains’, thus legitimating the police and delegitimizing the demonstrators. Moreover, another way of representing the police is by means of exclusion. This occurs when reporting the casualties of clashes especially one protester who died, such as in (16) and (17).

(16) *One man **died** and seven were **injured** in clashes in the capital today following protests by hard-line Muslims... (The Daily Mail).*

(17) *There were reports that at least one protester had **died**, but the authorities had not confirmed that as of Saturday morning (The New York Times).*

The journalists choose to employ relational processes, which can allow the social actor(s) who is/are responsible for the dead, in this case the police, to be excluded.

Furthermore, the representation of the demonstrators as a source of clashes also occurs in the Indonesian news media. In (18) and (19), for instances, the protesters are represented as *Agents* of the negative complex verb “started throwing” and the police are constructed as the *Recipients*.

(18) *The disappointed protesters **started** throwing*

stones, bottles and mineral water at police officers after the deadline and tried to break the police barricade and enter the State Palace (The Jakarta Post).

(19) *The tear gas was fired after demonstrators **started throwing** bottles, stones and wood at police officers (Antara News).*

The verb “started” seems already suggest a sequential order of events: the protesters started throwing stones, then the police reacted. This kind of representation is subtler when using the subordinating conjunction “after” such as in (19) and (20). The police therefore are constructed as doing the action unwillingly, only in response to the demonstrators’ actions.

(20) *Police shot the tear gas after several protesters **set off** firecrackers, ignoring the police’s call for them to leave the area near the state place (The Jakarta Post)*

What might be different from the international media’s is that both the police and the protesters are also assigned to positive material processes “maintaining or keeping the rally peaceful”, as exemplified in (21) and (22).

(21) *“They [the protesters] **maintained** security, public order and cleanliness around the venue of the demonstration. This is a very good example,” he [House Spokesperson] said... (Antara News).*

(22) *We respect the people’s aspiration by staging the mass rally. We thank the ulemas [Muslim Scholars] for **keeping** the rally in order and peaceful until the dusk,” the president said. (The Jakarta Post).*

This occurs six times in the local articles but none in the foreign newspapers. Although in this construction the voices of the government (The President and House Spokesperson) are employed to distance the position of the writer, it seems that the writer still has options in including or excluding which social actor voices in the news article. In such way, this construction may be used by the writer to deemphasise the clashes that occur.

The Protest as Discrimination towards Minorities

The International newspapers construct the protest as discrimination towards minorities by foregrounding the religion and the ethnicity of the governor. All five International news texts identify the governor as minority Christian and Chinese 9 times. This is realised by using relational processes and classification. For examples, in (23) the governor is constructed as a *Carrier of Attributes* “ethnic Chinese” and “minority Christian”, and in (24) he is classified in terms of his ethnicity and

religion. Local newspapers, on the other hand, do not employ this representation. This attribution and classification thus appear to be used to convey that his religion and ethnicity is an essential aspect in the protest and a reason for the rally. Indeed, in (25), *The New York Times* overtly describes his religion as a *circumstance* of reason for protests.

(23) *Mr Purnama is ethnic Chinese and minority Christian (The Independent).*

(24) *Thousands of protesters, some yelling "kill the blasphemer", marched on Jakarta's presidential palace yesterday demanding the city's ethnic Chinese-Christian Governor (The Australian).*

(25) *Mr. Basuki had faced protests because of his Christianity... (The New York Times).*

Ahok as Laudable Governor

While presenting the protesters more negatively, the governor is constructed in a more positive way in International news reports. This representation is mainly realised by employing relational and material processes. When using the later processes, the governor is represented as an *Agent* of positive processes such as “fast-tracked” and “subsidize” in (27) and also as *Recipient* of the positive verb “adore” in (28). The relational process is used to portray Ahok as a *Carrier* of positive *Attributes*. For example, in 26, he is assigned to a favourable attribute “a popular figure”.

(26) *Mr. Basuki, 50, the grandson of a tin miner from Guangzhou, China, has been a popular figure in Jakarta (The New York Times).*

(27) *He has fast-tracked infrastructure projects, including a mass-transit system; dispatched a small army of orange-clad street sweepers to spruce up the city of more than 10 million; and instituted a "smart card" program to subsidize health care and education for the poor (The New York Times).*

(28) *He is adored as a blunt speaker who doesn't tolerate corruption and articulates a vision of making the chaotic, dysfunctional city more like clean, orderly and efficient Singapore (The Daily Mail).*

This is in contrast to the way the writer represents the protesters in relational processes. They are constructed as a *Token* of a negative *Value* “known for violent demonstrations and attacks on minorities” in (29) and as a *Carrier* of an *attribute* “ties” in (30) which may perpetuate the view that the protest has political motivations.

(29) *The main group behind the rally, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) which formed in 1999, is known for violent demonstrations and attacks on minorities (The Guardian).*

(30) *Analysts have also said that some of the Islamic groups that organized the march have ties to the campaigns of Mr. Basuki's two opponents... (The New York Times).*

Additionally, collectivisation of experts, *Analysts*, assists to signal their agreement and therefore make the information more credible. These representations, on the other hand, do not occur in Indonesian news articles.

The differences in representations in Indonesian news media, such as not using the terms *Islamist* and *hardliners*, deemphasising the clashes and not representing the protest as an act of discrimination, seem to be caused by different targeted readerships. Since one of the major readerships of *The Jakarta Post* and *Antara News* is foreign people and both news institutions are presumably affiliated to the government, the different constructions may be applied to sustain the international impression that Islam and Muslims in Indonesia are peaceful and moderate, thus maintaining national identity and creating political stability.

These findings are congruent with the previous research in the representation of political (dis)order or protests in the press (e.g. Brindle, 2016; Fowler, 1991; Hackett & Zhao, 1994; Hart, 2014) that different language constructions used in reporting an event can bring different ideological presentations and therefore the same event can be constructed differently in different newspapers, depending on political stances and ideologies that the news institution has. Such differences may be able to reflect the ideological positions of the newspaper's readership since values in society are (re)produced via “the discursive interaction between the newspaper text and the reader” (Fowler, 1991, pp. 46-47). Additionally, the findings may also support the argument of the previous studies in the portrayals of Muslims in western media (e.g. Baker 2012; Baker et al. 2013) that Muslims are predominantly constructed in negative ways.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to investigate the discursive constructions of the blasphemy protest in the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta, on 04th November 2016 in both local and international news media. The result indicates that there are several differences and similarities in the representations. Generally, it seems that the International newspapers have a tendency to delegitimize the protest by portraying it as discrimination towards minorities and a benefit for terrorist groups, as well as constructing the protesters as extremists and a source of clashes and violence. On the other hand, although Indonesian news media also appear to delegitimize the protest and the protesters, the constructions are not as radical as the foreign media.

This difference seems to be caused by different targeted readerships. Since both the local news institutions are presumably affiliated to the government and one of their major readerships is foreign people or international readers in Indonesia, the different constructions, such as not using the terms *Islamist* and *hardliners* and not representing the protest as an act of discrimination, may be used to sustain the international impression that Islam and Muslims in Indonesia are peaceful and moderate, thus maintaining national identity and creating political stability.

It should be noted, however, that this study still has some limitations. First, it is confined to the verbal domain as it only considers texts without taking into account any non-verbal communication such as pictures and layout, which may influence the meanings of the texts. Also, the findings may not be able to be representative of Indonesian news discourse since a vast majority of Indonesians newspapers are in Indonesian language. Nevertheless, this study may still be able to demonstrate how different transitivity structures and social actor network model can reflect alternative ideologies in news texts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Christopher Hart for his valuable feedback on the earlier version of this manuscript, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments. I am also immensely grateful to Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) for funding this study.

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