

The Construction of The Meaning of the Boycott According to the Boycotters on the Israeli-Palestinian Issue

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: boycott; Israel; construction of meaning; Palestine. The boycott movement is a public action in response to the genocidal situation between Israel and Palestine which was again in the spotlight of the media at the end of 2023. The public uses all forms of media to spread the widest possible awareness about this boycott movement, one of which is using social media. But the action did not last long, as seen from some stalls that were considered pro-Israel to be crowded again after several months of the boycott movement. So this research was carried out to find out the construction of the meaning of the boycott according to people who boycott products with the pro-Israel label. This research focuses on how people construct meaning in a movement that is currently being carried out by society, namely the boycott movement as part of cancel culture. This research was conducted using a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach proposed by Alfred Schutz to find out how the intrapersonal communication of each boycott perpetrator is formed into a personal meaning construction about the boycott movement they are doing. The results of the study show that a boycott is interpreted as an effort to show disagreement with an issue or phenomenon by stopping support for parties that are considered detrimental so that the party makes efforts to change the issue.



Introduction

Canceling culture or cancel culture according to Merriam Webster is defined as the loss of support for public figures in response to their unpleasant behavior or opinions, some of the movements that fall into this cancel culture include boycotts, or refusal to promote (Dershowitz, 2020). Although this canceling culture is often associated with individuals, it is possible that the target of cancel culture can extend to the level of organizations, companies, and countries. Currently, cancel culture has become a phenomenon in the virtual era, where people start a cancel culture movement and spread it through social media using tools, one of which is hashtags. This is also the reason for

the rapid spread of information on social media because according to Hwang & Kim (in Sitorus, 2022), social media is considered a medium for actors or users to be active in promoting criticism and protest.

One of the massive dissemination of information that has attracted public attention is the war between Israel and Palestine which is back in the spotlight. Israel continues to carry out genocidal attacks against Palestinians in Gaza. In response to this, the people who defended Palestine then launched a boycott of the state of Israel as a form of condemnation of the attack given. The boycott movement carried out by the community is by making a list of products affiliated with the state of Israel directly or indirectly and then disseminating through social media as the main means of spreading issues that have a call-to-action impact on their user. (Dalimunthe, Syam, Suhendar, & Al-Mujtahid, 2024).

Although the overall data shows a decrease in sales figures, the visitors to the outlets that are included in the official boycott list are not completely quiet even though the Indonesian Ulema Council has issued a MUI fatwa related to this boycott movement. Therefore, the researcher is interested in knowing how the boycotters construct the meaning of the boycott reflecting on this Israeli-Palestinian issue. This research will take place at Tunas Unggul High School, Bandung City, which is located on Jl. Abah Sastro No.20, Mandalajati District, Bandung City. Tunas Unggul High School is known to be quite active in socializing the boycott movement on Israeli-Palestinian issues through knowledge-sharing activities such as cult agendas, and others. The teaching staff at SMA Tunas Unggul Bandung City are also known to be active in voicing this boycott movement among students and parents of students, this is what researchers consider in determining the teachers of SMA Tunas Unggul Bandung City as the subject of research. With the points mentioned above, the researcher decided to conduct this research with a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences and construction of the meaning of the informants.

Daily communication is highly dependent on the social construction of individuals in giving meaning to their environment. (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, & Virk, 2022), researchers are interested in knowing how the teachers of Tunas Unggul High School as boycott actors in constructing the meaning of the movements they make. In this case, Alfred Schutz offers a perspective in research on meanings that arise from everyday life through phenomenological theories.

Alfred Schutz's thought forms a strong foundation on which understanding is prepared from the meaning incorporated by the individual from the actions they take, so Schutz describes the actions of individuals in two related motives, namely in-order-to motive and because of motive. (Manggola & Thadi, 2021).

In this study, three questions are the basis for the research, these questions include understanding the boycott perpetrators, motives, and sharing of experiences of the boycott movement that they have carried out.

Method

As explained in the introduction, in conducting this research, the researcher uses a qualitative research method, where qualitative research is considered a research method that has limited goals but does not have a limit on data depth (Wahyuni, 2023) (Hirose & Creswell, 2023) Also explained that qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand meanings that are considered to originate from social or humanitarian problems by several individuals or groups of people.

The researcher uses a phenomenological approach, defined by Littlejohn. (Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017) As the exploration of knowledge arising from consciousness at the event of understanding an object or event by experiencing it directly. Researchers with a phenomenological approach aim to describe the similarities experienced by all participants/informants in dealing with a phenomenon, with the main goal of reducing individual experiences to a description of the universal essence of the phenomenon according to Creswell & Poth. Another perspective regarding the phenomenological approach in a study is that phenomenology refers to research that focuses on individual awareness from the first perspective. (Enggarwati & Utomo, 2021). Based on the points mentioned above, this research will include the experiences, feelings, and meanings that the research subjects gained about the boycott movement they have carried out.

Researchers use a constructivist paradigm, a research paradigm that is a combination of beliefs and fundamental principles that influence the researcher's approach to conducting research. (Dempsey & Lindsay, 2018).

The subjects in this study are the teachers of Tunas Unggul High School, Bandung City as actors of the boycott movement against the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the construction of the meaning of the boycott as the object of research. To collect data, the researcher used in-depth interview techniques with five teaching staff at Tunas Unggul High School, Bandung City. An interview is an exchange of information between two individuals that is carried out to form a deep understanding of a particular topic. In addition to in-depth interviews, the researcher uses literature study techniques as a technique that emphasizes the data obtained from in-depth interview activities. The literature study as quoted from Green (in Satori & Komariah, 2017) becomes a study document because it has relevant criteria in breaking down the need for information on the topic being researched. Some of the documents used by researchers in literature studies are scientific journals, book reviews, and others.

In analyzing the research data, the researcher uses five steps in analyzing the data according to (Hirose & Creswell, 2023), where the first stage, namely the recording of the interview results obtained, is processed by making interview transcripts to then reduced according to the needs of the research, after the data is reduced, the researcher then makes data coding by the theory of meaning construction by Alfred Schutz, the

interview transcript that has been coded is then presented again in the form of a description by the theme of the discussion.

Qualitative research requires researchers to check the validity of previously obtained data. One way to check the validity of data is to use triangulation. In this study, the researcher uses source triangulation, which is a technique where the researcher explores the correctness of the data obtained through various sources.

Results and Discussion

Data collection has been carried out since May 20, 2024, namely pre-research, where researchers collect information before in-depth interviews are conducted. Then the data collection continued to the in-depth interview stage from June 10 to June 19, 2024, with a total of 5 research informants.

Understanding Boycott

To find out how the research informants knew the movements they were doing, the researchers asked the question 'What is a boycott' and the question 'Why did this boycott happen?'

Based on the results of the interview, which then continued to the data reduction process to the coding of the data received, the researcher obtained keywords related to the definition of boycott through these two questions. These keywords include, 'exclusion'; 'rejection'; 'partiality'; 'blocking'; 'not contributing'; 'form of protest'; 'anger'; 'A form of concern' for the aggrieved party or the disadvantaged party because it is not by the values believed by a group of people.

The researcher asked questions about the access to information obtained by informants related to the boycott movement, this question will be decisive information about the knowledge underlying the informants in carrying out this boycott movement. Based on the results of the interview, Informant One and Informant Two received information about the boycott movement through social media, news media, and the internet without involving social interaction or information exchange dialogue, while Informants Three, four, and Fifth informants, information was obtained that these informants obtained information about the boycott not only through news media, the internet, and social media but also through interaction with others, this is marked by the answers of informant three, informant four, and informant five as follows:

"The difficulty, for example, wanting to buy a product at the supermarket, sometimes I like to have my doubts, actually I am sure that this product is not affiliated, but when I want to buy it, sometimes I like to check again, so it's quite a bit takes time, then from this information from a friend or something like that." (Informant 2, 2024)

"I have known about this boycott invitation for a long time, since 2020 I happened to be active in Islamic community activities. And it was indeed a year ago." (Informant 3, 2024)

"Because in the past, when I was a student around 2005 to 2010, I was also active in several student organizations whose focus was to fight for the Islamic brotherhood, so at least we have discussed, shared, and shared information," (Informant 5, 2024).

The answers from the three informants above are information that supports Alfred Schutz's theory, where according to Alfred Schutz meaning is formed based on knowledge obtained through social interaction and experience. (Tayo & Nursanti, 2023), therefore based on the results of interviews with the three informants, it can be confirmed that the answers of informants three, four, and five are contrary to Kreitler's theory of meaning construction, where Kreitler argues that knowledge and meaning play a role in the formation of meaning, knowledge is personal and private (Kreitler, 2022), while in informants one and two, the results of the interviews show that there is alignment with Kreitler's theory and contrary to Alfred Schutz's theory.

Motives for Boycotting

To obtain information about the motives of informants in carrying out the boycott, the researcher asked questions related to their personal reasons for the boycott. The answers obtained were then reduced and analyzed by categorizing the informants' answers into the category of motives, namely in-order-to motive and because of motive.

In terms of the motive of the goal, through Informant Two and Informant Five, the researcher found that these informants carried out this cancel culture movement with several objectives, including stopping the supply of support to Israel so that Israel's money power was reduced and attacks on Palestine could be stopped. This is in line with Alfred Schultz's phenomenological theory which explains the motive of the goal as a projection of a phenomenon that will occur as a result of an action. (Aho, Altman, & Pedersen, 2024), while the motive because, the researcher found that the research informants carried out the cancel culture movement for religious and humanitarian reasons, the answers of Informant One, Informant Three, and Informant Four validated Alfred Schultz's theory of motive because (because motive) where the factor environment and history (in this case, religious and humanitarian factors) that affect the cancel culture movement they carry out.

Experience of Boycott

In addition to knowledge, meaning is also generated from individual experience. The researcher provided interview questions about the experiences of each informant during this boycott movement.

The researcher gave several questions to the teachers of Tunas Unggul High School in Bandung City as research informants. Through this subchapter, informants were asked to elaborate on how they experienced themselves as individuals as well as teaching staff who carried out the cancel culture movement.

Based on the results of the interviews, the five research informants had their underlying experiences in carrying out this boycott. Through this experience, researchers can find out that the opinions of Kreitler and Alfred Schutz are valid in stating that experience plays a role in the formation of meaning, this finding is contrary to Atwar

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Bejari's theory of meaning construction (Simarmata, 2017) which states that meaning is not formed from experience, but through the motives that underlie individual actions.

Conclusion

Through the above findings, the researcher then concluded how the teachers of Tunas Unggul High School in Bandung City constructed the meaning of the boycott through 3 factors of meaning construction according to Alfred Schutz, namely Knowledge, Experience, and Motive.

Based on the answers given by the informant after going through the data analysis process, a boycott is interpreted as an effort to show disagreement with an issue or phenomenon by stopping support for parties that are considered detrimental so that the party makes efforts to change the issue. The boycott movement carried out by everyone is based on different reasons, namely because of religion, humanity, or those based on goals such as 'so that the genocide that occurs immediately stops', and or 'so that the aggrieved party feels what the affected party feels'.

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