



Patterns of Repertoire Conflict in Indonesia: A Study of #Indonesia Gelap News on Detik.com

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Abstract

The administration of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka began amid protests initiated by the Indonesian Student Executive Board (BEM SI). This student movement presented nine demands to the government, covering economic, social, legal, and political issues. The movement, known as #IndonesiaGelap, utilized this theme to create tension and garner support from various segments of society, which in turn drew a response from the ruling authorities. This analysis examines *Detik.com*'s coverage of the #IndonesiaGelap student movement, utilizing Charles Tilly's repertoire tension theory as the theoretical framework. The study applies Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, examining three elements: text, discourse practice, and social practice. The findings reveal that *Detik.com* consistently included #IndonesiaGelap in all its news headlines. Conflicting repertoires are reflected in the news texts, where students used the #IndonesiaGelap theme as a strategy to criticize government policies viewed as unsupportive of the people, thereby mobilizing support among university students. During the demonstrations, those in power also adopted the repertoire to present themselves as open to criticism. In conclusion, this study finds that the #IndonesiaGelap repertoire has limited effectiveness in promoting sociopolitical change, mainly due to the lack of social capital possessed by both the student movement and *Detik.com* within the existing power structure.

Keywords *tension theory, repertoire, student movement, #Indonesia Gelap, social capital*

INTRODUCTION

This research was prompted by a student movement that criticized the government's policies enacted following the 2024 elections. These policies were considered anti-people and were articulated through 13 specific demands. The #Indonesia Gelap student movement was primarily initiated by the All-Indonesia Student Executive Board (BEM SI). Rather than relying on traditional methods to coordinate the student movement, BEM SI has leveraged digital technology, recognizing that students are native to the digital landscape. According to Katimin (2024), digital communication across various platforms serves as an effective tool for students to mobilize, campaign, and garner public attention.

The student demonstrations were organized under the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap. This hashtag served as a means to defuse tensions within the movement. Initially circulated on social media, the #IndonesiaGelap campaign garnered significant attention and spread rapidly, ultimately manifesting in tangible actions. In this stage, the campaign expanded across various social media platforms and mainstream media outlets.

This research investigates the patterns of repertoire tension within the #IndonesiaGelap student movement as reported by Detik.com. Detik.com was selected due to its status as a pioneering online media outlet in Indonesia since 1998. Recognized for its rapid news delivery and broad audience reach, Detik.com is a key platform for representing the dynamics of public discourse in the digital media era. The importance of this study lies in its ability to elucidate how repertoire patterns can provide insight into the access of student movements and the media to sources of capital. This access to capital resources plays a crucial role in the success of movements aimed at social change. Exploring the patterns of repertoire tension within student movements is

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vital to ensure that these movements are not simply manipulated for external interests. A well-defined and consistent repertoire can drive meaningful change, as illustrated by [Chowdhury \(2024\)](#) study on the Narmada Bachao Andolan, an Indian civil society movement. This paper examines the repertoire within the #IndonesiaGelap social movement, aiming to enhance our understanding of the strategies, practices, and dynamics involved in social movements as they construct discourse and influence the public sphere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student movements have historically expressed their repertoire through writings and actions aimed at the ruling government. These movements often arise as a moral force unaligned with traditional politics, responding to the state's failure to fulfill its obligations and ensure public welfare. Instead of seeking political power, student movements tend to articulate the aspirations and concerns of the populace, serving as a vehicle for political resistance when stagnation or gridlock occurs ([Setyoko & Satria, 2020](#); [Rahmatan Al Kanzah et al., 2024](#); [Supriyanto, 2022](#); [Mardianti, 2022](#)). For these movements to remain effective, they must go beyond symbolic solidarity and clearly define specific goals for democratic change ([Mahpudin et al., 2020](#); [Barung, 2023](#)).

As we enter the digital era, the methods of consolidation have shifted from conventional spaces to virtual platforms. Social media has become the primary arena for student activism, enabling broader participation in political discourse and offering safer avenues for expression. Digital activism not only bolsters freedom of opinion but also catalyzes the growth and sustainability of social movements, allowing them to connect grassroots issues with larger political transformations ([Nassrullah, 2012](#); [Isa Ansori et al., 2023](#)).

Social media is now an essential tool in student social movements, facilitating a shift from physical public spaces to digital platforms. Research on the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement demonstrates how social media significantly influences public discourse and political communication ([Chen & Chan, 2017](#); [Stieglitz et al., 2012](#)). Additionally, studies on the #IndonesiaGelap movement often employ framing analysis to examine how the media presents and interprets the movement to the public.

Mthokozisi Emmanuel [Ntuli and Teferra \(2017\)](#) conducted a study on the impact of social media on student movements in Africa. Student activism can also be observed in the Arab Spring, which occurred in 2012. In Indonesia, student-led demonstrations in the 2020 era often utilized social media to gain support. For instance, the Black Umbrella Movement, known as Kamisan 500, protested against human rights violations. The black umbrellas served as a symbol demanding that the Indonesian government address these issues, which was part of the #GejayanMemanggil campaign. Research by [Mahmudin et al. \(2020\)](#) indicates that social media plays a significant role in framing issues and strengthening movements. The #peringatan darurat (emergency warning) and #IndonesiaGelap movements exemplify how student movements used social media to foster consolidation.

Consolidation in virtual communities often leads to demonstrations, with online and mainstream media emerging as platforms for contesting discourse between students and power structures. In this context, student movements engaged in political communication to shape public opinion and influence decision-makers. Digital technology has amplified their reach and transformed civic participation beyond geographical boundaries ([Subekti et al., 2023](#); [Gurevitch et al., 2009](#)).

Students participating in demonstrations act as political actors who frame and share persuasive messages, utilizing both traditional protest tactics and innovations in digital spaces ([Tilly, 2006](#); [Chowdhury, 2024](#)). Media reporting becomes an integral part of this process,

reflecting both the actions of students and the responses from the state. The consistent use of such methods has been crucial in global movements, including the Arab Spring and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. This study examines the effectiveness of students protesting the Prabowo–Gibran administration in employing the #IndonesiaGelap repertoire to promote their thirteen demands.

Previous discourse studies on news media have primarily focused on textual content. However, in the digital age, public attention is also significantly influenced by hashtags that reference specific facts. This research aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between news reporting and the use of hashtags in shaping discourse.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method grounded in a critical paradigm, which views social reality as characterized by elements of injustice and power imbalance. The focus of the analysis is on online media coverage from Detik.com regarding the student movement associated with the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap, spanning from February to April 2025. Data were collected from news articles related to the movement, which was initiated by the All-Indonesia Student Executive Board (BEM SI) and included 13 demands that resonated across various regions. A total of 89 news articles were collected; however, due to the dynamic nature of online media, 36 stories were selected from the most comprehensive coverage of #darkIndonesia to avoid duplication of information.

The analysis employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), chosen for its effectiveness in uncovering ideological patterns, domination, and power relations embedded within media texts. Fairclough's three-dimensional model is applied, which encompasses: (1) Text analysis, focusing on language and repertoire in Detik.com's coverage; (2) Discourse practice, which examines the production and interpretation of texts in reporting; and (3) Social practice, situating the discourse within broader socio-cultural and political contexts.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, source triangulation was used, comparing content from Detik.com with other supporting documents. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed to verify the consistency of the findings. Additionally, the results were analyzed using Charles Tilly's theory on regimes and repertoires. Detik.com was selected as it is one of Indonesia's pioneering online media outlets with a broad audience, making it particularly relevant for this analysis. The focus on a single medium is further enhanced by triangulating social movement theory, thereby strengthening the interpretation. This study emphasizes in-depth discourse analysis grounded in a solid theoretical framework.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The #Indonesia Gelap student movement emerged during the early days of the administration of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Initiated by the All-Indonesia Student Executive Board (BEM SI), this movement took place from February to April 2025 and was covered by mainstream media, including Detik.com.

The repertoire that diffused the tension among students was "Indonesia Gelap," a term that did not appear in mainstream media reports but was widely shared on social media. As digital natives, students utilize social media platforms to organize, attract attention, and engage with existing power structures. The "Indonesia Gelap" repertoire targets explicitly those in power and carries a negative connotation. Denotatively, it means "no light," but connotatively, it refers to uncertainty, a lack of transparency, and crises occurring across various sectors, including law and economics. Following the 2024 elections, the government launched a 100-day program that many perceive as anti-people, particularly the flagship initiative of Free Nutritious Meals (MBG), which

has not met expectations in its implementation. In response to their dissatisfaction with the government's programs, students have formulated 13 demands. When BEM SI conveyed the "Indonesia Gelap" message through social media, both students and the public reacted swiftly.

Detik.com reported on the #Indonesia Gelap student movement across all regions 85 times between February and April 2025. There were 21 news reports related to the pre-action (consolidation) phase, 37 reports during the demonstrations, and 27 reports following the demonstrations. The Indonesia Gelap theme was consistently featured in the headlines. The repeated use of the Indonesia Gelap repertoire at the textual level demonstrates a form of intertextuality employed by the student demonstrations to heighten tension. The inclusion of the word "gelap" (meaning "dark") in each headline creates a rhetorical effect aimed at reinforcing a singular opinion, generating drama, attracting attention, and evoking emotional responses from the audience. At the textual level, the term "dark" symbolizes uncertainty or crises. Furthermore, the Indonesia Gelap repertoire highlights an identity that transcends a mere student movement, reflecting broader societal issues.

In terms of text production and consumption, the Indonesia Gelap repertoire indicates that Detik.com places significant emphasis on the headlines related to the student movement. By reactivating the Indonesia Gelap repertoire, Detik.com creates a public platform for discourse. This repeated emphasis also solidifies the theme as a defining identity of action, ensuring it remains prominent in the public consciousness.

The socio-political context surrounding the Indonesia Gelap repertoire, as reflected in various news headlines, symbolizes how the student movement has emerged as a symbolic opposition to the government's assertions of stability and ongoing development in Indonesia. For students, the Indonesia Gelap repertoire serves as a critique of the power structure, helping to shape the discourse on the multidimensional crises affecting the country, including the crises of democracy, the economy, and the rule of law. Students signal that if these issues are not addressed, Indonesia will remain in darkness.

The media popularized the term Indonesia Gelap to bolster the legitimacy of the student movement's symbolism. However, there may also be a hidden ideology behind the use of this term. The media played a crucial role in conveying that the student movement's demands were not merely sectoral issues but were deeply interconnected with the nation's future. Nevertheless, the discourse surrounding the student movement should not be understood solely through the headlines that are repeatedly presented. The evolving discourse can be examined through the content of news articles. During the Indonesia Gelap demonstrations, numerous reports highlighted the students' motivations for taking action, but these reports also critically questioned the nature of their protests.

The news article titled "Indonesia Gelap" reports on a demonstration where students rejected the revision of laws concerning the TNI, Polri, and Kejaksaan (Detik.com, February 17, 2025). The article employs a tone that highlights the country's troubling state, using a lexicon filled with elements of contrast, criticism, and dissatisfaction. Phrases such as "all black," "cut," and "criticized" emphasize this sentiment. Additionally, the report includes phrases used by protesters, such as "everyone is affected by efficiency except family, friends, thugs, and enforcers," which further reinforces their critical stance.

In terms of discursive practice, the article incorporates eyewitness accounts and contextual data to describe the demonstrations. Detik.com aims not only to inform readers about the mass protests but also to reflect public dissatisfaction with government policies, subsequently fostering public discourse. This reporting reveals that Indonesia is currently grappling with economic challenges and widespread criticism of the government, alongside discontent regarding austerity measures, education, and the distribution of power. The slogans chanted during the protests echo

themes of "injustice" and "transparency," as the protesters advocate for "justice" and "equal treatment."

Detik.com provides a vivid portrayal of the power dynamics between protesters and authorities, highlighting how public spaces are utilized to demand accountability. The media plays a crucial role in disseminating these demands widely, while authorities assert their control through the presence of police, concrete barriers, and traffic diversions. This suggests that the state actively regulates and manages public spaces.

In a news article titled "Muzani on the 'Indonesia Gelap' Demonstration: What Prabowo Did Caused Shock," the Gerindra party politician expresses discursive power that defends the interests of the existing power structure. The phrase "initial stage" implies that the changes announced by the government will take time, urging the public to be patient. Additionally, terms like "shock," "excessive," and "counterproductive," used by Muzani, assign a negative connotation to the student movement. This discourse influences public perception of the actions and responses associated with government initiatives. In this context, Detik.com cannot be interpreted as solely pro-government; rather, it offers a balanced perspective on the prevailing facts.

Detik.com also provided a platform for the authorities to respond to the protests in the article titled "Meet the 'Indonesia Gelap' Protesters: Mensegnek Asks Students to Remain Critical" (Detik.com, February 21, 2025). In the linguistic aspect of this news report, several notable phrases were used, such as "meet the masses," "ask students to remain critical," "with the permission and blessing of the president," and "fellow students." This choice of diction reinforces the role of the Minister of State Secretary, whom the President assigned to engage with the students, and seeks to diminish the perceived distance between the authorities and the student body.

While the article mentioned the demands of BEM SI, it primarily allocated more space for the Minister of State Secretary to express his views. However, the structure of this news report seems to legitimize the government's openness to student aspirations rather than directly addressing the actions taken by the students. A prominent theme in the report is the emphasis on students remaining critical, which challenges the assumption that the ruling government is not open to criticism. In a socio-cultural context, the news text illustrates the power dynamics between the government and the students. The government occupies a dominant position, while students are in a challenging or critical role. Yet, when confronted by the students, the government acknowledges them as significant political actors. Historically, students have been viewed as a formidable force, as many officials in the power structure originated from student movements. Detik.com's reporting underscores that students must be critical while the government must be responsive to their concerns.

The Indonesia Gelap repertoire, which had the potential to escalate tensions, managed to find a balance that led to a decrease in the intensity of the student movement. Media coverage of the issue also diminished over time. However, two months after the protests, the power structure employed tactics aimed at undermining the Indonesia Gelap narrative promoted by the students.

This was evident in the news article titled "Prabowo Talks About Propaganda Lies, Surprised That Some Say Indonesia Gelap" (Detik.com, April 8, 2025). In this article, Prabowo did not directly address the #IndonesiaGelap student movement. Instead, he focused on propaganda techniques used by figures like Hitler and Goebbels, arguing that repeated lies eventually become accepted as truth. In response to the Indonesia Gelap satire, he presented the message of "waking up to a bright morning."

The discourse practices in this article reinforce the notion that the government is honest and scientific, while those who refer to #IndonesiaGelap are portrayed as perpetuating significant falsehoods. The phrase "Mahari Terbit dari Barat" (Mahari Rises from the West) is utilized by the government to highlight the absurdity of these repeated lies. There is a consistent contrast between

the student actions represented by "Indonesia Gelap," symbolizing chaos and hopelessness, and "Indonesia cerah," which conveys optimism. The narrative employed by those in power implicitly encourages the public to align with a party that is portrayed as fair, open, and trustworthy.

This news story is significant for both the government's and students' discourse. The government emerges as the dominant voice, adopting a scientific approach to control the narrative. Prabowo acknowledges the legitimacy of criticism by stating, "...criticism is a right," but the overall discourse tends to reinforce the government's authority.

Tilly (2016) suggests that tension is inherent in the repertoire of social movements, as exemplified by the student movement highlighted during the #Indonesia Gelap demonstration. Detik.com, as a mainstream media outlet, served as a battleground for these discursive conflicts, particularly as it found itself caught in this tension. However, due to its status as an online platform, the complexities of repertoire tension could not be fully captured in a single news report. The limited access that both students and the media have to power structures often results in the media inadvertently providing more coverage to those in power. Moreover, the students involved in the protest also face their own limitations regarding social capital and their access to media and power structures.

This research has its limitations; it focused solely on one digital media platform, Detik.com. Nevertheless, it sheds light on the patterns of repertoire tension present in the Indonesian Gelap student movement. A key finding is that student movements must select a consistent repertoire to facilitate change. Given that meaningful change requires time, initiatives like #Indonesia Gelap should be sustained until all 13 demands are met.

CONCLUSIONS

Journalists who write with a sharp repertoire can significantly influence social movements, prompting responses from those in power. The #IndonesiaGelap student movement has created tension between demonstrators and the authorities, as evident in the public discourse reflected in Detik.com's reporting. From February to April 2025, Detik.com's coverage maintained consistency with the Indonesia Gelap movement's repertoire of headlines.

Detik.com's news coverage is grounded in interviews, direct reporting, and descriptions of participants' activities, including posters and expressed opinions. This consistency and attention to detail have encouraged the authorities to engage with the students, recognizing that the student movement, with its critical approach, is a significant force. The media plays a strategic role in shaping public discourse, which means student movement activists should be more proactive in building media relations to broaden the reach of their messages and enhance the impact of their movement. However, after the authorities met with the protesters, Detik.com struggled to provide balanced coverage, instead giving more attention to the power structure. This shift weakened the optimistic repertoire promoted by the student movement, highlighting the students' limited access to social capital and media resources.

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