

REPRESENTATION OF THE "INDONESIA GELAP" DEMONSTRATION AT THE HORSE STATUE IN JAKARTA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CNN INDONESIA AND KOMPAS COVERAGE

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Abstract

Demonstrations are an important mechanism for the public to voice their aspirations and criticisms, where the mass media plays a fundamental role in shaping public perception of these kinds of events. This study aims to analyze the representation of the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration at the Jakarta Horse Statue through a comparison of the coverage of two major digital media, CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com. This study seeks to identify and interpret the differences in framing applied by the two media, as well as understand their implications for the construction of reality and societal understanding. Using Robert N. Entman's framing analysis method, this study identifies how the two media define the problem, diagnose the causes, make moral judgments, and propose solution recommendations. The results showed significant differences in framing; CNN Indonesia tends to highlight security aspects and potential for unrest, while Kompas.com focuses more on the substance of student demands and dialogue efforts. These differences reflect how the media actively constructs narratives that can influence public perception and opinion.

Kata Kunci:

Framing media, Representasi,

Aksi Demonstrasi, CNN

Indonesia, Kompas.com.

Abstrak

Aksi demonstrasi merupakan mekanisme penting bagi masyarakat untuk menyuarakan aspirasi dan kritik, di mana media massa memegang peran fundamental dalam membentuk persepsi publik terhadap peristiwa semacam ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis representasi aksi demonstrasi "Indonesia Gelap" di Patung Kuda Jakarta melalui perbandingan liputan dua media digital utama, CNN Indonesia dan Kompas.com. Penelitian ini berupaya mengidentifikasi dan menginterpretasikan perbedaan framing yang diterapkan kedua media, serta memahami implikasinya terhadap konstruksi realitas dan pemahaman masyarakat. Menggunakan metode analisis framing Robert N. Entman, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi bagaimana kedua media mendefinisikan masalah, mendiagnosis penyebab, membuat penilaian moral, dan mengusulkan rekomendasi solusi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan signifikan dalam framing; CNN Indonesia cenderung menyoroti aspek keamanan dan potensi keributan, sementara Kompas.com lebih berfokus pada substansi tuntutan mahasiswa dan upaya dialog. Perbedaan ini merefleksikan bagaimana media secara aktif mengkonstruksi narasi yang dapat memengaruhi persepsi dan opini publik.

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INTRODUCTION

Demonstrations in post-reform Indonesia have become a crucial mechanism for the public to voice their aspirations and criticize government policies (Nabillah, 2024). This phenomenon is not merely a reflection of social dynamics but also a platform where various parties, including the mass media, shape public reality. In the context of a healthy democracy, the media plays a fundamental role as the fourth pillar, capable of shaping public perception and influencing public responses to crucial issues (Hariyanto et al., 2023). Therefore, how the media frames a demonstration has a significant impact on public understanding and political participation.

Indonesia, as one of the world's largest democracies, consistently experiences dynamic complexity in its political landscape. Challenges, reform efforts, and waves of criticism from various elements of society often mark each government transition. Demonstrations, as a form of unconventional political participation, often serve as an alternative channel for the public to express demands when formal channels are deemed ineffective or unresponsive (Wibowo, 2017). This phenomenon demonstrates that demonstrations are not simply an expression of frustration, but a concrete manifestation of civil rights within a dynamic democratic system.

In early 2025, a demonstration titled "Indonesia Gelap," spearheaded by the Indonesian Student Executive Board (BEM SI), captured the public spotlight. The culmination of the demonstration, held on February 20-21, 2025, at the Horse Statue in Jakarta, was a collective reaction to government policies deemed unfaithful to the people and ignoring their aspirations. The intensity and reach of the demonstration, which spread to various regions, successfully attracted widespread attention from both conventional and digital media. In this context, digital news portals such as CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com are crucial to analyze, given their dominance in shaping the public narrative.

In the realm of reporting demonstrations, mass media hold a strategic position beyond simply conveying information; they also actively construct social reality. Digital news portals, in particular, have become a crucial platform for shaping public discourse, where socio-political events are framed through complex practices (Hamad, 2004). This process involves the selection, emphasis, and packaging of news stories influenced by various factors, including media ideology and political-economic interests. Robert Entman's (1993)

conceptualization of framing, which encompasses problem definition, causal diagnosis, moral judgment, and solution recommendations, provides a strong analytical foundation for understanding how media shape public views.

Previous research has shown a diversity of framings among mainstream media outlets. Research by Silvanus Alvin (2022) demonstrated differences in framing in news construction on CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com regarding the election postponement issue. The analysis revealed that CNN Indonesia tended to legitimize student demonstrations and reject the idea of postponing the election. At the same time, Kompas highlighted the interaction between Luhut and students, as well as their rejection of the idea. This research highlights the importance of media framing in shaping public perception of political issues (Alvin, 2022).

The demonstrations at the Horse Statue in Jakarta have unique characteristics as a center of political expression in Indonesia. This location often attracts media attention due to its strategic and symbolic value in voicing direct demands to the government. Therefore, how these two media outlets, CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com, select, highlight, and interpret events at this location will significantly influence public perception regarding the legitimacy, goals, and impact of the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration. Framing analysis is expected to uncover potential biases and differences in the narratives presented to the public.

In line with that, this paper analyzes the comparative representation of the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration at the Jakarta Horse Statue on the news portals CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com for the period of February 20-21, 2025. Using Robert N. Entman's framing model, this analysis seeks to understand how both media define the problem, diagnose the causes, make moral judgments, and recommend solutions related to the action. From the results of this study, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the construction of socio-political reality by the media and its influence on public opinion in the context of Indonesian democracy will be obtained.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with Robert N. Entman's framing analysis method. This qualitative approach was chosen to examine in depth how the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration at the Horse Statue, Jakarta, was constructed and represented by the news portals CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com. Entman's framing analysis method was chosen based on his comprehensive conceptual framework in identifying four framing functions: defining the problem, diagnosing the cause, making moral judgments, and providing treatment recommendations, which are highly relevant to examining the formation of news narratives (Handoko et al., 2024).

The research data was collected through documentation techniques, namely by identifying and collecting relevant news articles from the CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com websites covering the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration at the Horse Statue, Jakarta, on February 20-21, 2025. The collected data were then analyzed using Robert N. Entman's framing model. The analysis process includes: (1) Defining Problems, to identify how each media formulated the core issues of the demonstration; (2) Diagnosing Causes, to analyze the attribution of the root cause or cause of the action by each media; (3) Making Moral Judgment, to determine how each media provided justification or moral criticism of actors and actions related to the demonstration; and (4) Treatment Recommendation, to identify suggestions or implications for solving the problem presented by each media (Entman, 1993).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A comparative analysis of two news sources, CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com, reveals variations in framing patterns in covering the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration at the Horse Statue in Jakarta. This discussion focuses on the identification and elaboration of the framing elements used, including how problems are defined, causes are identified, ethical judgments are provided, and both media outlets imply solutions. These findings not only provide an overview of the differences in the construction of reality but also enrich our understanding of the dynamics of media coverage. Complete findings regarding the identification and elaboration of the framing elements used by both media outlets are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Framing Elements of CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com Coverage

Framing Elements	CNN Indonesia	Kompas.com
Frame	CNN Indonesia tends to highlight aspects of security, public order, and the potential for unrest. Their reports often focus on incidents such as throwing objects, vandalism, and anarchic acts committed by some of the crowd. They also highlight the response and deployment of security forces. This framing tends to portray demonstrations as events that threaten stability and order.	Kompas.com tends to highlight the substance of the students' demands, the aspirations of the community, and efforts at dialogue. While still reporting on the dynamics on the ground, Kompas.com focuses more on the reasons behind the demonstrations and the government's response to those demands. This framework tends to be more balanced, giving space to the protesters' voices and emphasizing the importance of communication between the government and the community.
Define Problem	Overall, CNN Indonesia tended to define the main problem as the potential for security disturbances, chaos, and anarchic acts during the demonstrations. Its reports highlighted incidents of bottle and	Kompas.com defines the problem more as the accumulation of widespread disappointment and unrest among students and the public regarding government policies deemed unpro-people, non-transparent, or

Framing Elements	CNN Indonesia	Kompas.com
	firecracker throwing, CCTV damage, and the burning of plastic barriers by demonstrators. This focus diverted attention from the substance of the demonstrators' demands to the disruptive impact of the demonstrations.	detrimental. The "Indonesia Gelap" protests are framed as a collective expression of mounting dissatisfaction, not simply a single demonstration.
Diagnosis Causes	CNN Indonesia identified the cause of the problem primarily as provocative and anarchic actions by some demonstrators, such as throwing bottles, destroying property, and setting fires. This narrative placed responsibility for the unrest on the demonstrators, implying that they were the ones creating the chaos. The coverage's focus on the details of these anarchic actions led readers to view the problem as a result of the crowd's destructive behavior, rather than the substance of the government's demands or policies. Security forces were portrayed as those attempting to restore order following the demonstrators' actions.	Kompas.com identified the cause of the problem as public and student dissatisfaction with government policies, particularly on issues such as energy, agrarian affairs, and the environment, as well as the government's slow response to important issues. Kompas.com's reporting highlighted that this action was the culmination of collective disappointment with the government's performance. The "Indonesia Gelap" action was positioned as a response to the government's failure to meet the people's aspirations, not solely due to the anarchic actions of the demonstrators. This shows that Kompas.com sees the root of the problem in governance and policies, rather than the behavior of individual demonstrators.
Make Moral Judgments	CNN Indonesia's moral judgment tends to be negative towards anarchic actions and violations of public order. Phrases such as "heating up," "throwing bottles and firecrackers," "damaging CCTV," and "burning barriers" implicitly suggest that the mob's actions are undesirable, wrong, and disruptive to public order. This judgment attempts to shift public sympathy from the protest's purpose to the negative impact of violence, categorizing demonstrators as lawbreakers and security threats. CNN Indonesia tends to blame the demonstrators for the escalation of the conflict.	Kompas.com's moral assessment of the student struggle was obvious and positive. Through extensive reporting of the demands and emphasizing the solidarity of the demonstrators, Kompas.com positioned this struggle as moral and based on the values of justice, transparency, and accountability. The government and its policies were implicitly viewed as "needing evaluation" or "rejection" due to their perceived harm or injustice. Kompas.com tended to give moral legitimacy to the demonstrations as a form of social control.
Treatment Recommendation	The solution proposed by CNN Indonesia involves order and law enforcement to halt the riots. The deployment of thousands of police personnel and police appeals to the crowd not to be provocative are forms of "recommendation" to restore order. Its reports tend not to offer	Kompas.com explicitly offered a solution in the form of fulfilling the students' nine demands and direct dialogue with the government. The demonstration itself was framed as a way to voice these recommendations and pressure the government to act. The presence of the State Secretary,

Framing Elements	CNN Indonesia	Kompas.com
	government policy solutions to address the demonstrators' demands, but instead focus on solutions to control the demonstrations.	who met with the demonstrators and promised to study their demands, demonstrated hope for a communication-based solution and policy response.

A comparative analysis of the framing employed by CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com in covering the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration at the Jakarta Horse Statue revealed significant differences in the construction of reality. This phenomenon aligns with Robert N. Entman's (1993) framing concept, which states that the media does not simply reflect reality but actively selects and highlights certain aspects of an event to promote problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and recommendations for specific solutions (Faizi & Febriyanti, 2024). In this regard, CNN Indonesia tended to frame the demonstration as a threat to public order and security, focusing on the anarchic incidents and the police's response. In contrast, Kompas.com chose a more balanced frame, emphasizing the substance of the demonstrators' demands and efforts at dialogue. This difference in framing is crucial given the role of the mass media as an institution with extensive capabilities to disseminate information and influence how society understands and interprets reality, ultimately shaping public opinion (McQuail & Deuze, 2020).

The differences in the "Define Problem" element demonstrate how the two media outlets directed audiences' understanding of the demonstrations' core issues. CNN Indonesia consistently defined the primary problem as the potential for security disruption and unrest, such as throwing objects and vandalism. This emphasis effectively diverted audience attention from the demonstrators' substantial demands to the disruptive impact of the demonstrations. This represents the selection and highlighting mechanism described by Entman (1993), whereby the media chooses certain aspects of an event to highlight and ignores others, thus strategically shaping the public agenda. Kompas.com, on the other hand, tended to define the problem as the accumulation of public disappointment and unrest over government policies deemed unpro-people. This framing positioned the "Indonesia Gelap" protests as a collective expression of mounting dissatisfaction, more in line with online journalism's role as a provider of in-depth information and a forum for public aspirations in a democratic context (Yusuf, 2024).

The analysis of the "Diagnosis Causes" element also highlights the divergence in the narratives of the two media outlets in identifying the root cause of the problem. CNN Indonesia explicitly identified the primary cause of the problem as the anarchic actions of

some demonstrators, such as bottle throwing and arson, thus implicitly placing responsibility for the unrest on the demonstrators. This interpretation of causality is an essential function of framing according to Entman (1993), which clearly indicates "what or who is considered the cause of a problem or issue." This narrative has the potential to influence audience perceptions of the legitimacy of the protests. In contrast, Kompas.com identified the root of the problem as public and student dissatisfaction with government policies, highlighting that these actions were the culmination of collective disappointment. This interpretation confirms that Kompas.com sees the root of the problem in governance and policies, not solely in the behavior of individual demonstrators. This choice of diagnosis is very significant in shaping public understanding of the conflict and who should be held responsible.

The difference in framing is also significantly reflected in the element of "Make Moral Judgments." CNN Indonesia tends to provide negative moral judgments on the actions of demonstrators deemed to violate public order, using phrases such as "heating up" and "burning the barrier," which implicitly categorize these actions as undesirable and disruptive to public order. This judgment, one of Entman's (1993) four main framing devices, attempts to shift public sympathy from the goals of the protest to the negative impacts of violence, in line with the ability of framing to influence audience attitudes and opinions (Zulham et al., 2024). This contrasts with Kompas.com, which emphasizes a favorable moral judgment on the student struggle. Through extensive reporting of demands and an emphasis on solidarity, Kompas.com positions this struggle as moral and based on the values of justice, transparency, and accountability. This approach reflects how the media can provide moral legitimacy to social actors and actions, acting as a form of social control and facilitator of public discourse in a democratic system (Prabowo, 2023).

Finally, the "Treatment Recommendation" element also shows significant differences in the implications of the solutions offered by the two media outlets. CNN Indonesia tended to recommend order and law enforcement to stop the riots, focusing on controlling the protests rather than policy solutions to the demonstrators' demands. This recommendation is consistent with its diagnosis of causes and moral judgments (Entman, 1993). The implication is that the primary problem is order, and the solution is law enforcement. In contrast, Kompas.com explicitly offered solutions in the form of meeting students' demands and direct dialogue with the government, positioning the demonstrations as a means to voice these recommendations and pressure the government to act. In the context of online journalism, the media plays a crucial role as a watchdog and facilitator, supporting public engagement in achieving communication-based solutions (Yusuf, 2024). These differences in recommendations

directly influence public perceptions of how a social problem should be resolved and who is responsible for taking action.

These differences in framing not only reflect the editorial style of each media outlet but are also inherently linked to factors in the political economy of the media. Within the political economy of the media, the ownership and corporate structure of media outlets significantly influence how news is framed. CNN Indonesia, as part of a larger media group under Chairul Tanjung's CT Corp, tends to have a strong interest in maintaining stability and order. With a diverse business background and Chairul Tanjung's political experience as a former Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, CNN Indonesia tends to present news that favors the government or at least maintains stability, in order to avoid narratives that could potentially disrupt the investment climate or policies it supports.

This aligns with the concept of commodification described by Mosco (2009), where public safety and order can be "commodified" as essential values. Any disruption to these values becomes headline news that is "sold" to an audience concerned about stability. Reports highlighting incidents such as bottle throwing, CCTV damage, or the burning of plastic barriers in coverage of the "Indonesia Gelap" protests strategically shifted the focus from the substance of the demonstrators' demands to the "disruption," aiming to reduce public support for the protests while simultaneously increasing the "value" of police intervention as guardians of order. This framing, which highlights the chaos and potential threats to order, is consistent with specific economic interests, indicating that editorial decisions are not solely based on news value but are also influenced by business and political considerations (Van Dijk, 2013).

Meanwhile, Kompas.com, although also part of a large media group (Kompas Gramedia Group), demonstrated an editorial strategy that prioritized public voice and social control. Kompas.com's tendency to frame the "Indonesia Gelap" action from the perspective of student demands and aspirations regarding government policies, as well as efforts for dialogue, can be interpreted as a manifestation of the media's role as a public forum in a democratic system. This is in accordance with Mosco's (2009) concept of spatialization, namely the expansion of the functional reach of the media that provides "space" for the voices of marginalized people to be heard, even reaching representatives of the Palace.

The philosophy and values firmly held by the Kompas Gramedia Group, founded by PK Ojong and Jakob Oetama with the principles of humanist, independent journalism, and a focus on the "people's conscience," are manifested in Kompas.com's editorial policy. Values such as honesty, integrity, and concern for the community serve as the foundation for

comprehensively presenting student demands and the ongoing dialogue process, without solely focusing on the potential for unrest. Kompas.com strives to act as a communication bridge between the public and the government, providing a platform for public aspirations and encouraging problem-solving through democratic mechanisms in accordance with its founders' vision. This more balanced framing, which emphasizes the substance of demonstrators' demands and efforts at dialogue, directly reflects Kompas's commitment to exercising its social media control function as a pillar of democracy, even in dealing with sensitive issues such as demonstrations that highlight government performance (Wibowo, 2017).

CONCLUSION

An in-depth analysis of the framing of CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com's coverage of the "Indonesia Gelap" demonstration clearly shows that the two media outlets fundamentally differed in constructing their representations of the event, each with a different emphasis. CNN Indonesia tended to prioritize a security and order frame, highlighting the disruptive and potentially anarchic aspects, which directed public attention to the negative consequences of the demonstration. In contrast, Kompas.com chose a frame that emphasized the substance of the students' demands and the importance of dialogue, allowing space for the democratic aspirations of the masses. This divergence in framing significantly influenced how the event was perceived by the audience, creating diverse understandings and potentially triggering polarization of public opinion. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the media's significant power in shaping discourse and perceptions, making promoting media literacy among the public a crucial solution. The public's ability to critically compare narratives from various sources and understand media framing strategies will empower them to form a more comprehensive and balanced view, which in turn will strengthen informed public participation in democracy.

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