

Framing the #IndonesiaGelap Demonstration Narrative in Indonesian Online Media

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Abstract

Purpose: This research aims to explore and understand how Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia, the two online media outlets with the highest level of public trust, frame the violent dimension of the #IndonesiaGelap demonstration news coverage. Both outlets have the best reputation ratings in Indonesia; in 2025, Kompas.com scored 62%, and CNNIndonesia.com scored 61%, outperforming other media outlets, both traditional and digital.

Methods: This study uses a qualitative method with a critical paradigm and a framing approach to CNN Indonesia news and Kompas.com regarding the #IndonesiaGelap demonstration actions during February 17-21, 2025, using Robert N. Entman's Framing Theory. This model was chosen because it emphasizes cognitive aspects that are suitable for analyzing long-term socio-political issues, compared to other models that emphasize formal aspects and linguistic metaphors.

Findings: The results of the study show that Kompas.com highlights issues and causes of conflict through the demands of demonstrators and government policies. It tends to be critical and balanced. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia focuses on the definition of the problem and avoids mentioning the cause or moral judgment. It tends to be neutral. These findings affirm the balanced and neutral role of the media in shaping public perceptions while considering security aspects. This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of media framing on democracy in Indonesia.

Originality: This study contributes theoretically by showing that nearly identical trust scores between Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia do not guarantee equal critical framing, nuancing media credibility theory's assumption that audience trust reflects a medium's depth of critical journalism.

Keywords: Framing Comparison, #IndonesiaGelap, Media in Indonesia, Trusted Media.

Introduction

Indonesia is a democratic country that guarantees freedom of speech and opinion. One of the fundamental aspects of a democratic country is the holding of elections to elect leaders by and based on the will of the people (Chu et al., 2024). In a democratic country, every citizen has the same opportunity to voice their ideas, including criticizing government policies. Democracy requires high political participation from its citizens. It includes the right to vote, run for office, and engage in political discourse. Broad suffrage is a key indicator of a democratic system (Pulido, 2022). In a democratic country, preventing conflicts and ensuring stability must be carried out by the state (Tshiyoyo, 2025). Especially with the value of freedom of expression guaranteed by the state.

In 2025, a wave of demonstrations colored Indonesia's political landscape. The #IndonesiaGelap (Dark Indonesia) is an idea that has emerged and circulated in the community, especially on social media, related to the decline of the democratic system in Indonesia. The community considers that a number of policies do not reflect public aspirations, as well as the lack of citizen participation in the decision-making process. This

action reflects the accumulation of people's dissatisfaction with the direction of democracy, which is considered to be in decline.

The phenomenon of digital action #IndonesiaGelap not only creates political pressure but also becomes the main focus of the mass media. Among various national media, CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com rank at the top in terms of public trust. CNN Indonesia gained public trust with a percentage of 61%, and Kompas.com with 67% (Newman, 2021). According to a study by The Media Insight Project (2021), one of the factors supporting high public trust in the media is based on journalistic practices that are carried out in accordance with the procedures and values they adopt (Akbari, 2024). These values refer to what Tom Rosenstiel put forward, for example, related to truth, verification discipline, independence, siding with weak audiences, and responsibility for reporting (Tagle et al., 2022), or how Kovach and Rosenstiel conceptualize the journalistic firewall as an essential editorial discipline to protect journalists from profit-oriented business pressures (Krisdinanto et al., 2024). This practice is often considered to be the basic philosophy of journalism (Krisdinanto et al., 2024).

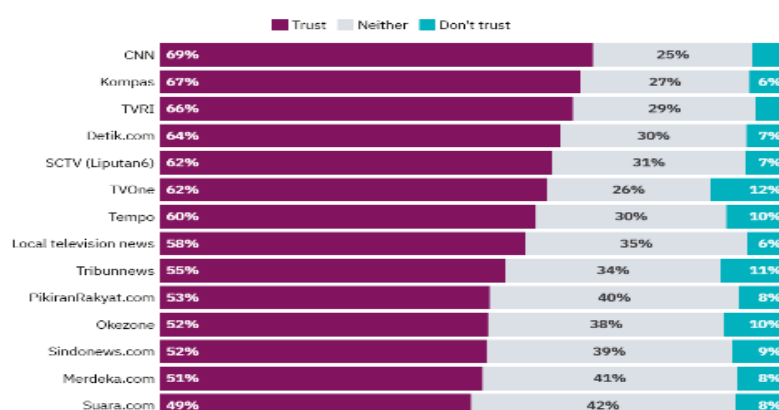


Figure 1. Brand Trust Scores (source: Indonesia--Reuters Institute for The Study of Journalism, 2021)

The main reason this study chose CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com is that both are among the most influential outlets in Indonesian online media, as reflected in the brand trust scores presented in Figure 1. A 2021 survey conducted by the Reuters Institute showed that CNN Indonesia ranked first with a public trust level of 69%, followed by Kompas.com in second place with 67 percent (Steele, 2021). Meanwhile, in 2025, Kompas.com will be ranked first with 62 percent, while CNN Indonesia will be ranked second with a percentage of 61 percent (Steele, 2025). Both media outlets have a wide readership base and are considered capable of representing mainstream voices, so the framing they build has the potential to influence public perception in general. CNN Indonesia tends to present news in a concise style and emphasizes statements from the authorities, while Kompas.com is known as a media with a moderate reputation and is often seen as a mediator in public discourse. In contrast to Tempo, which is more critical and investigative, Tempo's audience is usually narrower and is dominated by people who are familiar with political issues. Therefore, selecting CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com corresponds to the purpose of this study, which is to see how the mainstream media frames #IndonesiaGelap actions and how the framing can affect the meaning of social movements in the dynamics of digital democracy in Indonesia.

From the search results, at least 15 articles on CNN Indonesia discussed #IndonesiaGelap actions during February 17-21, 2025. Meanwhile, in Kompas.com, the number was higher, with more than 16 articles on February 19-21, 2025. From all of these publications, this study took articles that highlighted the violent side in the field, from burning tires, breaking off CCTV, to throwing Molotov cocktails at the authorities. This selection consideration is intended to ensure that the research focuses on reading the way the mainstream media frames the dynamics of action.

Mass media is a catalyst for democracy, and thus it should be independent. It plays not only as a conveyor of information but also as a political actor that can influence public perception. Some points affecting media independence are economic factors (Ballarini, 2020), ownership structures, as well as external factors related to relationships with advertisers and political actors (Amallah et al., 2025). The government's position as a regulator is also fraught with pressure. The influence of government and politics on media content is a significant concern. The theory of media capture suggests that government interests and the influence of ownership can undermine media independence, which affects democratic accountability (Danso, 2025). In addition to these crucial issues, media independence is challenged by economic pressure in the form of commercialization (Svensson & Edstrom, 2016), including the presence of social media, which is a fertile ground for the spread of hoaxes, as well as global challenges such as global media networks (Rabe, 2016).

In the context of governance, the mass media plays as the main source of information for the public, providing the latest information related to changes in government policies (Muhammad et al., 2024). Therefore, the public can be influenced by the nature of agenda setting and media opinions that facilitate public discourse, so the media also needs to be a (Sanz-Hernández et al., 2020) government supervisor in order to influence the government's public policy (Mwangi, 2018). Therefore, the role of the mass media is complex, acting as a supervisor while demanding responsibility in maintaining objectivity and integrity in order to build public trust and support transparent and democratic governance (Mwangi, 2018).

Digital-democracy mass media face government influence, compromising editorial independence via funding dependencies or safety threats (Putra et al., 2025). These power elites can manipulate national policies and media narratives for personal benefit (Sen et al., 2018). The communication strategy built by government public relations through media framing significantly affects public perception of the government, as it did during Covid19 (Setiawan et al., 2024). The media builds a narrative through news produced by selecting viewpoints, determining sources of information, depicting actors, and emphasizing an event (Boer et al., 2020). Framing plays an important role in understanding how mass media shapes meanings of global political issues through a varied framing approach to events, influenced by editorial policies, political orientation, and target audiences (Pratiwi et al., 2025). The framing effect itself is influenced by its quality, not its frequency. The environment can indeed change, but it does not eliminate the impact of framing on public opinion.

This research examines how mass media reporting shapes public understanding of the #IndonesiaGelap demonstrations. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the way Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia frame the action. In addition, it is necessary to examine whether there are differences or similarities in the way the two media frame articles, as well as how this framing may affect public perception of the legitimacy of actions and the current state of democracy in Indonesia.

A number of previous studies have used Robert N. Entman's Framing model, particularly those conducted in Indonesia, to analyze media reports on demonstrations, including #IndonesiaGelap actions, as in [Bakry et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Muharrom et al. \(2025\)](#). Both raise the issue of #IndonesiaGelap, but Bakri et al. do not compare it with Habermas's approach and theory. Meanwhile, Muharam et al. employ Robert N. Entman's theory to compare two news outlets, CNN Indonesia and Tempo.co, in relation to the relatively common news topic #IndonesiaGelap, which led to both anarchic actions and non-anarchic ones. Meanwhile, the current research focuses on reporting demonstrations that raise anarchist issues ([Muharrom et al., 2025](#)).

Meanwhile, research published in international journals covers diverse research topics. The first study was conducted by [Salman et al. \(2023\)](#) on the news of the May 1998 tragedy published by three Indonesian printed media, Kompas, Republika, and Suara Karya. The second was conducted on public policy reporting and regional head leadership crises at the beginning of COVID-19 in Indonesia. [Aras & Barezki \(2023\)](#), the third study, compared news coverage of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. They use Robert N Entman's methods and approaches with different objects. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on violent/anarchist coverage, its comparison of CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com, the two most trusted Indonesian online media in 2025, and its examination within the context of contemporary digital democracy.

This study identifies similarities and differences in the framing strategies used by the two media to convey information about the action. It seeks to understand the impact of news framing on public perceptions of protest legitimacy and on the dynamics of democracy in Indonesia in the contemporary era. Thus, this research is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions in understanding the role of mass media in shaping public opinion and supporting transparent and democratic governance.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with framing analysis techniques to examine how online media frames news about the #IndonesiaGelap demonstrations. It is a descriptive approach that highlights the process and meaning from the perspective of the subject ([A'yun et al., 2025](#)). The data source was obtained from news articles published by CNN Indonesia and Kompas.com on February 17-21, 2025, during the demonstrations. The selection of the two media outlets was based on data from the Digital News Report on high levels of public trust and a wide range of audiences. The reason for choosing these two online media outlets is that they have the best reputation in Indonesia. In 2025, Kompas.com scored 62%, and CNNIndonesia.com scored 61% ([Steele, 2025](#)). These outlets outperform other media, both traditional and digital. The criteria for selecting news included articles that directly discussed the #IndonesiaGelap demonstration, the involvement of demonstrators and security forces, and the government policies that provided the background for the action. The framing used is Robert N. Entman's model, which examines narratives through defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies ([Junaid et al., 2025](#)). This model emphasizes cognitive aspects suitable for analyzing long-term socio-political issues.

Results

Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com are two national online media that are news portals. According to the ranking site Similarweb, Kompas.com ranks 5th in the News & Entertainment category, while CNNIndonesia.com ranks 20th. However, the ranking is not

too selective because Similarweb also includes non-news categories, such as X as a microblogging platform and Medium as a blogging platform. In fact, media that are geographically based in China are also included in the Indonesian geographical category. Therefore, if reordered, as of October 4, 2025, Kompas.com's position ranks second below IDN Times, while CNNIndonesia.com ranks 7th. Meanwhile, based on a Reuters Institute survey, Kompas.com has the highest level of trust at 62%, followed by CNNIndonesia at 61%. Although there have been changes over the past 4 years, Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com remain the online media with the highest level of public trust in Indonesia, as illustrated in Figure 2.

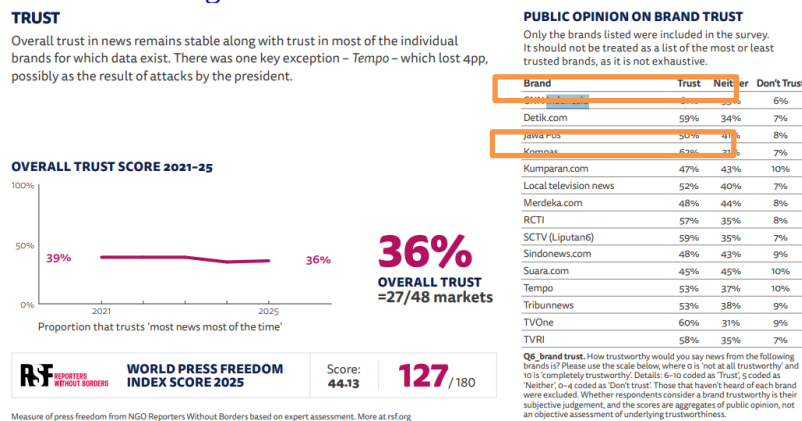


Figure 2. Brand Trust Scores (source: Indonesia--Reuters Institute for The Study of Journalism, 2025)

Based on observations of two online media outlets that emphasized protests, with a portion of their news covering anarchist actions, each outlet began its reporting differently. Kompas.com from February 17, 2025, and CNN Indonesia from February 17, 2025. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia starts on February 20, 2025. The author details it in the form of a table as follows in Table 1:

Table 1. List of News (Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia)

Publication date	Kompas.com	CNNIndonesia.com
February 17, 2025	1. "Indonesian student demonstrations were marked by tire burning" ("Unjuk Rasa Mahasiswa Indonesia Gelap diwarnai Aksi Bakar Ban") (Ramadhanty et al., 2025a) 2. "Burning Banners Again, Indonesian Protesters Try to Break Through Concrete Barriers" ("Kembali Bakar Spanduk, Massa Aksi Indonesia Gelap Mencoba Tembus Beton Pembatas") (Ramadhanty et al., 2025b) 3. "Asked to Disband, Indonesian Protesters Throw Bottles and Wood at Police" ("Diminta Bubar, Massa Demo Indonesia Gelap	

		Lempar Botol dan Kayu ke Polisi”) (Ramadhanty et al., 2025c) 4. “Students Try to Pull Down Concrete Barriers during the #DarkIndonesia demonstration” (“Mahasiswa Coba Tarik Beton Pembatas dalam Unjuk Rasa Indonesia Gelap”) (Kurniawan et al., 2025a)	
February 2025	20,	1. “Indonesian protesters begin breaking through Concrete Barriers at the Horse Statue” (“Massa Aksi Indonesia Gelap Mulai Jebol Beton Pembatas di Patung Kuda”) (Farisi et al., 2025a) 2. “The #DarkIndonesia Protest at Horse Statue, Protesters Pull Down Concrete Barriers Until Collapse” (“Gelar Demo Indonesia Gelap di Patung Kuda, Massa Aksi Tarik Beton Pembatas hingga Roboh”) (Kurniawan et al., 2025b) 3. “Arriving at the Horse Statue, Indonesian Protesters Immediately Burn Tires” (“Tiba di Patung Kuda, Massa Demo Indonesia Gelap Langsung Bakar Ban”) (Farisi et al., 2025b) 4. “The #IndonesiaGelap Lives Matter Demonstration Begins at Horse Statue, Students Arrive with Fists Raised” (“Demo Indonesia Gelap di Patung Kuda Mulai, Mahasiswa Datang Sambil Kepalkan Tangan”) (Farisi et al., 2025c)	1. “BEM SI Holds Follow-up Action for the #IndonesiaGelap at the Horse Statue Today” (“BEM SI Gelar Aksi Lanjutan Indonesia Gelap di Patung Kuda Hari ini”) (Ibrahim, 2025) 2. “Follow-up Action to #IndonesiaGelap, Thousands of Students Flock to the Horse Statue” (“Aksi Lanjutan ‘Indonesia Gelap’, Ribuan Mahasiswa Padati Patung Kuda”) (Anugrah, 2025a) 3. “The #IndonesiaGelap Protesters Gather at Horse Statue, Students Tear Down Concrete Barriers” (“Demo Indonesia Gelap di Patung Kuda, Mahasiswa Robohkan Barrier Beton”) (Anugrah, 2025b) 4. “Hundreds of Police Deployed to Guard #IndonesiaGelap Protest at Horse Statue” (“Ratusan Polisi Diterjunkan Kawal Aksi ‘Indonesia Gelap’ di Patung Kuda”) (Zaezar, 2025)
February 2025	21,	1. “The #IndonesiaGelap Action at Horse Statue Turns Violent, Crowd Lights Fireworks and Molotov Cocktails” (“Aksi Indonesia Gelap di Patung Kuda Mulai Ricuh,	1. “#IndonesiaGelap in Chaos, Authorities Pelted with Molotov Cocktails at Horse Statue” (“Indonesia Gelap Ricuh, Aparat

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| <p><i>Massa Nyalakan Kembang Api dan Molotov”</i>) (Rafni et al., 2025a)</p> <p>2. <i>“Firecrackers Explode at #IndonesiaGelap Rally, Crowd Retreats Thinking It's Tear Gas”</i> (<i>“Ledakan Petasan di Aksi Indonesia Gelap, Massa Sempat Mundur karena Mengira Gas Air Mata”</i>) (Bustomi, 2025)</p> <p>3. <i>“The #IndonesiaGelap protesters damage barbed wire fence, police urge people not to be provoked”</i> (<i>“Massa Aksi Indonesia Gelap Rusak Kawat Berduri, Polisi Ingatkan untuk Tidak Terprovokasi”</i>) (Rafni et al., 2025b)</p> | <p><i>Dilempari Bom Molotov di Patung Kuda”</i>) (CNN Indonesia, 2025a)</p> <p>2. <i>“CCTV Damaged During #IndonesiaGelap Protest at Horse Statue”</i> (<i>“CCTV Dirusak Saat Aksi Indonesia Gelap di Patung Kuda”</i>) (CNN Indonesia, 2025b)</p> <p>3. <i>“The #IndonesiaGelap Crowd dispersed, Traffic resumed as Normal”</i> (<i>“Massa 'Indonesia Gelap' Bubarkan Diri, Lalin Kembali Dibuka”</i>) (CNN Indonesia, 2025c)</p> <p>4. <i>“the #IndonesiaGelap protesters burn plastic barriers at the Horse Statue”</i> (<i>“Pedemo 'Indonesia Gelap' Bakar Barrier Plastik di Patung Kuda”</i>) (CNN Indonesia, 2025d)</p> <p>5. <i>“People with Disabilities Protest the #IndonesiaGelap, Read Pancasila at Horse Statue”</i> (<i>“Warga Disabilitas Demo Indonesia Gelap, Baca Pancasila di Patung Kuda”</i>) (Anugrah, 2025c)</p> <p>6. <i>“#IndonesiaGelap, Crowds at Horse Statue Throw Bottles and Firecrackers”</i> (<i>“Aksi Indonesia Gelap, Massa di Patung Kuda Lempar Botol dan Petasan”</i>) (CNN Indonesia, 2025e)</p> |
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Note: Comparison of news coverage between Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com during the period of unrest from February 17 to 21, 2025. Kompas.com began reporting on the violence on February 17, 2025, while CNNIndonesia.com began reporting on February 20, 2025.

Based on the 16 news articles on Kompas.com, the authors selected only 11 that contained violent acts, such as burning tires, as shown in Table 1. The news highlighted

various dynamics in the field, from burning tires to pulling the concrete barrier, as illustrated in the news titles *Student Rally #IndonesiaGelap Colored by Tire Burning Action* and *Holding #IndonesiaGelap Demonstration at the Horse Statue, Mass Action of Pulling Concrete Barrier*. The news presentation combines event details with an emphasis on strong visual moments to shape the reader's imagination of the conditions and atmosphere of tension during the action.

Meanwhile, for CNN Indonesia, the authors selected 10 of 15 news stories for analysis based on their coverage of violent acts. The number of news articles published by CNN Indonesia is fewer than Kompas.com's, which is 10, as shown in [Table 1](#). The protest #IndonesiaGelap became the main highlight of national news. News on CNN tends to be sensational by using terms such as Molotov cocktails. Several news headlines, such as *#IndonesiaGelap in Chaos, Authorities Pelted with Molotov Cocktails at Horse Statue; The #IndonesiaGelap Protesters Gather at Horse Statue, Students Tear Down Concrete Barriers*, show the media's focus on the dramatic and confrontational moments that occurred on the ground.

This phenomenon not only marks the high level of tension of the event but also shows how the media packages narratives to build public perception of the action. Based on the news, the researcher conducted coding based on the framing theory of Robert N. Entman, as presented in [Table 2](#):

Table 2. Robert N. Entman Framing Model

Define Problem	Stages beginning a framing that shows how journalists interpret an event at the time a problem arises
Diagnosis Causes	Understand how a person is considered as the main character of a problem that arises.
Make Moral Judgment	Provide moral justification for arguments in defining the problem that has been prepared.
Treatment	It is a solution offered by journalists or the media to readers.
Recommendation	

Note: Entman's model provides a highly structured analytical framework, based on the four D-D-T-R functions, highly relevant for political and conflict news ([Zhang et al., 2026](#)).

The first element, defining the problem. Defining the problem helps identify the central issue in the news narrative. The following table is a narrative of defining the problem:

Table 3. Elements Defining the Problem in Kompas.com's Reporting

Element	Supporting Narrative in Kompas.com News	Supporting Narrative in CNNIndonesia.com News
Define Problems	The five main demands presented in the '#IndonesiaGelap' action are as follows: 1. Urging the government to revoke Presidential Instruction (Inpres) Number 1 of 2025 regarding budget efficiency. 2. Evaluating all MBG programs that are considered inappropriate in their implementation.	There are a number of demands that the protesters will bring up. 1. Some of them reject the TNI Bill, the Polri Bill, the Attorney General's Office Bill, the ratification of the DPR rules of procedure, and the Attorney General's Office Bill.

3. Revoke the article in the Minerba Bill that allows campuses to process mining permits in order to maintain academic independence.
4. Request the government to disburse allowances for lecturers and educators without deductions or obstacles due to bureaucracy.
5. Protest the government's inconsistency in policy-making.

2. The protesters also demand an evaluation of the budget efficiency policy, President Prabowo's bloated cabinet, and the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals program.

Note: The table shows that the news reported by Kompas.com focuses on individual issues, while the news reports on CNNIndonesia.com are more detailed.

Based on the coding in Table 3, there is a difference in narrative between Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia. Kompas.com's narrative tends to be broader, while CNN Indonesia's tends to be more focused. Based on 11 news reports, Kompas.com appeared twice. The narrative from Kompas.com directly explains the core of the issue that is being hotly discussed and is in the demonstrators' spotlight. The demonstrators called for government policies and programs considered problematic. The demonstrators' list of five demands to the government serves as a concrete identification of the problems that triggered the action and gives the public an overview of the main points in question.

Meanwhile, the narrative on CNNIndonesia.com lists the issues protested: the TNI Bill, the Police Bill, the House of Representatives rules, the Prosecutor's Bill, budget efficiency, the fat Cabinet, and the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program. These issues show the main focus of the demonstrations that are in the spotlight of the media. The submission of information is carried out descriptively without explaining the specific background or reason behind each demand.

In general, the narratives presented by these two trusted Indonesian news media outlets have the same substance, which are a number of government policies. The difference lies in the details and focus of each news media outlet. Kompas.com's narrative tends to broaden the discussion to include the disbursement of lecturer allowances and the government's inconsistency regarding policies. Meanwhile, CNNIndonesia.com focuses on the details of the issues raised since the news was reported.

The second element of Robert N. Entman's framing model is cause diagnosis, a framing element used to determine who is considered the perpetrator of an event. This can be based on what or who. How an event is understood determines what and who is considered the source of the problem. The following are the cause diagnoses of the two online media outlets:

Table 4. Elements of Diagnose Causes

Element	Supporting Narrative in Kompas.com News	Supporting Narrative in CNNIndonesia.com News
Diagnose Causes	<i>"They protested against a number of government programs and policies that were considered disturbing and detrimental to the Indonesian people."</i> <i>"Upon arriving at the location, several students arranged tires and burned them as a form of</i>	<i>"Prabowo Subianto's administration policies."</i> <i>"The protesters also demanded an evaluation of budget efficiency policies, President Prabowo's bloated cabinet, and the implementation of the Free Nutritious Meals program."</i>

protest.”

“Concerns over several policies of President Prabowo Subianto.”

“The protesters brought a number of demands related to the policies taken by President Prabowo Subianto's administration.”

Note: All news narratives from both media outlets focused on the protesters, with only one narrative featuring President Prabowo Subianto, namely from CNNIndonesia.com, as can be seen in column one.

Based on the coding in [Table 4](#), both Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia clearly explain the reasons behind these actions. All of them boil down to the policies of Prabowo Subianto's administration. However, almost all narratives focus on the protesters. Kompas.com specifically explains that the policies in question have disrupted Indonesian society. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia presents a more technical narrative on budget efficiency, a bloated cabinet, and free nutritious food programs.

In other news, CNN Indonesia only explains several policies without providing details. On Kompas.com, the narrative is not only about the policy but also about its impact, so it is described as a worrying policy. This alarming narrative is not used by CNN Indonesia. However, one narrative on CNNIndonesia.com makes the government the main subject, while the other focuses on the protesters. This shows that the meaning of the demonstrations lies in the policies of the Prabowo Subianto administration.

The third element of Robert N. Entman's framing model is to make moral judgment. Making moral judgments is a framing element used to justify or support the definition of a problem. This is done to support strong arguments for an idea. The following are the elements of moral decision-making in the #IndonesiaGelap action news, as presented in [Table 5](#):

Table 5. The Elements of Making Moral Judgment

Element	Supporting Narrative in Kompas.com News	Supporting Narrative in CNNIndonesia.com News
Make Moral Judgment	#ClimateCrisisDemocracyCrisis #GemoyCabinetTroublemakers #KrisisIklimKrisisDemokrasi #KabinetGemoyBerulah “They protested a number of policies that have caused unrest among the public.” “They protested the government's inconsistent policies.” “The crowd was also urged not to resort to anarchist actions.” “The students, most of whom wore green uniforms, immediately began chanting in a tone of unrest against the government's policies.”	“The police are still urging the remaining demonstrators not to engage in provocative actions.” “In response to the throwing of objects, the police are asking the crowd not to engage in provocative actions.”

Note: The narrative in the element of making moral judgments on Kompas.com is specific and contextual by highlighting moral issues in policy, while the narrative on CNNIndonesia.com tends to be normative.

Based on the narrative of the news reports, Kompas.com contains quite a lot of moral

judgments, both in the form of conclusions and indirect quotations. This includes writing hashtags quoted from banners displayed by protesters. The narrative of protest against inconsistency is part of the narrative against the government's incorrect actions. Similarly, the use of disturbing diction in several narratives shows that this is a form of moral control by protesters against government policies. Kompas.com does this through a fairly diverse and dynamic narrative in its news reports related to moral judgments.

Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia tends to make fewer moral judgments. In fact, CNN Indonesia does not make moral judgments about the attitudes and general ideas of the protesters. However, what CNN Indonesia does is more about the attitude of the protesters, such as not provoking others, which can be categorized as treatment recommendations. What CNNIndonesia.com does regarding moral judgments tends to be normative.

The fourth element of Robert N. Entman's framing model is Treatment Recommendation. Treatment Recommendation is used to assess what journalists want. What path to choose to resolve the issue. The resolution depends on the events observed and who is seen as the cause of the problem.

Table 6. The Elements of Treatment Recommendation

Element	Supporting Narrative in Kompas.com News	Supporting Narrative in CNNIndonesia.com News
Treatment Recommendation	<i>"Seeing the destruction, police officers on duty reminded the protesters not to be provoked and to maintain order."</i> <i>"The police repeatedly warned the crowd not to light firecrackers. On the other hand, the police also appealed to the crowd not to be provoked by the actions of the police on the ground."</i>	<i>"Meanwhile, the Jakarta Metropolitan Police urged the public not to hold demonstrations around the State Palace during the inauguration of regional heads, which was also held today."</i> <i>"The police urged the crowd not to throw Molotov cocktails and instructed security personnel to refrain from responding to provocations."</i>

Note: In terms of treatment recommendations, both make similar recommendations.

Regarding treatment recommendations, both Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com published narratives in the form of appeals, as presented in Table 6. In terms of quantity and substance, both appealed to the demonstration participants. The table shows that participants were urged not to be provoked and to maintain order. These recommendations were given directly through concrete advice on maintaining security and avoiding chaos.

The police, as the authorized and responsible party for maintaining the situation, play an active role in issuing reminders. The police are also actively engaged in prevention and control measures. This narrative emphasizes self-control and order as solutions to prevent the escalation of conflict and violence. The narratives of both media outlets are normative.

Discussion

The defining element in Robert N. Entman's framing analysis is the media's role in defining a problem. In the define problem element, an identical event can be interpreted in different ways (Widyaya & Setiawan, 2023). In this case, Kompas.com reported the #IndonesiaGelap action by focusing on the main issue: presenting the demonstrators' demands. This narrative is the most frequently raised narrative and carries a list of five demands, including the revocation of Presidential Instruction No. 1/2025 and the

evaluation of the MBG program. This narrative explicitly states what is at stake for the participants in the action to determine what is at stake in the news. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia focuses only on conveying what happened (Arifin et al., 2020), not why it happened. CNN Indonesia gives readers an overview of the problem before going into details of other events. CNN Indonesia explicitly does not mention a specific party or policy as the cause of the problem.

In defining the problem in Kompas.com, the narrative, in addition to focusing on the substance of the problem, also contains demands. This has a strategic role in shaping public perception of the action. By presenting the demands in an explicit and structured manner, Kompas.com facilitates the audience's understanding that the action is not just a crowd or a directionless protest, but a focused response to government policies considered problematic. This presentation emphasizes the urgency of the issue and creates the perception that the demands are based on solid arguments and clear goals. This kind of framing approach can influence audiences to view action as a public-interest-oriented and relevant movement for attention. Thus, Kompas.com's construction of defining the problem not only explains the core of the problem, but also establishes a context that places the action within the framework of a broader national interest.

Meanwhile, the narrative defines the problem on CNN Indonesia, as well as Kompas.com, puts the list of demands as the main focus, but frames the action as a series of statements of attitude towards policy, without expanding the discussion beyond information from the masses. By explicitly highlighting the details of the claim, readers of CNN Indonesia articles are directed to recognize the scope of the problem without considering additional background or analysis. This approach strengthens the framework for defining a problem by focusing on its occurrence, rather than on its cause or how it arose. The define problem element discusses the visible event or issue and the main problem. The definition problem element frames what the problem is without further explanation of the reason or cause. Compared to Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia's narrative creates a different framing. Media that associate the demands with the policy background encourage readers to see the cause-and-effect relationship, while CNN Indonesia focuses on the list of issues raised by the protesters. This method strengthens the definition problem framework by describing action as a collection of attitudes towards policy, without analyzing the policy's causes or impacts. So the critical side of CNN Indonesia's narrative tends to be minimal compared to Kompas.com's narrative.

The public will better understand the issues when reading Kompas.com because the issues that arise are not only about policy but also about its impact on the wider community. This is because framing involves highlighting specific elements of an issue defined by each media outlet (Oo et al., 2024). Therefore, the public's perception tends to differ when reading narratives from Kompas.com, which is more critical, and CNN Indonesia, which is neutral. Through these narratives, the public can be more critical of the narratives presented by Kompas.com but will tend to be neutral towards the narratives presented by CNN Indonesia.

The second element in Robert N. Entman's framing model is Diagnose Causes. Diagnose Causes is used to identify the mastermind or main actor of an event. The narrative carried out by Kompas.com not only shows the existence of a problem in an event, but also mentions who or what triggers it. The media displayed a view from the protesters that government policies were considered unsettling and detrimental to the community, so they protested. This mass protest is directly linked to a response to government policies that are considered problematic. In this narrative, the media conveyed that the protesters considered

the government as the source of the problem. The unsettling narrative can be seen from the Kompas.com news, as stated in the table of research results. Kompas.com not only narrates policy issues, but policies that have an unsettling impact.

While the diagnosis of the causes was carried out by CNN Indonesia, the narrative that emerged was more general, namely, related to government policies. However, it does not have a specific unsettling impact. Only CNN Indonesia narrated in more detail what policies caused the protests. CNN Indonesia can deliberately avoid giving rise to 'unsettling' narratives as Kompas.com does, so it still looks objective and factual, not emotional. CNN Indonesia seems to focus only on surfaces that only explain the what and why in general. This strategy reflects editorial efforts to maintain an objective image, especially when covering topics involving political actors not personally in leadership but in governance as a whole. Thus, CNN Indonesia can deliberately frame the general definition of problems and diagnose causes so that they do not focus on one political issue that leads to one person's leadership, but the entire policy. This is done so that the reader can freely conclude who is the cause of the problem.

Diagnosing causes includes the identification and analysis of the factors that trigger the occurrence of a problem (Ariyanto, 2024). This element arises through the construction of causal language or blame-fault quotes (Powell et al., 2019). It helps identify the factors behind an event. Diagnose causes can be formed implicitly through language framing, not merely a blatant statement that a party is the mastermind of the problem. This element plays a crucial role because it allows the reader to relate events to specific actors or policies, thus forming a public understanding of the party responsible. Thus, diagnosing causes not only identifies what the problem is but also why the problem occurs and who is considered the trigger. Diagnose cause puts who should be responsible. In this position, the narrative of diagnosing causes can encourage further strengthening of action or weaken action (Oo et al., 2024). Kompas.com seems to be framed with the journalistic element of Bill Kovach, about partiality to the audience (Tagle et al., 2022). Kompas.com position seems clearly to be in the ranks of the people. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia takes a neutral position because it only focuses on policy narratives.

The third element in Robert N. Entman's framing model is making moral judgments. This element is used to provide moral justification for arguments in defining the problem that has been arranged. It goes hand in hand with framing of blame when the media places responsibility on a particular actor. This element arises when the media explicitly states whether an action or policy is considered right, wrong, good, or bad, thus influencing the way the public views the actors and events reported. In a number of news reports, the media often conveys this moral judgment through the use of diction such as *irresponsible*, *violating rights*, *crime*, and so on that explicitly judge certain actions or policies as wrong or unethical (Durham et al., 2024).

Kompas.com narrates a lot of moral judgments that explicitly state the truth or error of an attitude. Such as when quoting the narrative through #KrisisIklimKrisisDemokrasi (#ClimateCrisisDemocracyCrisis) or #KabinetGemoyBerulah (#GemoyCabinetTroublemakers). This narrative shows that Kompas.com seeks to emphasize and agree with the masses that there have been mistakes in democracy in Indonesia, including in the management of the government under the leadership of Prabowo Subanto through the #KabinetGemoyBerulah narrative. Although this is an attitude of the protesters, Kompas.com has the choice to raise or not to raise the narrative. Even Kompas.com has narrated that the current government policy is unsettling and

unacceptable to the public. If it is not accepted by the public, it is morally considered a mistake.

In this context, Kompas.com positions itself as a watchdog, a media outlet that monitors government policy. This is one of the functions of the media trichotomy. A free press is essential for educating citizens and holding governments accountable (Flavin & Montgomery, 2020). Kompas is fulfilling this function, not only by exercising control but also by educating citizens and instilling democratic values (Bello et al., 2025). The act of making moral judgments determines whether an action or party is appropriate, wrong, dangerous, or valuable.

Making moral judgments not only directs cognitive opinions but also triggers emotional reactions such as anger and empathy, which reinforce the reader's moral judgment. In other words, this element helps the media to form a framework of interpretation that not only guides readers to understand the facts but also gives a certain feeling to the article in question. The media not only describes events but also evokes emotional responses such as sympathy, anger, or pride, thereby implicitly shaping moral judgments in readers' perceptions.

Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia tends to report on micro issues at the location of protesters, such as provocation. Therefore, the focus of interpretation should be only on events that lead to protesters' behavior, not on government policies. Although Kompas.com does that too, it highlights more macro issues. CNN does not include elements of moral judgment against the government, so it seems to maintain a neutral attitude and avoid the impression of siding with certain parties. This moral judgment can often be interpreted as support or attack on certain parties, which risks affecting the media's image independence. This approach allows CNN Indonesia to convey verified facts, so that readers can form their own perceptions without the influence of emotional narratives.

The two media make different narratives about making moral judgments. Kompas.com position itself as government control as well as moral control over protesters so as to carry out the function of media trichotomy. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia is more micro and only focuses on making moral judgments of protesters. In the context of mass demonstrations, moral judgment is essential. The media's portrayal of the motives and actions of the demonstrators can significantly influence public opinion (Yan, 2020).

The fourth element in Robert N. Entman's framing model is treatment recommendation. This element is used by journalists in providing a solution to a certain problem. Treatment recommendations function to direct public action by proposing certain solutions. It usually contains directions on how the problem should be handled, including who should take action and how (Mendelsohn et al., 2024). The treatment recommendation element serves to direct public attention to solutions that are considered effective by the media or authorities, thereby helping to form perceptions of the most appropriate steps to solve the problem. This element highlights the actors responsible for dealing with the problem, illustrating the dynamics of power in the news

Kompas.com in this element gives rise to a narrative by conveying an appeal from the police so that the participants of the action are not provoked and maintain order. Kompas.com distributes messages that recommend concrete steps in dealing with conflicts. This shows that Kompas.com not only reports events but also facilitates the delivery of solutions or anticipatory actions from the authorities, thus forming a narrative framework that leads to the best way to deal with the problem and maintain mutual security and order. Despite the solutions from the apparatus presented, this framing tends to strengthen the

dominant position of the authorities and potentially ignore the perspectives of the protesters.

On the other hand, Kompas.com reports on the demonstrators' demands, focusing on the five key points made to the government. In this way, the reader is made to understand that the action is not just a crowd of aimless masses, but a clear movement with a strong reason. Kompas.com also does not give a good or bad assessment of this action, so the news looks neutral and objective. Readers are given the opportunity to judge the situation for themselves without being influenced by media opinion.

CNN Indonesia did something similar to what was done by Kompas.com: the appeal of the Metro Jaya Police not to hold demonstrations and not to be provoked. This appeal directs the reader's perception to the steps considered appropriate. By highlighting the direction of the authorities, CNN Indonesia shapes public expectations and focuses attention on the solutions offered, narrowing the reader's interpretation space towards maintaining order and preventing conflicts.

The treatment recommendation element presents concrete solutions and steps that arise when the text not only mentions the problem but also offers what to do ([Mendelsohn et al., 2024](#)). The language that marks the elements of treatment recommendation is usually imperative and advisory, such as *shall*, *should*, *prohibit*, and other sentences that give operational direction ([Koon et al., 2016](#)). Treatment recommendations have an important role because they not only frame the problem, but also direct the audience towards a specific solution the message maker wants. Thus, framing becomes a strategic tool to influence perception and behavior.

In this way, the media simply portrays events as a collection of demands without analyzing the causes or determining who is responsible for the situation. This kind of framing allows the reader to get an overview of the issue being protested, but does not gain a deep understanding of the root of the problem or the impact of the policy at issue. This may be intended to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions, but it also risks making the protests appear to be just a series of demands without a broader context.

After discussing Robert N. Entman's framing elements, what is the position of these two media outlets in the context of the #IndonesiaGelap incident? The phenomenon reflects public dissatisfaction with government policies and the deterioration of democracy, and also gives rise to the dynamics of widely covered mass movements. The media has a significant role in how the movement conveys information while forming meanings that affect public perception. In framing theory, the movement presents issues that affect public perception. Meanwhile, from an agenda-setting perspective, the media influences which issues the public considers important by choosing which news to cover and how to cover it. Based on an analysis conducted using four framing elements from Robert N. Entman, Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com have almost similar narratives but with significant differences in meaning. Although the pressure point is the same on the issue of demonstrations, Kompas.com tends to have the character of a controlling media, carrying out the function of media tricotomy. Meanwhile, CNNIndonesia positions itself as a media that is neutral, impartial, and tends to only convey facts ([Jakaza et al., 2024](#)).

At first glance, the two media narrate the same issue but place substantially different emphases. Kompas.com is a local Indonesian media outlet, while CNNIndonesia, although it uses the term 'Indonesia', is part of an international network. It could be that the two have different perspectives on the demonstration's context. As [Venger \(2016\)](#) suggested, the Iranian and US media tend to differ when it comes to issues about the Green Movement. From the perspective of political economy, the media does not position itself as a neutral

institution but has interests, either economic or political. So what is presented by the media has a target audience in mind. In the context of the demonstration, framing can affect the political dynamics and legitimacy of the movement (Giraldez, 2024).

Demonstrations are always associated with sociopolitical issues, as was the case with the #IndonesiaGelap movement, which focused on government policy. This political issue can be analyzed using Robert R. Entman's framing theory, as framing helps researchers understand the media's position. The way the media frames mass actions through its narrative has a significant impact on the legitimacy of the movement and the response to it, as well as the response to policy continuity (Latypova, 2025; Mwangi, 2018). This is inseparable from the way the media frames issues, the selection and presentation of specific aspects related to strategic political issues, which play an important role in shaping public opinion and ultimately influencing changes in government policy (Fairclough & Mădroane, 2020; Fredheim, 2021). Conversely, media restrictions can limit the depth and objectivity of coverage, which affects public opinion and policy outcomes (Wahab & Abdullah, 2025).

The framing of issues itself, as done by Kompas.com or CNNIndonesia, is a form of media political agenda (Mwangi, 2018). This influences public response (Schätz & Kirchhoff, 2024) so that demonstrations gain public legitimacy (Lim et al., 2025). In crucial situations such as the #IndonesiaGelap incident, balanced reporting is very important but challenging due to the diversity and complexity of perspectives (Noorzai & Hale, 2021). The concept of balance is subjective and varies across media outlets, as shown by research on Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com. However, narratives that are relevant and responsible to the audience can garner public support for the media, thereby gaining public recognition and trust in the media while fulfilling the media's own mission (Medina & Kimber, 2025).

Rejecting passive neutrality, genuine media independence prioritizes public truth, a complex struggle driven by political relations (Danso, 2025). In a political context, media independence becomes complex because it is influenced by the relationship and interests between the media, the public, and those in power (Karppinen & Moe, 2016). In the Indonesian context, media independence is influenced by many factors, not only economics and politics but also history. Specifically, Sen and Hill (2007) in Putra et al. (2025) argue that the New Order enforced centralized propaganda through absolute control over TVRI and print media. Then, the Press Law of 1999 was enacted after the reform (Syafriadi & Santri, 2025), which guarantees press freedom. However, political pressure, especially in Indonesia, does not guarantee media independence (Hendriana et al., 2025). As is well known, media owners in Indonesia also work as politicians. The involvement of media owners further complicates media independence (Anggoro & Amin, 2018).

Based on several studies, Kompas.com's position in a number of news reports shows a neutral and balanced attitude, such as in its coverage of the political conflict in Egypt (Nuruddin et al., 2020). Its coverage of the relocation of the capital city of Nusantara also shows a neutral stance. However, Kompas.com reported critically when reporting on COVID-19 cases in Indonesia (Prayudi et al., 2021). Meanwhile, CNNIndonesia.com tended to be critical when reporting on the capital city of Nusantara, positioning itself as a watchdog (Dhamayanti et al., 2024). In another study, CNNIndonesia was positioned as a critical media outlet (Masduki & d'Haenens, 2022). In its coverage of the #IndonesiaGelap protests, Kompas.com tended to be more critical but remained balanced, while CNNIndonesia.com tended to be neutral.

Based on the results and discussion, the researchers found that this study has shortcomings, as it only focuses on a single issue, #IndonesiaGelap. The study would be

more comprehensive if it compared the coverage of socio-political issues in previous incidents. It would provide a broader view regarding the position of these two trusted media outlets on issues involving government policy. The other limitation is that this study does not discuss media ideology, which often serves as a benchmark for how the media behaves and positions itself on every issue.

Conclusion

This study shows that the narratives of Kompas.com and CNNIndonesia.com on #IndonesiaGelap are nearly identical but with different emphases. In narrating the problem, Kompas.com focuses not only on the substance of the issue but also includes demands. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia's narrative places the list of demands as the main focus, framing the action as a series of policy statements without expanding the discussion. In the diagnose cause element, Kompas.com narrates more specifically and delves into the substantial issue, namely the disturbing policy. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia tends to narrate superficially, namely the policy itself. In the make moral judgment element, Kompas.com creates a narrative that positions the media as a control for both the public and the government, creating a macro narrative about the behavior of the protesters and the government, while CNN Indonesia focuses on a more micro issue, namely the protesters themselves. This makes Kompas.com more ideal than CNN Indonesia, so it is natural that trust in Kompas.com is higher than in CNN Indonesia. The final element concerns the treatment recommendation, where both Kompas.com and CNN Indonesia have relatively similar narratives. In this final element, both trusted media outlets in Indonesia's digital public sphere consistently present the same narrative: solutions related to the protesters' activities. Based on an overall analysis of these framing elements, Kompas.com's reporting tends to be critical but balanced, while CNNIndonesia.com tends to be neutral. This study does not discuss broad sociopolitical issues or the ideologies of the two media outlets, so it does not explain their positions. However, based on the study using Robert N. Entman's framing model, researchers and readers can understand that, in the context of #IndonesiaGelap, Kompas.com tends to be more critical than CNNIndonesia.com, which tends to be neutral.

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

We declare that there is no conflict of interest in any financial, personal, or other relationship with any individual or organization related to the material discussed in the manuscript. This research was conducted independently as part of an academic interest in media studies.

Generative AI Statement

The authors used Perflexity and Scopus AI to improve language and readability during manuscript preparation. All outputs were reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

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