

Digital Political Delegitimization in Indonesia: Framing the “Antek Asing” Narrative in Hybrid Media

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Abstract

This study examines how the antek asing (“foreign lackey”) narrative operates as a digital political delegitimization system in contemporary Indonesian political communication, focusing on discourse surrounding Prabowo Subianto. Using an integrated mixed-method design, the study combines framing analysis, social network analysis, and knowledge graph retrieval-augmented generation to analyze a multi-source corpus of 340 YouTube videos from 131 channels, 609 political discussion transcript segments, and seven web-based sources. The analysis examines narrative clusters, actor–claim relations, framing competition, and diffusion structures across Indonesia’s hybrid media ecosystem. The findings show that the antek asing discourse functions not as isolated rhetoric, but as a structured delegitimization repertoire organized through accusation escalation, symbolic enemy construction, and distributed amplification. Five framing types emerged: pro-narrative, critical, analytical, clarification, and neutral amplification. Neutral amplification dominated circulation volume, while analytical and clarification-oriented frames showed high engagement efficiency. The narrative also escalated from “foreign lackey” labeling toward betrayal frames, producing fragmented but interconnected communities of accusation and critique. The study contributes to debates on digital populism, information integrity, and political delegitimization by showing how foreign-threat rhetoric becomes a relational and platform-mediated system of contested legitimacy.

Keywords: *Digital political communication; political delegitimization; foreign-threat rhetoric; hybrid media; Indonesian politics.*

INTRODUCTION

Populist political communication often relies on enemy construction, symbolic othering, and delegitimizing narratives to consolidate authority, mobilize support, and justify exceptional political action. Across democratic and hybrid regimes, accusations that portray critics as foreign agents, traitors, or anti-state actors function not only as rhetorical attacks but also as instruments for shaping political legitimacy (M. A. Sánchez, 2013; Karyotakis, 2024). In digital environments, these accusations become more powerful because hybrid media systems connect political messaging, algorithmic visibility, audiovisual emotion, and networked publics (Hameleers, 2024; Puertas-Graell & Suau-Martínez, 2025; Suau Martínez & Juárez Miro, 2026).

Scholarship on delegitimization and information disorder further shows that accusations involving “foreign agents” or “anti-state actors” increasingly circulate through contested media ecologies rather than through elite rhetoric alone. Hostile media criticism, “parallel truths,” and anti-foreign accusations can weaken shared reality while recasting dissent as a threat to national order (Buttgereit et al., 2026; Domínguez-García et al., 2025; Hameleers & Yekta, 2025). YouTube and similar platforms therefore operate as arenas where political narratives are amplified, contested, and normalized through recommendation systems and networked visibility (Pira, 2023). These dynamics are also linked to broader concerns about information integrity, polarization, and fragmented digital sub-realities (da Costa Maia Lopes, 2025; Vatreš, 2025).

In Indonesia, the discourse surrounding “antek asing”—literally “foreign stooge”—offers an important case for examining foreign-threat rhetoric in contemporary political communication. Although anti-foreign rhetoric has deep roots in Indonesian political culture, its digital circulation around Prabowo Subianto remains underexamined. Existing discussions often treat the phrase as a slogan or populist symbol, leaving underexplored how it connects accusations, actors, media sources, and competing frames within a hybrid media ecosystem. This gap is important because the narrative operates simultaneously as nationalist mobilization, political delegitimization, and framing contestation among supporters, critics, and neutral amplifiers.

Addressing this problem requires an approach that moves beyond single-method analysis. Qualitative framing analysis can explain how political meaning is constructed, but it does not fully capture actor connectivity or diffusion structures. Social network analysis can map co-occurrence patterns and relational prominence, but it may overlook the semantic content of accusations. Computational discourse methods can identify narrative clusters, but they still require interpretive grounding. Therefore, recent mixed-method work in computational political communication supports the integration of discourse analysis, network methods, and machine-assisted semantic clustering to trace narrative dynamics across platforms (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Paziuk et al., 2025; Rohlinger et al., 2020).

This study responds to that need by integrating framing analysis, social network analysis, and knowledge graph retrieval-augmented generation to examine the “antek asing” discourse as a connected digital delegitimization system. Framing theory provides the basis for distinguishing supportive, critical, analytical, neutral, and clarification-oriented constructions of contested political narratives (Buttgereit et al., 2026; Entman, 1993; Entman & Usher, 2018; Lischka, 2021). Social network analysis maps actor, organization, and source relations within the discourse (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Domínguez-García et al., 2025). while knowledge graph approaches represent political discourse through actor–claim–relation structures and graph-grounded sensemaking (Giorgis et al., 2024).

The study therefore aims to analyze how the “antek asing” narrative is structured, circulated, and framed across Indonesia’s hybrid media ecosystem. It asks how core accusations are organized, how political actors and organizations become connected within the discourse, how Prabowo Subianto is framed across different sources, and how the narrative shapes political accusation, media framing, and public perception. The study contributes to research on digital populism and political delegitimization in Indonesia and to mixed interpretive-computational approaches for studying contested political narratives.

Scientific work on knowledge graphs, narrative extraction, and graph-grounded reasoning provides a methodological basis for analyzing contested political narratives as relational systems rather than fragmented statements. Studies on causal graph extraction, event-centric narrative graphs, and LLM-enhanced knowledge graph construction show that graph-based methods can capture evolving storylines, actor roles, and semantic dependencies across complex discourse environments (Tang et al., 2024; Yan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). GraphRAG approaches are particularly relevant because they support modularity, community partitioning, and query-focused sensemaking over large corpora (Giorgis et al., 2024). Applied to political communication, these methods can connect micro-level accusations, meso-level actor networks, and macro-level framing patterns. However, their use in studies of digital populist narratives remains limited, especially in non-Western, multilingual, and platform-diverse contexts.

Existing studies lack integration of diverse data sources and interpretive framing with graph-based reasoning in analyzing accusation patterns and diffusion structures (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Giorgis et al., 2024; Hameleers & Yekta, 2025). The “antek asing” narrative in Indonesian political discourse is a case study for understanding political delegitimization and testing integrated interpretive-computational analysis in a non-Western context.

Against this background, this study analyzes the digital political framing of the “antek asing” narrative surrounding Prabowo Subianto through an integrated framework combining framing analysis, social network analysis, and knowledge graph RAG-based sensemaking. Substantively, it conceptualizes “antek asing” not as isolated political rhetoric, but as a digital delegitimization system shaped by narratives, actor networks, source authority, and competing frames. Methodologically, it offers a cross-platform design that links discourse interpretation with relational and graph-grounded computational modeling. The study addresses four questions: how core narratives and accusations are organized; how actors and organizations are framed; how Prabowo’s political leadership is constructed across sources; and how the narrative shapes media framing and public perception.

RESEARCH METHODS

Multi-Source Digital Political Discourse Design

This study employed a mixed-method digital political discourse design integrating platform content analysis, transcript-based discourse analysis, targeted web-source collection, social network analysis, and knowledge graph retrieval-augmented generation (KG-RAG). The design was used to examine how the “antek asing” narrative surrounding Prabowo Subianto was structured, circulated, and contested within Indonesia’s hybrid media ecosystem. This approach follows computational political communication research that emphasizes multi-source triangulation, replication-oriented procedures, and interpretive-computational integration (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Domínguez-García et al., 2025; Paziuk et al., 2025; Rohlinger et al., 2020). Political narratives are treated here as relational formations shaped by interactions among actors, platforms, sources, and discursive frames ((da Costa Maia Lopes, 2025; Giorgis et al., 2024).

The empirical corpus was constructed from four data streams. The first consisted of a YouTube dataset archived as `youtube.csv`, containing 340 videos from 131 channels. Videos were retrieved using keyword combinations centered on “antek asing,” “Prabowo,” “pengkhianat bangsa,” “LSM asing,” “agen asing,” “pendanaan asing,” and related accusation narratives. The dataset included video titles, descriptions, channel identities, view counts, co-occurring keywords, and actor references. YouTube was selected because it functions as a major infrastructure for political information circulation, audiovisual persuasion, and algorithmic visibility in Indonesia’s hybrid media environment (Hameleers, 2024; Pira, 2023).

The second data stream consisted of 609 transcript segments from the Bocor Alus political discussion corpus on YouTube. This corpus enabled closer interpretation of accusation mechanisms, contextual meanings, and speaker positioning that could not be captured through metadata alone. Transcript segments were retained when they referred directly or indirectly to “antek asing,” Prabowo Subianto, foreign influence, NGOs/LSM, political criticism, student activism, or related accusation structures. Transcript-level analysis strengthened semantic validity by allowing the study to examine how political accusations were articulated within mediated conversational contexts (Buttgereit et al., 2026; Hameleers & Yekta, 2025).

The third data stream comprised seven web-based sources, including journalistic, institutional, and commentary materials, relevant to the “antek asing” narrative. The fourth data layer used relational data from YouTube, transcripts, and web corpora to analyze political narratives (Mandravickaitė & Krilavičius, 2026).

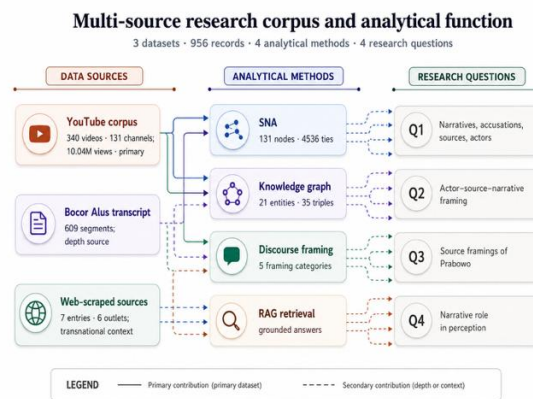


Figure 1. Multi-source research corpus and analytical function.

Sampling for the study was purposive and theoretically informed, focusing on items related to the “antek asing” narrative, Prabowo Subianto, or foreign-influence narratives. Duplicate entries were removed, and reposted videos were retained only if they contributed to narrative circulation and platform amplification. This sampling strategy was used to capture discursive variation rather than to claim statistical representativeness.

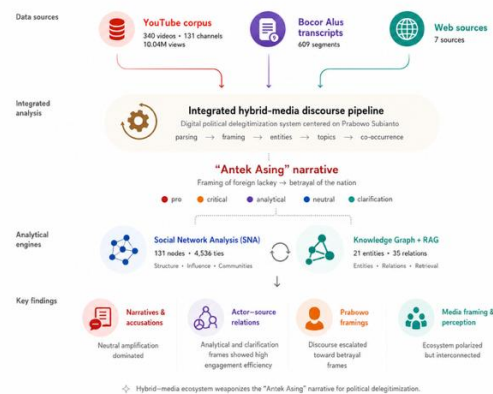


Figure 2. Integrated methodological pipeline combining platform data, transcripts, web-source collection, SNA, and KG-RAG.

Research Instruments and Coding Protocol

The study used five instruments for systematic analysis of YouTube videos, including metadata extraction, transcript coding, and framing coding protocols (Entman, 1993; Entman & Usher, 2018; Lischka, 2021). A network extraction matrix identified nodes, edges, co-occurrences, actor links, and relational intensity, following social network approaches in political communication research (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Rohlinger et al., 2020). An actor-relation-claim template was used to construct knowledge graph triples for KG-RAG analysis (Giorgis et al., 2024; Mandravickaitė & Krilavičius, 2026). Together, these instruments clarified what was extracted, how it was coded, and how textual evidence was converted into relational data.

Five framing categories were defined: pro-narrative, critical, analytical, neutral amplification, and clarification. Each category represented a different approach to the “antek asing” narrative. Each category was accompanied by coding indicators, inclusion rules, and examples to reduce overlap among frames.

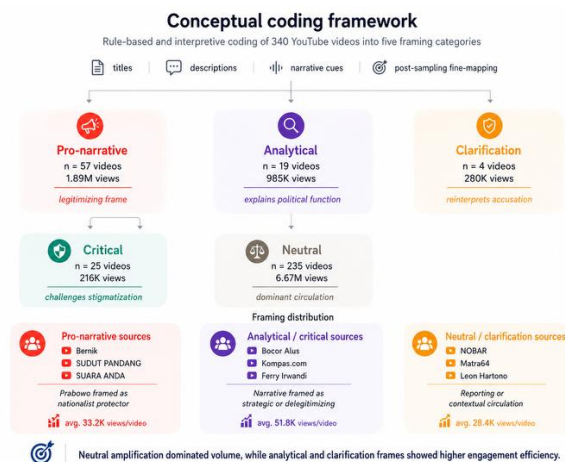


Figure 3. Conceptual coding architecture for framing categories and actor–source relations.

Deductive and inductive procedures identified five frame categories and recurring narrative motifs from video materials (Buttgereit et al., 2026; Hamleers & Yekta, 2025). This procedure allowed the study to preserve theoretical consistency while remaining sensitive to Indonesian political vocabulary and context-specific accusation patterns. Validity was strengthened through expert review, source triangulation, and iterative checking (Mandravickaitė & Krilavičius, 2026; Vatreš, 2025; Yan et al., 2024).

Analytical Procedures: Framing Analysis, Social Network Analysis, and KG-RAG

Framing and social network analyses were used to examine how Prabowo Subianto was framed and how accusations were constructed. The analyses compared individual frames and broader accusation patterns, emphasizing relational density and community clustering (Ong & Tapsell, 2022). Network analysis was used to interpretively connect actor centrality with framing competition in relational prominence and legitimacy struggles. Knowledge graph construction synthesized actor-claim relations into knowledge triples, forming a graph of actors, accusations, sources, and relations (Giorgis et al., 2024). This verification step ensured that computational synthesis remained grounded in the original corpus.

Sequential triangulation integrated framing analysis, social network analysis, and KG-RAG to analyze accusation patterns, actor networks, and framing dynamics. Limitations were addressed through source triangulation, expert validation, manual checking, and human-in-the-loop interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Core Narratives, Accusations, Sources, and Political Actors

The results show that the “antek asing” discourse operated not as a single accusation, but as a layered delegitimization narrative connecting accusation clusters, political actors, and media sources. Across the YouTube corpus of 340 videos from 131 channels, the phrase “antek asing” emerged as the dominant discursive hub. It appeared in 214 videos, while Prabowo Subianto appeared explicitly in 83 videos and co-occurred with the “antek asing” label in 57 videos. These patterns indicate that the phrase functioned as a meta-frame linking betrayal, foreign penetration, civil society suspicion, and elite conspiracy. This finding is consistent with scholarship showing that political accusation narratives often transform criticism into security-oriented friend–enemy discourse (Hameleers & Yekta, 2023; Karyotakis, 2023; J. L. M. Sánchez et al., 2022).

Knowledge graph extraction identified five major narrative clusters: “antek asing” as the central hub, “pengkhianat bangsa” as an escalatory accusation frame, NGO/LSM as a foreign-agent motif, foreign funding as a threat narrative, and “common enemy” construction as a loyalty-building device. The most visible escalation occurred when the accusation shifted from foreign-stooge labeling to explicit betrayal framing. Although the “pengkhianat bangsa” frame appeared in only 17 videos, it generated 2.42 million cumulative views, making it the highest-engagement accusation cluster in average view terms. This suggests that escalatory and emotionally charged narratives may gain disproportionate visibility in hybrid media environments (Hameleers, 2024; Suau Martínez & Juarez Miro, 2026).

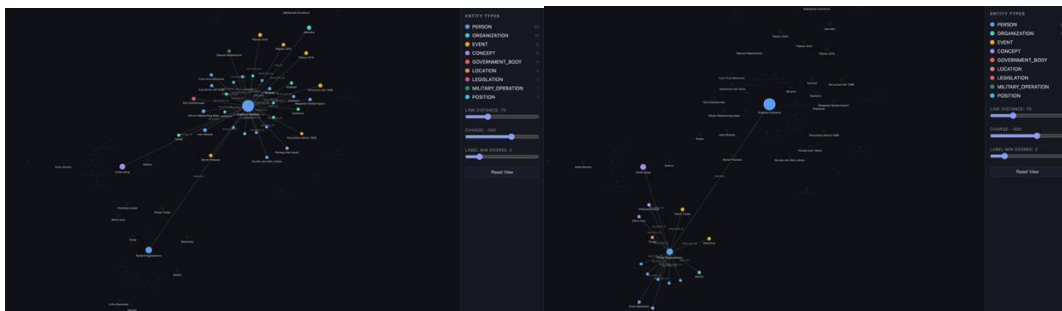


Figure 4. Knowledge graph of major accusation clusters and actor relations in the antek asing discourse.

Accusation patterns in the Bocor Alus transcripts linked foreign education and funding to foreign allegiance, framed NGOs as external agents, labeled critics as “traitors,” and extended suspicion to student movements. These patterns suggest delegitimizing discourse can blur the line between political disagreement and anti-state positioning. (Buttgereit et al., 2026). Relational analysis reveals Prabowo as the dominant source node in accusations, with Ray Rangkuti, Feri Amsari, BEM UI, and Rocky Gerung

as counter-nodes. This contested discursive field shows how delegitimizing discourse can amplify a political actor's centrality. The source ecology was heterogeneous, with YouTube as the main distribution infrastructure and Bocor Alus/Tempo transcripts providing richer interpretive evidence. Supplementary sources added genealogical and reflexive interpretations, framing the discourse as manipulative or polarizing (da Costa Maia Lopes, 2025; Vatreš, 2025).



Figure 5. Narrative clusters, accusation types, and central political actors identified through KG-RAG.

Overall, the findings indicate that the “antek asing” discourse functions as a distributed system of political delegitimization. It links accusation escalation, symbolic enemy construction, actor centrality, and platform-based amplification within Indonesia’s hybrid media ecosystem.

Actors, Organizations, Sources, and Framing Types

Framing analysis identified five recurrent framing types: pro-narrative, analytical, critical, clarification, and neutral amplification. These frames differed in volume, engagement, and actor composition. Neutral amplification dominated the dataset, comprising 235 videos or 69% of the YouTube corpus and generating 6.67 million views. Although these videos did not express a clear ideological position, they expanded the visibility of the narrative by circulating the term and related accusations. This indicates that apparent neutrality can still function as amplification infrastructure, shaping agenda salience and public perception without explicit persuasion (Domínguez et al., 2022).

Pro-narrative framing, appearing in 57 videos with 1.89 million views, portrayed Prabowo as a nationalist protector against foreign threats, with NGOs and critics depicted as potential threats to national integrity. This pattern reflects what Hameleers & Yekta, (2023) describe as legitimizing parallel truths, in which accusation narratives construct alternative moral orders rather than merely contesting facts.

Analytical framing appeared in a smaller number of videos, but generated strong engagement. Although it comprised only 19 videos, it recorded the highest average engagement, with more than

51,000 views per video. Analytical frames did not simply reject the narrative; they explained its political mechanics. Pandji Pragiwaksono’s interpretation of “antek asing” as a way of “creating a common enemy” illustrates this mode. The high engagement of analytical content suggests public demand for interpretive mediation within polarized discourse environments.

Critical framing, appearing in 25 videos, countered Prabowo’s rhetoric by highlighting contradictions and challenging anti-foreign rhetoric. This counter-framing suggests competing legitimacy performances (Buttgereit et al., 2024; Lischka, 2021). Clarification framing, appearing in four videos, reinterpreted the narrative by distinguishing criticism of foreign dependency from rejection of foreign cooperation. Despite its numerical marginality, it demonstrated high view efficiency, indicating audience interest in reconciliatory interpretations

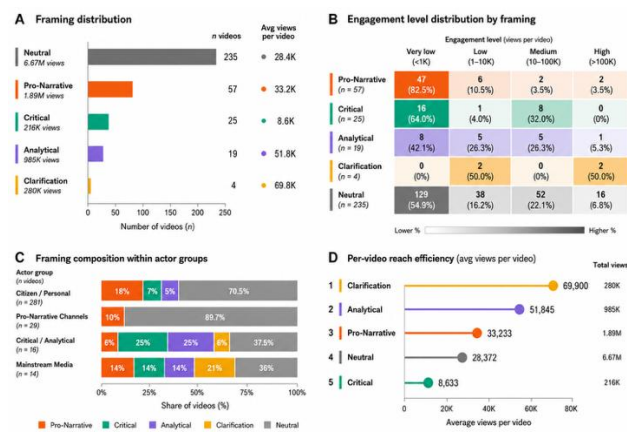


Figure 6. Distribution of five framing types across actor groups and engagement levels.

Figure 6. Distribution of five framing types across actor groups and engagement levels. Panel A shows that Pro-Narrative content is heavily concentrated in the Very-Low engagement band (47/57 = 82.5%), while Critical content is also dominated by low-reach videos. Panel B reveals that Critical/Analytical channels are the only group where critical and analytical framings together exceed 50% of output, contrasted with Citizen/Personal channels where 70.5% of output is Neutral. Panel C confirms the efficiency paradox: Clarification (69.9K avg/video) and Analytical (51.8K avg/video) outperform Pro-Narrative (33.2K avg/video) per-video, despite far smaller volumes.

Legitimacy struggles involved NGOs, LSMs, and institutions like BEM UI, with Greenpeace facing foreign-agent accusations. Gerindra served as a symbolic legitimacy anchor, while Bocor Alus/Tempo and East Asia Forum questioned the narrative.

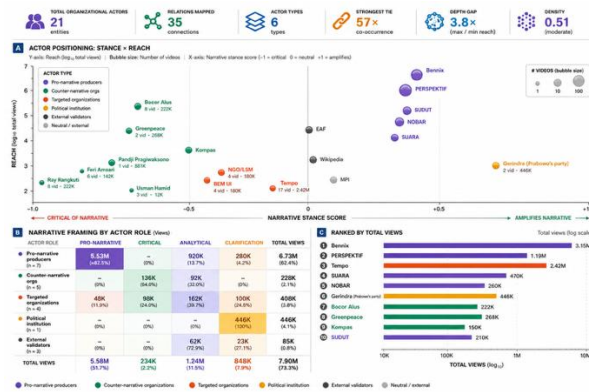


Figure 7. Organizational actors, narrative positioning, and associated framing orientations.

Framing contestation involved multiple legitimacy repertoires, including neutral amplification, pro-narrative framing, critical framing, analytical framing, and clarification framing. Neutral amplification and analytical mediation played significant roles.

How Sources Frame Prabowo in the “Antek Asing” Discourse

Data analysis reveals four dominant leadership frames for Prabowo, with the most prominent portraying him as an anti-foreign nationalist guardian, protecting national sovereignty (J. L. M. Sánchez et al., 2022). Prabowo was framed as politically complacent, allowing reckless rhetoric to circulate unchecked, rather than purely manipulative. This reframed the issue from moral accusation to structural critique of democratic accountability.

The third frame depicted Prabowo as a contradictory actor, highlighting inconsistencies between his anti-foreign rhetoric and alleged foreign connections. This contradiction intensified political contestation by generating competing claims about legitimacy and credibility (Hameleers & Yekta, 2023). The fourth frame depicted Prabowo as a strategic rhetorician using the “antek asing” narrative to consolidate political order. This interpretation, found in academic and interpretive sources, viewed the discourse as part of a broader populist repertoire

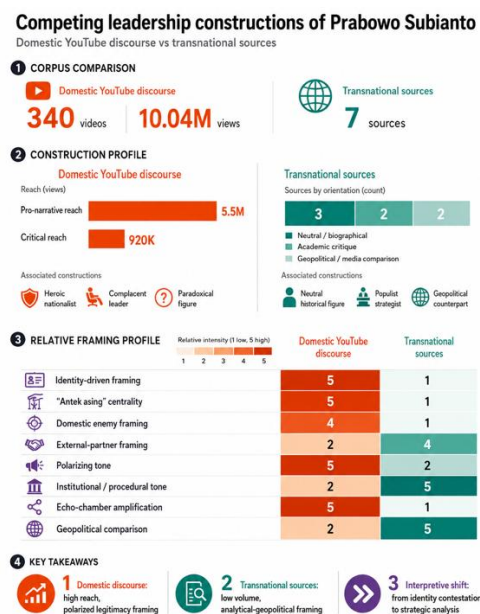


Figure 8. Competing leadership constructions of Prabowo across domestic and transnational.

A key finding concerns the difference between domestic and transnational source framing. Domestic platform narratives were more polarized, moving between heroic nationalism and contradiction critique. International and academic sources were more genealogical and analytical, treating the discourse as a case of populist threat rhetoric and information manipulation. This difference indicates not only variation in tone, but also variation in interpretive register: domestic sources tended to evaluate Prabowo’s political legitimacy, while international and academic sources more often examined the discourse as a communication strategy.

Cross-source comparison also shows that Prabowo was rarely framed in isolation. His image was consistently linked to civil society actors, critics, political parties, foreign referents, and media sources. This finding supports the methodological claim that leadership image in contentious digital discourse is co-constructed through actor networks, rather than produced solely through candidate-centered messaging.

Role of the Narrative in Political Accusation, Media Framing, and Public Perception

The “antek asing” narrative functioned as a boundary-making device, separating legitimate from suspect political participation and symbolically excluding critics, NGOs, student activists, and media actors (Karyotakis, 2023; Suau Martínez & Juárez Miro, 2026). Discursive chilling through suspicion, where accusations of foreign allegiance stifle political debate, narrows legitimate disagreement and weakens democratic contestation (Vatreš, 2025).

Neutral amplification of videos, through repeated circulation in nominally neutral channels, can normalize accusation frames and influence public perception through familiarity rather than explicit messaging (Pira, 2023). Social network patterns show clustered polarization, with accusation narratives circulating within tightly connected communities and counter-narratives forming smaller opposition clusters. This structure resembles networked disinformation ecologies. (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025).

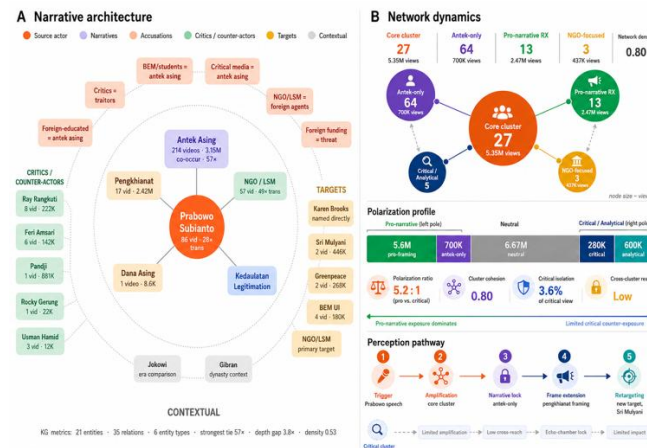


Figure 9. Network clustering and perception pathways associated with narrative diffusion and polarization.

The narrative simplified complex political criticism by framing it as foreign betrayal, reducing democratic disagreement to binary judgments of loyalty. This simplification influenced both supportive and critical responses, demonstrating the dominant influence of the “antek asing” frame. KG-RAG synthesis reveals that “antek asing” discourse is a digital delegitimization repertoire, extending beyond propaganda and disinformation. (da Costa Maia Lopes, 2025; Giorgis et al., 2024).

The “antek asing” narrative serves as an accusation system, framing contest, leadership arena, and perception-shaping mechanism, gaining political power through discourse, platform amplification, actor networks, and legitimacy claims.

Discussion

Theoretical Interpretation: The “Antek Asing” Narrative as a Digital Delegitimization System

The findings show that the “antek asing” narrative operates as a digitally mediated delegitimization system rather than an isolated political insult. Its force emerges from accusation, symbolic boundary-making, actor relations, and platform circulation. This extends studies of populist communication that identify enemy construction, friend–enemy distinction, and threat framing as mechanisms for defining legitimate and illegitimate political actors (Karyotakis, 2023; J. L. M. Sánchez et al., 2022). In this case, the accusation does not merely mark opponents as wrong; it places them outside the moral boundaries of national belonging. The shift from “foreign stooge” to “pengkhianat

bangsa,” reflected in Figure 4 and Figure 5, shows how delegitimization intensifies through semantic escalation.

The narrative’s circulation also supports hybrid media scholarship. Once introduced into the digital ecosystem, it moved through supportive channels, critical commentators, analytical intermediaries, and neutral amplifiers. This pattern confirms that platforms intensify political narratives through visibility, repetition, and recommendation-driven exposure (Hameleers, 2024; Pira, 2023). The dominance of neutral amplification in Figure 6 is important because circulation can normalize suspicion without explicit endorsement. Repeated exposure may make a stigmatizing frame familiar before audiences assess its evidence or democratic consequences.

This interpretation also complicates the view of delegitimization as a purely elite-driven or top-down process. Once introduced, the accusation circulated through supportive channels, neutral amplifiers, critical commentators, and interpretive intermediaries. This distributed circulation supports hybrid media scholarship showing that political narratives can gain autonomy beyond their originating actors through repetition, recommendation systems, and networked visibility (Hameleers, 2024; Pira, 2023). The dominance of neutral amplification is especially important because it shows that delegitimization can be sustained through circulation without explicit endorsement. In this sense, amplification itself becomes a political act, not merely a technical process of mediation.

The results also refine scholarship on “parallel truths” and contested legitimacy claims (Hameleers & Yekta, 2023). The “antek asing” discourse did not produce a simple opposition between true and false narratives. Instead, it generated multiple legitimacy regimes. Pro-narrative actors framed the label as nationalist defense, critical actors framed it as witch-hunt logic, and analytical actors framed it as strategic enemy construction. These competing frames created partially distinct political realities organized around different assumptions about loyalty, sovereignty, and dissent.

The methodological integration of framing analysis, social network analysis, and KG-RAG also has theoretical implications. Previous studies have often treated narrative content, network diffusion, and computational sensemaking as separate domains (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Giorgis et al., 2024). This study shows that their integration can reveal properties that single-method approaches may miss. For example, Prabowo’s centrality in criticism networks might appear as simple salience, but when interpreted through framing and graph relations, it shows how delegitimizing discourse can simultaneously contest and amplify the actor at its center. This supports a relational view of political narrative formation, where meaning emerges through actor–claim structures rather than isolated texts.

A further theoretical implication concerns narrative escalation. The movement from “antek asing” to “pengkhianat bangsa” suggests that delegitimization can intensify through semantic upgrading, where a political label becomes a moral accusation. This resonates with scholarship on

emotional amplification and polarizing rhetoric in conflict narratives (Suau Martínez & Juarez Miro, 2026). The Indonesian case shows that escalation can occur within nationalist labeling itself, strengthening the argument that populist threat frames should be understood as dynamic repertoires capable of intensifying symbolic exclusion.

Framing Competition and Contested Legitimacy

The coexistence of pro-narrative, critical, analytical, clarification-oriented, and neutral amplification frames shows that the discourse generated contested legitimacy, not a simple opposition between truth and falsehood. This refines the concept of “parallel truths,” which explains how actors construct competing legitimacy claims across established and alternative media spaces (Hameleers & Yekta, 2023). Pro-narrative actors framed the accusation as nationalist defense; critical actors interpreted it as stigmatization; analytical actors explained it as enemy construction; and clarification-oriented sources distinguished criticism of foreign dependency from rejection of international cooperation.

The same narrative therefore performed different functions across actors and sources. The pro-narrative frame strengthened in-group solidarity by positioning Prabowo as a nationalist guardian. The critical frame emphasized the democratic risk of labeling dissent as foreign allegiance. The analytical frame created interpretive distance, while neutral amplification expanded circulation without stabilizing meaning. As Figure 7 suggests, NGOs, student groups, advocacy organizations, and media institutions became embedded in these frames. Delegitimization was relational because it attached suspicion to individual critics and institutional categories associated with civil society and oppositional commentary.

Actor Networks, Platform Visibility, and Narrative Escalation

The integration of framing analysis, social network analysis, and knowledge graph retrieval clarifies how the narrative acquired force across the hybrid media ecosystem. Previous studies often examine discourse, diffusion, and computational sensemaking as separate domains (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Giorgis et al., 2024). This study shows that their integration can reveal dynamics that single-method approaches may overlook. Prabowo’s centrality in the network does not merely indicate visibility. Through actor–claim relations, it shows how supportive and critical narratives reproduced his position as the gravitational center of the discourse, contesting his legitimacy while amplifying his symbolic centrality.

The escalation from “antek asing” to “pengkhianat bangsa” demonstrates how digital narratives intensify through emotionally charged moral categorization. This aligns with research showing that affective and conflict-oriented frames increase the salience of political accusations in hybrid media ecosystems (Suau Martínez & Juarez Miro, 2026). The Indonesian case adds nuance because escalation

occurred within nationalist vocabulary itself. As Figure 8 indicates, this process shaped competing constructions of Prabowo's leadership as nationalist defender, contradictory actor, politically complacent figure, and strategic rhetorician.

Democratic Implications and Information Integrity

The findings have important implications for democratic communication. When policy criticism, civil society advocacy, student activism, or journalistic commentary is reframed as foreign allegiance, the boundary of legitimate opposition becomes unstable. This reflects anti-pluralist boundary policing, where dissent is not treated as democratic disagreement but stigmatized as a threat to national order (Buttgereit et al., 2024). The “antek asing” narrative may therefore produce a chilling effect without formal censorship because criticism can be symbolically recoded as disloyalty.

This implication becomes clearer when connected to scholarship on information integrity and algorithmic sub-realities. Repeated exposure to accusation narratives can shape public perception through saturation rather than persuasion (da Costa Maia Lopes, 2025; Vatreš, 2025). The prevalence of neutral amplification suggests that audiences may encounter the accusation repeatedly before contextual clarification appears. As Figure 9 indicates, this circulation contributed to clustered polarization, where accusation and counter-accusation communities developed partially separated interpretive spaces. Such fragmentation weakens shared criteria for evaluating political claims, although analytical and clarification-oriented engagement also indicates demand for mediation and reflexive counter-framing.

Contribution, Limitations, and Future Research

This study contributes to the literature on populist communication, political delegitimization, and hybrid media by demonstrating how foreign-threat rhetoric operates as a relational and digitally networked system in a non-Western democratic context. While much existing work focuses on Europe or North America, the Indonesian case shows how postcolonial histories, nationalist suspicion, and platform infrastructures interact in contemporary political accusation. Methodologically, the integration of framing analysis, social network analysis, and knowledge graph retrieval responds to calls for cross-platform interpretive-computational approaches that connect discourse, actor networks, and graph-grounded reasoning (Åkerlund & Strömbäck, 2025; Mandravickaitė & Krilavičius, 2026).

The findings should be read within the study's scope. The purposive and YouTube-centered sampling strategy prioritizes analytical depth rather than statistical generalization. The corpus captures mediated circulation but does not directly measure audience reception or behavioral effects. Although KG-RAG strengthened relational synthesis, graph construction remained dependent on extraction rules, coding decisions, community partitioning, and human interpretation. This reinforces the need for

human-in-the-loop validation in AI-supported discourse analysis (Mansoor et al., 2026). Future research can compare anti-foreign delegitimization across Southeast Asian and postcolonial democracies and combine survey experiments, digital ethnography, and multimodal analysis to assess how audiovisual rhetoric, memes, and platform performances shape trust, polarization, and perceptions of democratic legitimacy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the “antek asing” narrative functions as a structured system of digital political delegitimization rather than as an isolated rhetorical label. The main findings show that the narrative operates through accusation escalation, symbolic enemy construction, actor-network relations, and platform-mediated amplification. Its movement from “foreign stooge” labeling to betrayal-oriented framing demonstrates how political disagreement can be transformed into suspicion about loyalty, nationalism, and legitimate civic participation.

The study also shows that the narrative is sustained by multiple framing repertoires. Supportive frames legitimize the accusation as nationalist defense, critical frames challenge it as stigmatization, analytical frames explain its political function, clarification frames reinterpret its meaning, and neutral amplification expands its visibility without explicit endorsement. This indicates that delegitimizing narratives can circulate not only through direct persuasion but also through repetition, visibility, and seemingly neutral distribution.

These findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on populist communication, information integrity, and hybrid-media polarization by showing how foreign-threat rhetoric becomes a relational and platform-mediated system of contested legitimacy in a non-Western democratic context. The study also highlights the value of examining political narratives as socio-technical systems shaped by discourse, actors, platforms, and public interpretation.

Future research should compare similar delegitimization narratives across other postcolonial or hybrid-media democracies, trace their development across electoral cycles, and examine audience reception to assess their effects on political trust, polarization, and perceptions of democratic legitimacy.

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