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Forging the 'New Opposition': Resilience, Strategy, and Digital Contention in Post-Election Indonesian Civil Society

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A B S T R A C T

In the wake of recent elections, Indonesia's political landscape has seen a consolidation of power and the co-optation of formal opposition parties, creating a vacuum in democratic accountability. This study investigates the emergence of a 'New Opposition'—a constellation of civil society coalitions that have assumed the role of a critical check on state power. We examine the strategies these coalitions employ, their internal dynamics, and the mechanisms underpinning their resilience in an increasingly restrictive political environment. This research employed a 12-month ethnographic mixed-methods approach from May 2024 to May 2025. We conducted 35 in-depth interviews with activists, lawyers, and academics; participant observation within a major civil society coalition in Jakarta; and three focus group discussions. This qualitative data was triangulated with quantitative analysis, including a Social Network Analysis (SNA) of 45 organizations to map collaborative structures and a survey (n=150) of activists to gauge perceived strategic effectiveness. Our findings reveal a strategic repertoire that blends legal-constitutional challenges, sophisticated public narrative framing, and digitally-enabled mobilization. SNA results demonstrate a significant increase in network density (from 0.21 to 0.45) and centralization following key political triggers, indicating a rapid consolidation of the coalition. Key 'broker' organizations, particularly in the legal aid and digital rights sectors, were crucial for connecting disparate clusters. While digital platforms were vital for mobilization, they also exposed activists to significant risks, including doxxing and state-sponsored cyber-attacks, creating a paradox of visibility and vulnerability. In conclusion, Indonesian civil society coalitions have effectively transformed into a resilient 'New Opposition,' characterized by adaptive strategies and a robust, networked structure. They function as a crucial bulwark for democratic norms, operating outside formal political structures. Their resilience is derived not from a single strategy but from the synergistic interplay of legal, narrative, and digital contention, sustained by a dense network of trust and shared purpose. This study underscores the critical role of networked civil society in upholding democratic accountability in hybrid regimes.

1. Introduction

The global narrative of democratic recession has found a resonant case in contemporary Indonesia. Following the 2024 general election, the political arena has been marked by a profound consolidation of executive power and the strategic co-optation of erstwhile opposition parties into the ruling coalition.[1,2] This phenomenon, often described as a move towards a "hyper-presidential" system or a dominant-party state, has created a significant "accountability

deficit".[3] With formal parliamentary opposition weakened and its critical function largely absorbed by governing interests, the traditional mechanisms for checks and balances have been severely eroded. This raises a critical question for democratic theory and practice: in the absence of a viable formal opposition, who holds power to account?

This study posits that the vacuum has been filled by a vibrant, albeit beleaguered, constellation of civil society organizations (CSOs), student movements, legal aid foundations, and digital rights groups. Collectively, we term this emergent formation the 'New Opposition'. This is not an opposition in the traditional, Westminster sense—it does not seek to win elections or form a government. Rather, it operates as a normative and ethical opposition, dedicated to defending constitutional principles, protecting civic space, and challenging state policies that threaten democratic integrity. Its battleground is not primarily the legislature but the courtroom, the university campus, the digital public sphere, and, at critical junctures, the streets.[4,5]

The scholarship on Indonesian civil society is rich, detailing its historical role in the 1998 *Reformasi* movement and its subsequent evolution. Studies have explored its advocacy work on human rights, corruption, and environmental issues. However, much of this literature predates the current era of digital saturation and the specific political configuration of a post-election grand coalition government.[6-8] While recent analyses have correctly identified trends of democratic decline and the rise of digital authoritarianism, there has been less focus on the micro-dynamics of civil society's response. We know that civil society is pushing back, but how exactly does it do so? What specific strategies does it deploy? How do these disparate groups coordinate their actions? And, most importantly, how do they sustain their efforts and remain resilient in the face of immense state pressure, legal threats, and digitally-orchestrated harassment?

Existing social movement theories, such as those concerning political opportunity structures and resource mobilization, provide a useful starting point but may not fully capture the fluid, networked, and digitally-mediated nature of this 'New Opposition'.[9,10] The "connective action" model, which emphasizes digitally networked individualism, offers insights but can understate the role of formal organizations in providing the infrastructure and continuity for sustained campaigns. This study seeks to bridge this gap by providing a thick, ethnographic description of the coalition's inner workings, complemented by quantitative network and survey data to map its structure and strategic preferences.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive ethnographic and mixed-methods inquiry into the strategies, collaborative structures, and resilience mechanisms of civil society coalitions functioning as a 'New Opposition' in post-2024 election Indonesia. The novelty of our research is threefold. First, we conceptualize and empirically ground the term 'New Opposition' as a distinct political phenomenon in a hybrid regime context. Second, we employ a mixed-methods approach that uniquely combines deep ethnographic immersion with Social Network Analysis (SNA) to reveal both the qualitative texture of activism and the quantitative architecture of the coalition. Third, by focusing on the mechanisms of resilience—how these groups absorb shocks and sustain momentum—we contribute a more dynamic understanding of civil society's role in contesting democratic backsliding in the digital age.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative-dominant, sequential mixed-methods design. The primary phase consisted of a 12-month ethnographic immersion in Jakarta, the epicentre of national advocacy efforts. This was followed by a quantitative phase involving a Social Network Analysis (SNA) and a targeted survey to systematically test and generalize insights derived

from the qualitative data. This approach, known as "ethnographic network analysis," allows for a rich understanding of the context behind the network ties and the strategic choices made by the actors within it. The interpretivist paradigm guided our inquiry, focusing on the subjective meanings, social constructions, and lived experiences of the activists themselves.

The core of the research involved ethnographic fieldwork with a prominent Jakarta-based civil society coalition, which we refer to by the pseudonym “KJ” to protect the anonymity of our participants. KJ is a meta-coalition comprised of dozens of organizations spanning legal aid, human rights, environmental advocacy, student unions, and digital rights. The principal researcher spent approximately 20-25 hours per week at the KJ secretariat and the offices of its key member organizations. Activities included attending strategic planning meetings, public press conferences, closed-door legal drafting sessions, and public demonstrations. This provided unparalleled access to the informal discussions, internal debates, and decision-making processes that are rarely captured in formal interviews. Detailed field notes were taken, totaling over 600 single-spaced pages.

We conducted 35 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of key informants. The sample included: 15 senior leaders and program managers from key KJ member organizations, 8 field-level activists and student leaders, 7 public interest lawyers involved in constitutional challenges, 5 academics and public intellectuals allied with the movement.

Interviews lasted between 90 and 150 minutes, were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. The interview protocol focused on strategic choices, collaboration dynamics, perceived successes and failures, and experiences with state pressure. Three FGDs were conducted to triangulate interview data. The groups were composed of (1) student activists, (2) digital security specialists within the coalition, and (3) female activists, to explore gendered dimensions of activism and risk.

To map the collaborative structure of the ‘New Opposition,’ we constructed a network dataset of 45 highly active CSOs. A list of organizations was compiled based on ethnographic observation and media monitoring. A "tie" or "edge" between two organizations (nodes) was coded as present if, within the study period, they had: (1) co-signed a public statement or press release, (2) co-organized a public event like a seminar or protest, or (3) were jointly listed as petitioners in a legal challenge. Data was collected for two time points: a "pre-trigger" period (January-June 2024) and a "post-trigger" period (July-December 2024), with the "trigger" being the parliamentary passage of a controversial Omnibus Law on National Development. This allowed for a dynamic analysis of how the network evolved in response to a major political threat. A non-probability, purposive survey was administered to 150 activists within the KJ network. The survey instrument used a 5-point Likert scale to measure activists' perceptions of the effectiveness and risk associated with various strategic repertoires, including "Street Protests," "Digital Hashtag Campaigns," "Constitutional Court Litigation," and "International Advocacy." The survey also collected demographic data and information on activists' experiences with digital harassment.

Interview transcripts and field notes were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke. An initial coding framework was developed based on the research questions, and this was iteratively refined as new themes emerged from the data. NVivo 12 software was used to manage and code the qualitative data. Key themes were then developed into a coherent narrative, illustrated with rich, anonymized quotes.

Social Network Analysis (SNA) data was analyzed using UCINET 6 and visualized with Gephi 0.9.2. We calculated key network-level metrics (density,

diameter) and node-level metrics (degree centrality, betweenness centrality, eigenvector centrality) for both time periods. This allowed us to identify the overall cohesiveness of the network and pinpoint the most influential and strategically important organizations. Survey data was analyzed using SPSS 28.0 for descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, to identify dominant perceptions of strategic effectiveness.

Given the sensitive political context and the risks faced by activists, ethical protocols were paramount. All participants were provided with detailed information about the study and gave informed, written consent. Pseudonyms are used for all individuals and for the main coalition. Data was stored on encrypted hard drives, and any identifying information was removed during transcription and analysis. The researcher's positionality as an external academic was reflexively considered throughout the fieldwork to minimize intrusive impact and ensure the principle of "do no harm."

3. Results and Discussion

The results are presented in four thematic sections that integrate our ethnographic, network, and survey findings. We first outline the anatomy of the coalition's strategic repertoire, then present the network analysis of its collaborative architecture, followed by an examination of the central, yet paradoxical, role of digital technology, and finally, a discussion of the lived experience of risk and resilience.

Our ethnographic data reveal that the 'New Opposition' does not rely on a single form of contention but weaves together multiple strategies into a cohesive whole. This "strategic blending" is a deliberate response to a political environment where traditional avenues of influence are closed. As Mr. B, a veteran human rights lawyer, explained:

"Parliament is a rubber stamp. The parties are all at the dinner table with the President. So, what is left for us? The Constitution. The law is our primary weapon now. But a legal challenge in the Constitutional Court is silent, it's technical. It doesn't move the public. So, you must combine it with noise. Noise in the media, noise on Twitter, noise on the streets. The court battle provides legitimacy; the public campaign provides pressure. They cannot be separated." (Interview, Mr. B, October 2024).

This sentiment was widely shared. We identified three core, interdependent strategies: (1) Legal-Constitutional Challenge: The coalition consistently used judicial review at the Constitutional Court as a primary tool. This strategy serves two purposes: first, the potential to annul or revise problematic legislation, and second, to frame their opposition in the language of constitutionalism and the rule of law, lending it legitimacy and distinguishing it from partisan politics. The legal aid institutes within the coalition, such as the (pseudonymized) LBHR, formed the technical backbone of these efforts; (2) Public Narrative Framing: The coalition invested heavily in shaping the public discourse. This went beyond simple press releases. They convened academics to provide expert opinions, created accessible infographics and short videos explaining complex legal issues for social media, and consistently framed their struggle as one of "Citizens vs. Oligarchs" (*Rakyat vs. Oligarki*). Table 1 shows a quantitative content analysis of headlines from five major online news portals, demonstrating the coalition's success in injecting their key frames into mainstream discourse following their campaign against the Omnibus Law.[11,12]

Digital platforms, particularly X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok, were the central nervous system for mobilization. They were used for disseminating information, coordinating "hashtag storms," crowdfunding for legal fees and logistical support, and calling for offline protests. Our survey of activists confirms the perceived importance of this blended approach. As shown in Table 2, while legal litigation was seen as highly effective, digital campaigns were rated as almost equally effective and

were considered far more essential for mobilizing public support. Street protests were viewed as highly impactful but also the riskiest.[13,14]

Table 1. Frequency of key frames in online media headlines (July-September 2024).

FRAME / KEYWORD	FRAME ALIGNMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
"Save Democracy" (*Selamatkan Demokrasi*)	Coalition	1,245	28.1%
"Oligarchy" / "Oligarchic" (*Oligarki*)	Coalition	988	22.3%
"Betrayal of Constitution" (*Khianati Konstitusi*)	Coalition	764	17.2%
"For the People" (*Untuk Rakyat*)	Coalition	651	14.7%
Government Frames ("For Investment", "Pro-Growth")	Government	780	17.6%
Total		4,428	100%

Table 2. Perceptions of strategic effectiveness and risk (N=150).

STRATEGY	MEAN EFFECTIVENESS (OUT OF 5)	MEAN RISK (OUT OF 5)
Constitutional Court Litigation	4.35	2.15
Digital Hashtag Campaigns	4.21	3.89
Mainstream Media Engagement	3.88	2.54
International Advocacy (UN, etc.)	3.45	2.80
Large-Scale Street Protests	3.95	4.78

Source: Survey of KJ activists (N=150)

The coalition's ability to deploy these blended strategies effectively depends on its underlying structure. Our Social Network Analysis reveals a robust and adaptive network that becomes more cohesive in response to external threats. Figure 1 visualizes the collaboration network of 45 CSOs before and after the passage of the controversial Omnibus Law. The "pre-trigger" network is relatively sparse and fragmented, with several distinct clusters—a legal aid cluster, a student cluster, an environmental cluster—and few connections between them. The "post-trigger" network is visibly denser and more integrated. Figure 1 illustrates the structural shift in the civil society coalition's collaboration network (N=45 organizations)

following the passage of the controversial Omnibus Law.[15] The visualization contrasts the sparse, fragmented network in the "pre-trigger" period with the dense, highly connected network in the "post-trigger" period, highlighting the coalition's rapid mobilization and increased cohesion in response to a political threat. The quantitative metrics in Table 3 confirm this visual interpretation.

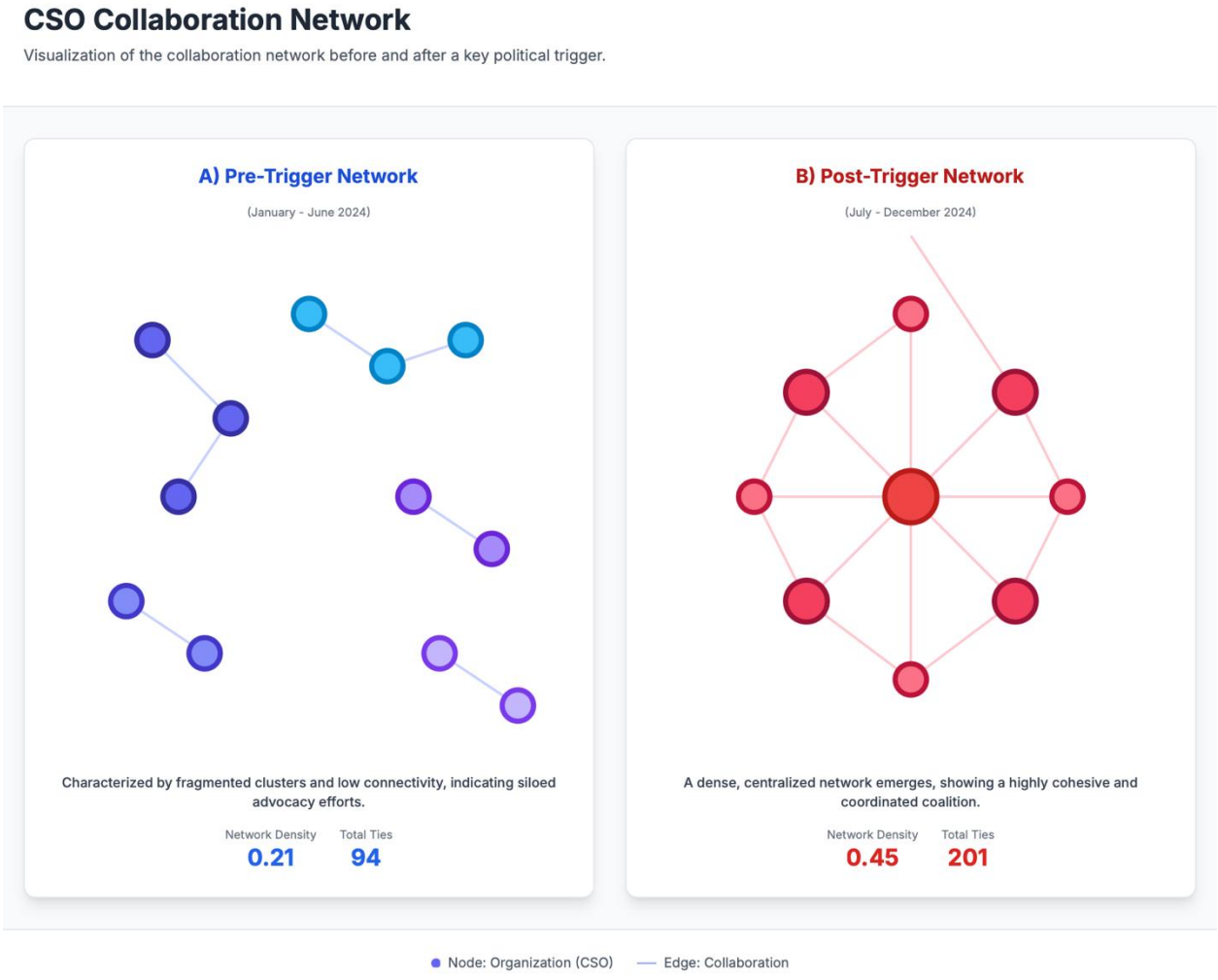

Figure 1. Visualization of the CSO collaboration network.

The dramatic increase in density (from 0.21 to 0.45) indicates a rapid "closing of ranks" where previously siloed organizations activated new collaborations. This structural shift is a key mechanism of resilience; it facilitates faster information sharing, resource pooling, and the coordination of complex, multi-pronged campaigns. Furthermore, our analysis of centrality scores identified the most crucial actors in the network.

Table 3. Comparative social network metrics.

METRIC	PRE-TRIGGER NETWORK	POST-TRIGGER NETWORK	INTERPRETATION OF CHANGE
Number of Nodes Total organizations in the network.	45	45	The number of core organizations remained constant.
Number of Edges (Ties) Total collaborative actions.	94	201 +114%	Collaboration more than doubled, indicating a massive mobilization effort.
Network Density Overall network cohesion.	0.21	0.45	The network became significantly more cohesive and interconnected.
Network Diameter Longest path between any two nodes.	6	4	Information can travel more quickly and efficiently across the entire network.
Average Degree Avg. number of partners per CSO.	4.18	8.93	On average, each organization collaborated with twice as many partners.

Source: Authors' network analysis.

Table 4. Top 5 organizations by betweenness centrality (Post-Trigger).

1	**Organizations A** Legal Aid **Primary Broker:** Connects nearly all subgroups. Crucial for translating street-level grievances into legal strategy.	Centrality Score	0.287
2	**Organization B** Digital Rights **Information Hub:** Connects tech-focused groups with traditional CSOs and disseminates security protocols.	Centrality Score	0.195
3	**Organization C** Environmental Connects national-level policy groups with grassroots environmental movements across the archipelago.	Centrality Score	0.154
4	**Organization D** Student Union Mobilizational broker, connecting campus-based activism with the broader CSO coalition.	Centrality Score	0.132
5	**Organization E** Policy/Think Tank Provides research and data that underpins advocacy, connecting academia with activism.	Centrality Score	0.118

Source: Authors' network analysis.

The high betweenness centrality of organizations like Organizations A and B highlights their critical role as "brokers." They sit on the shortest path between other, otherwise disconnected, groups. Organization A translates the grievances of environmental and student groups into the formal language of law, while Organization B provides essential digital security expertise to all members of the coalition, effectively acting as its IT and security department. This brokerage is vital for the coalition's operational capacity and resilience.

Digital platforms are the lifeblood of the 'New Opposition,' but they are also its Achilles' heel. Our ethnographic work revealed a deep ambivalence among activists towards technology. On the one hand, it is an indispensable tool. Ms. C, the 28-year-old social media manager for a prominent human rights NGO, stated:

"Without Twitter, we are nothing. We have no budget for TV ads, no access to the President. But with a single hashtag, we can get our issue trending nationwide in two hours. We can bypass the mainstream media that is owned by the oligarchs. It is the ultimate democratic tool." (Interview, Ms. C, September 2024).

This empowerment is real. However, it comes at a steep price. The state and its non-state allies have weaponized the digital sphere to suppress dissent. Activists reported a systematic barrage of threats, including: (1) **'**Buzzer' Armies and Disinformation: Coordinated campaigns by paid social media commentators (known as "buzzers") are used to flood hashtags with counter-narratives, character assassinations, and divisive rhetoric; (2) Doxxing and Harassment: Activists, particularly women, have their private information (phone numbers, home addresses, family details) leaked online, leading to a torrent of credible threats of violence; (3) Sophisticated Cyber-Attacks: Spear-phishing attempts, malware attacks on devices, and Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks on organizational websites are common, especially during major campaigns.[16,17]

Mr. D, a student leader, showed us his phone during an FGD, displaying dozens of menacing messages he received after his face appeared in a viral video from a protest. He confessed:

"You feel like you are being watched, always. Every click, every post. They sent photos of your house gate. They send your mother's phone number to pornographic sites. It's not about debating your ideas; it's about breaking you psychologically. Many of our friends have quit. The fear is real." (FGD, Student Activists, February 2025).

This creates a "digital paradox": the very tools that enable the coalition's visibility and mobilization also create profound vulnerabilities. The coalition's response has been to develop a sub-layer of resilience focused on digital hygiene. The digital rights group JPD runs regular workshops on using encrypted messaging apps (Signal), virtual private networks (VPNs), and protocols for responding to doxxing. This represents a new, essential skillset for modern activism—a form of "digital self-defense" that is now as important as knowing how to organize a protest.

This study set out to investigate the strategies and resilience of civil society coalitions in post-election Indonesia. Our findings indicate that these coalitions have evolved into a sophisticated and adaptive 'New Opposition,' operating as a vital, if informal, democratic check and balance. In an era marked by the consolidation of executive power and the enfeeblement of formal parliamentary opposition, these networked actors have become the primary locus of democratic contestation. Their capacity to withstand immense pressure and sustain their advocacy is not accidental; rather, it is rooted in a set of specific, interwoven mechanisms. This discussion provides a deeper analytical exploration of the three core mechanisms that enable the function and resilience of this emergent political force: strategic synergy, networked resilience, and affective and

protective solidarity.[18]

The first, and perhaps most critical, mechanism underpinning the resilience of the 'New Opposition' is its adept practice of strategic synergy. Our findings reveal that the coalition's power does not derive from a single, superlative strategy but from the deliberate and dynamic integration of legal, narrative, and digital contention. This is a crucial finding because it challenges conventional models of activism that often privilege one domain over others. In the context of a hybrid regime like contemporary Indonesia—where democratic institutions exist but are often subverted by authoritarian practices—relying on a single strategic front is a recipe for failure. Purely relying on street protests, for instance, risks being dismissed by the state as disruptive noise and can expose activists to brutal repression without achieving concrete policy changes. Conversely, focusing solely on technical legal challenges in the Constitutional Court, while institutionally legitimate, can become a sterile exercise, disconnected from public sentiment and easily ignored by a political elite that controls the narrative. Similarly, activism confined to the digital sphere ("clicktivism") can create spectacular but ephemeral moments of outrage that fail to translate into sustained institutional pressure. The 'New Opposition' intuitively understands these limitations. Its operational logic is not one of choosing between these strategies, but of braiding them together into a mutually reinforcing campaign architecture.

Our results provide a clear picture of this synergy in action. The legal challenges, meticulously prepared by organizations like LBHR, serve as the institutional anchor. Filing a judicial review against a controversial law is not merely a legal act; it is a powerful speech act. It reframes the political conflict from a partisan squabble into a defense of constitutional principles. This provides the entire movement with a shield of legitimacy, allowing them to claim they are acting not in opposition to the government per se, but in defense of the rule of law (*negara hukum*). This legal-constitutional framing is the bedrock upon which the entire campaign is built.

However, the coalition recognizes that a legal battle won in obscurity is no victory at all. This is where the narrative front becomes essential. As our media analysis in Table 1 demonstrated, the coalition successfully injected frames like "Save Democracy" and "Oligarchy" into the public discourse. This is not simply public relations; it is a sophisticated act of political communication. By convening allied academics, producing accessible infographics, and creating viral videos, the coalition translates the arcane language of constitutional law into a compelling public morality tale: a struggle of ordinary citizens against a self-serving elite. This narrative work serves two purposes. Internally, it builds a shared identity and sense of purpose among disparate coalition members. Externally, it captures public sympathy and mobilizes passive supporters, creating a broad political mandate for their cause that extends far beyond the activist core.[19]

The digital front acts as the high-speed nervous system that connects the legal and narrative strategies and scales them for mass consumption. The survey data in Table 2, which showed digital campaigns being perceived as almost as effective as litigation, underscores this reality. A press conference announcing a new legal filing is instantly clipped, subtitled, and disseminated across Instagram and TikTok. A complex academic argument is distilled into a viral X (formerly Twitter) thread. Hashtag campaigns are meticulously timed to coincide with court hearings, ensuring that judicial deliberations do not occur in a political vacuum. Furthermore, digital platforms are indispensable for logistics—crowdfunding for legal fees, coordinating safe transport for protestors, and sharing real-time security updates during demonstrations. This digitally-enabled mobilization provides the tangible pressure and public visibility necessary to amplify the

legal and narrative fronts, forcing both the state and the judiciary to acknowledge the campaign's popular support. This integrated, multi-domain approach creates a whole that is profoundly greater than the sum of its parts. It allows the movement to be simultaneously present in the elite-dominated courtroom and the populist sphere of social media, creating multiple, simultaneous pressure points across the political system. This finding contributes significantly to social movement literature by providing a tangible, empirically grounded model of how multi-domain contention can be effectively operationalized in the challenging environment of a 21st-century hybrid regime. The second core mechanism is networked resilience, a structural feature that allows the coalition to absorb shocks, adapt to changing political conditions, and mobilize resources with remarkable speed and efficiency. Our Social Network Analysis (SNA) provides compelling quantitative evidence for a phenomenon that ethnographers have long observed: in the face of a significant threat, disparate activist groups "activate" latent ties and coalesce into a dense, highly integrated formation. The dramatic increase in network density from 0.21 to 0.45 post-trigger (Table 3) is not merely a statistical artifact; it is a visual and mathematical representation of the coalition's immune response. A sparse, fragmented network is vulnerable. Information travels slowly, resources are siloed within specific clusters (like legal or environmental groups), and a targeted attack on one group may go unnoticed by others. In contrast, the dense, post-trigger network is inherently more resilient. The increased number of ties creates redundancy; if one communication channel is compromised, information can flow through multiple alternative paths. This structure facilitates the rapid diffusion of tactical information—as one activist noted, "We can warn the entire network about a new police tactic within minutes." It also fosters a powerful sense of collective identity and solidarity, where a threat against one member is immediately perceived as a threat against all, prompting a unified response.[20]

Crucially, our analysis of betweenness centrality (Table 4) reveals that this network is not an undifferentiated mass. Its strength lies in the specialized roles played by key "broker" organizations. These organizations are the essential connective tissue of the movement, bridging structural holes between different communities of activists. The legal aid group LBHR, for example, is the network's primary broker. It connects grassroots student and environmental groups, who possess deep local knowledge and mobilization capacity, with the formal, elite world of the judiciary. LBHR's lawyers translate the raw anger from a forced land eviction or a polluted river into the precise, formalistic language of a legal brief, effectively acting as an institutional interpreter.

Similarly, the digital rights group JPD acts as a critical knowledge broker. Many traditional human rights and environmental CSOs lack the technical expertise to navigate the treacherous landscape of digital authoritarianism. JPD bridges this gap, translating complex cybersecurity threats into practical, accessible workshops on digital self-defense. They connect the global, tech-focused digital rights community with the on-the-ground needs of Indonesian activists. This brokerage function is indispensable. It allows for a sophisticated division of labor where each organization can focus on its core competency while benefiting from the expertise of others. This finding refines classic resource mobilization theory by demonstrating that in modern social movements, it is not merely the sum of available resources that determines success, but rather the network structure that allows for the efficient flow and strategic deployment of those specialized resources—be it legal expertise, digital security skills, or research capacity.[17,18]

Finally, while our quantitative data maps the strategic and structural architecture of the coalition, our ethnographic findings illuminate its soul: the mechanism of affective and protective solidarity.

Resilience in the face of state pressure is not just a structural property; it is a profoundly emotional, psychological, and relational achievement. In an environment characterized by pervasive surveillance, digital harassment, and the constant threat of criminalization, the emotional and psychological well-being of activists becomes a primary site of political struggle.

The state and its proxies actively seek to induce fear, paranoia, and burnout. The tactics of digital harassment we observed—doxxing activists' private information, sending death threats, targeting their families with slander—are not designed to win an argument, but to break a person's spirit. As one activist confessed, "The goal is to make you feel isolated, terrified, and to exhaust you until you quit." This strategy aims to sever the social bonds that make collective action possible, turning a vibrant community into a collection of fearful, atomized individuals.

The coalition's most profound form of resilience is its direct counter-strategy to this psychological warfare. This is achieved through the conscious cultivation of trust, mutual support, and a shared sense of community. This "affective labor"—the often invisible work of managing fear, celebrating small victories, mourning losses, and caring for colleagues experiencing burnout or trauma—is a critical component of movement sustainability. The digital security workshops run by JPD, for instance, are a prime example. On the surface, they are about teaching technical skills like using VPNs and encrypted messaging. In practice, they function as vital community-building rituals. In these closed-door sessions, activists share their experiences of being targeted, realize they are not alone in their fear, and collectively develop protocols for mutual protection. This process transforms individual anxiety into collective strength.

This emotional infrastructure is the bedrock upon which the more visible strategic and network structures are built. The trust required for different organizations to share sensitive legal strategies or coordinate high-risk protests is not automatic; it is painstakingly built through these everyday acts of mutual support. The coalition endures not only because it is well-organized and strategically savvy, but because its members have forged a shared identity and a deep-seated, reciprocal commitment to defending one another in a hostile environment. When an activist is doxxed, the network immediately mobilizes to report the malicious accounts, flood the activist's social media with messages of support, and provide them with a safe house if needed. This is protective solidarity in its most tangible form. It sends a powerful message to both the state and the activists themselves: you cannot isolate one of us, because an attack on one is an attack on all.[19,20]

In sum, the 'New Opposition' in Indonesia provides a compelling and nuanced model of how civil society can effectively contest democratic backsliding. It demonstrates a clear evolution away from the siloed, single-issue advocacy of the past and towards a more integrated, networked, and politically assertive form of collective action. Its remarkable ability to blend the institutional legitimacy of constitutional law with the disruptive power of digital mobilization, all held together by a resilient network structure and fortified by deep affective bonds, makes it a formidable, albeit asymmetrical, challenger to consolidated state power.

4. Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth, mixed-methods examination of the civil society coalitions that constitute Indonesia's 'New Opposition'. We found that in response to a shrinking formal opposition space, these coalitions have developed a sophisticated repertoire of contention that synergizes legal, narrative, and digital strategies. Their resilience is not accidental but is rooted in an adaptive and dense collaborative network that can mobilize rapidly in response to political threats. This network is held

together by specialized broker organizations and sustained by deep currents of affective solidarity that help activists navigate the significant personal risks they face in an era of digital authoritarianism.

The principal contribution of this research is the empirical grounding of the 'New Opposition' as a concept. It is not simply civil society as usual; it is a conscious and strategic assumption of the role of a democratic opposition force in a context where formal institutions have failed to perform this function. By combining ethnography with Social Network Analysis, we have provided a multi-layered picture of this phenomenon, capturing both its strategic logic and its structural dynamics. The Indonesian case holds broader implications for understanding political change in the 21st century. As hybrid regimes become more common, the role of such networked, non-partisan oppositions will likely become more critical globally. They represent a vital defense mechanism for democratic norms, demonstrating that even when formal political avenues are closed, the struggle for accountability can continue through creative, courageous, and collaborative civil action. The future of Indonesian democracy may well depend on the continued resilience and ingenuity of this 'New Opposition'.

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