

Indonesian religious social movements: analysis and impacts

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DOI:10.18326/ijims.v14i2. 351-380

Abstract

This article examines the role of religion in contemporary social movements in Indonesia using the framework of relative deprivation theory. The phenomenon of religion-based social movements has become an integral part of the socio-political dynamics of post-Reformation Indonesia. This research presents three cases of significant religion-based social movements in Indonesia in the last decade. The cases chosen for in-depth analysis include: Action Defending Islam 2016-2017 (also known as the “212 movement”), the #2019ChangePresident Movement, and the Movement to reject the 2020 Job Creation Omnibus Law. This study examines how perceptions of injustice and socio-economic inequality trigger mass mobilization

based on religious identity. This research adopts a qualitative research method with a multiple case study design. Through critical analysis of three recent cases of social movements, this research reveals the complexity of the interaction between religious, economic and political factors in shaping collective action. The findings show that, while relative deprivation plays a significant role in motivating participation in religious social movements, contextual factors such as political opportunity structures and organizational resources also play an important role. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed in the context of efforts to build social cohesion and conflict management in a diverse Indonesia.

Artikel ini mengkaji peran agama dalam gerakan sosial kontemporer di Indonesia dengan menggunakan kerangka teori deprivasi relatif. Fenomena gerakan sosial berbasis agama telah menjadi bagian integral dari dinamika sosial politik Indonesia pasca Reformasi. Penelitian ini menyajikan tiga kasus gerakan sosial berbasis agama yang signifikan di Indonesia dalam satu dekade terakhir. Kasus-kasus yang dipilih untuk dianalisis secara mendalam meliputi: Aksi Bela Islam 2016-2017 (juga dikenal sebagai “gerakan 212”), Gerakan #2019GantiPresiden, dan Gerakan menolak Omnibus Law Cipta Kerja 2020. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana persepsi ketidakadilan dan ketimpangan sosial ekonomi memicu mobilisasi massa berdasarkan identitas agama. Penelitian ini mengadopsi metode penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus ganda. Melalui analisis kritis terhadap tiga kasus terkini, penelitian ini mengungkap kompleksitas interaksi antara faktor agama, ekonomi, dan politik dalam membentuk tindakan kolektif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun deprivasi relatif memainkan peran penting dalam memotivasi partisipasi dalam gerakan sosial keagamaan, faktor kontekstual seperti struktur peluang politik dan sumber daya organisasi juga memainkan peran penting. Implikasi teoritis dan praktis dari temuan ini dibahas dalam konteks upaya membangun kohesi sosial dan manajemen konflik di Indonesia yang beragam.

Keywords: *religion; social movements; relative deprivation; Indonesia; social conflict*

Introduction

As a nation characterized by profound religious and ethnic diversity, Indonesia presents a unique case study for examining the complex socio-political dynamics that have emerged since the Reformasi (Reformation)

era of 1998. This era marked a pivotal transition from the authoritarian regime of the New Order to a more democratic political landscape, where the interaction between religion and politics has become increasingly prominent. Various social movements with religious underpinnings have emerged, which reflected a significant transformation in Indonesia's socio-political fabric. The prominence of these movements signals a growing entanglement of religious identity with public discourse and mass mobilization, profoundly influencing the nation's political climate¹.

This research critically analyzes three significant social movements in recent Indonesian history: the Islamic Defense Action (commonly known as the 212 movement), the #2019GantiPresiden movement, and the protests against the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, each of which serves as a focal point for exploring the intricate dynamics among religion, politics, and civil society within Indonesia's contemporary context. Furthermore, these movements offer rich insights into the theoretical framework of relative deprivation, which can elucidate the motivations and dynamics underpinning collective action among marginalized communities.

The Islamic Defense Action (212 Movement), having culminated in mass demonstrations on December 2, 2016, exemplifies a critical juncture in Indonesia's socio-political landscape, particularly concerning the relationship between conservative Islamist groups and the Indonesian state. The mobilization was catalyzed by accusations of blasphemy against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), the then-Governor of Jakarta, a Christian of Chinese descent. This incident sparked widespread protests, highlighting a deep sense of shared grievance among conservative Muslim communities. Several felt their religious values and social identity were growing threat,

¹Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections: Nondemocratic Pluralism in Indonesia", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 30, no. 4 (2019), 104-118.

not only from state policies but also from broader societal changes².

From the perspective of relative deprivation theory, the 212 movement can be seen as a manifestation of perceived injustice and marginalization. Many conservative Muslims expressed a sense of disenfranchisement, rooted in their belief of their religious identity being undermined by the state and that their socio-economic status being compromised due to systemic inequities. The perception of relative deprivation was aggravated by economic disparities and perceived social injustice in law enforcement and resource allocation (Mietzner et al., 2018). Thus, not only does 212 movement serve as a religious mobilization but it also exemplifies a broader response to socio-political disenfranchisement, highlighting the intricate interplay of identity, belief, and political agency among Indonesia's conservative Muslim population.

The #2019GantiPresiden movement emerged in the lead-up to the 2019 general election, representing the intensifying political polarization in Indonesia. This movement, which called for the ousting of incumbent president Joko Widodo, adopted social media as a substantial instrument for mobilization and communication. The hashtag became emblematic of widespread dissatisfaction with government performance, particularly among segments of the population that felt disillusioned by unfulfilled promises of economic improvement and governance reform³.

Applying relative deprivation theory to the #2019GantiPresiden movement elucidates the socio-political context that fueled collective action. Supporters expressed deep disappointment and frustration, arguing that the government had failed to tackle key issues like corruption, socio-economic inequality, and bureaucratic inefficiency. Many felt betrayed

²Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia: Religious Intolerance, Militant Groups and the Politics of Accommodation", *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 42, no. 3 (2018), 479-497.

³Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections"...

by unfulfilled promises, which fueled a strong sense of alienation and resentment among those who felt left behind by the political system. The use of social media showcased the modern dynamics of political activism, making it easier to spread information quickly and organize collective actions. The #2019GantiPresiden movement highlighted the power of grassroots mobilization, blending religious sentiment with broader socio-economic frustrations. This movement reflects the complex and interconnected forces shaping contemporary Indonesian politics⁴.

The protests against the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, initiated in late 2020, represent another critical moment in Indonesia's socio-political evolution; while this movement was not explicitly rooted in religious identity, it effectively mobilized a wide array of societal actors, including labor unions and religious organizations, in opposition to governmental policies perceived as detrimental to workers' rights and environmental protections⁵.

The Omnibus Law aimed to streamline regulatory frameworks to enhance foreign investment and stimulate economic growth; however, it faced significant backlash from diverse sectors, which saw it as undermining labor rights and environmental safeguards.⁶ The movement against this legislation can be comprehensively analyzed through the lens of relative deprivation, as participants articulated feelings of economic insecurity and disenfranchisement stemming from the perceived erosion of their rights. The engagement of religious organizations in these protests further illustrates the complex nature of social mobilization in Indonesia, where

⁴Merlyna Lim, "Freedom to Hate: Social Media, Algorithmic Enclaves, and the Rise of Tribal Nationalism in Indonesia", *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, no. 3 (2017), 411-427.

⁵B. H. Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity: The Impact of Labour Market Flexibility on Employment Status in Indonesia", *Economic and Labour Relations Review*, Vol. 32, no. 2 (2021), 3-21.

⁶B. H. Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity: The Impact of Labour Market Flexibility"...

issues of economic justice and environmental stewardship resonate with ethical imperatives inherent in various religious traditions (Mietzner, 2020). The protests against the Omnibus Law exemplify how socio-economic grievances can unify disparate groups, reinforcing the idea that religious identity can serve as a conduit for broader socio-political struggles.

Relative deprivation theory, initially articulated by Ted Robert Gurr (1970), posits that collective action often arises from feelings of dissatisfaction that emanate from perceived discrepancies between expectations and the lived experiences. In the context of Indonesia, this theoretical framework shows how grievances related to socio-economic disparities, perceived injustices in governance, and threats to religious identity converge to motivate collective action among marginalized communities ⁷. The three cases explored demonstrate that feelings of disenfranchisement among diverse social and religious groups are linked to broader socio-economic conditions and political realities, which necessitates an integrated approach that considers both identity and material conditions in the analysis of social movements ⁸.

These movements have had a deep and lasting impact on Indonesia's political and social fabric. The 212 movement not only shifted Jakarta's political landscape but also sparked a national conversation about the relationship between religion and the state, challenging Indonesia's secular foundations. The #2019GantiPresiden movement, while falling short of its immediate goals, left behind a legacy of political polarization. It underscored the importance of understanding how social media drives political mobilization in today's Indonesia (Mietzner, 2020). Meanwhile, the protests against the Omnibus Law led to significant government

⁷Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Routledge, 2015).

⁸B. Klandermans, J. Van der Toorn, and J. Van Stekelenburg, "Embeddedness and Identity: How Immigrants Turn Grievances into Action", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 73, no. 6 (2008), 992-1012.

revisions, demonstrating the power of civil society to influence policy and push for social justice.

A critical examination of the long-term ramifications of these movements on Indonesia's democracy is essential. While they signify a robust civil society capable of articulating discontent and mobilizing for change, they also present challenges associated with identity politicization and social fragmentation. The ongoing struggle for balance between religious identity and democratic principles poses a significant challenge for Indonesia as it seeks to navigate the complexities of its diverse society⁹.

This study analyzes the role of religion in contemporary social movements in Indonesia through the lens of relative deprivation theory and focuses on recent cases of social movements with religious dimensions. It also seeks to address critical questions regarding how perceptions of relative deprivation influence mass mobilization in religion-based social movements, the impact of contextual factors such as political opportunity structures and organizational resources on the dynamics of these movements, and the interaction between religious identity and socio-economic issues in shaping the characteristics and trajectories of social movements. By exploring these inquiries, the research attempts to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between religion, politics, social discontent, and collective action within Indonesia's pluralistic and evolving society. This analysis will further shed light on how socio-political movements reflect and shape ongoing negotiations of identity and power in Indonesia, thereby contributing valuable insights to broader scholarly discussions on the global intersections of religion and politics.

⁹Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Relative deprivation and mass mobilization in religion-Based Social Movements

An analysis of the three selected social movement cases shows that the perception of relative deprivation plays a significant role in motivating participation and shaping the narrative of the movement. However, the manifestations and effects of deprivation vary relatively among such cases as follows:

Defending Islam Action, which culminated with mass demonstrations on December 2, 2016 (known as the “212 action”), shows how the perception of relative deprivation among some Indonesian Muslims contributed to large-scale mass mobilization. An analysis of the statements of movement leaders and campaign materials reveals a strong narrative of the marginalization of Muslims in the socio-economic and political context of Indonesia.¹⁰

Then regarding the perception of relative deprivation, in this case it has two main dimensions: *first* is economic deprivation. The narrative of the economic gap between indigenous Muslims and non-Muslim Chinese ethnicities is one of the central themes in mobilization.¹¹ *Second* is political deliberation; the feeling of lack of political representation of Muslims and the threat to Islam’s position in public life are important catalysts for the movement.¹² This finding is in line with the concept of fraternal relative deprivation where comparisons between groups become the basis for collective action¹³.

¹⁰Mietzner and Muhtadi, “Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation...”

¹¹Ari Herdiansah et al., “The Islam Defence Action: A Challenge of Islamic Movement to Democratic Transition in the Post 2014 Indonesia”, *Wacana Journal of Social and Humanity Studies*, Vol. 20, no. 2 (2017), 57–67.

¹²Edward Aspinall, *Semi-Opponents in Power: The Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri Presidencies*, 1st ed., Canberra: ANU Press, 2010.

¹³Walter Garrison Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966.

The #2019GantiPresiden movement which emerged ahead of the 2019 elections, also shows a relatively strong element of deprivation, albeit with different characteristics from the Defending Islam. An analysis of the narrative of this movement reveals the following: first is economic deliberation. Criticism of the government's economic policies and perceptions of increasing economic difficulties are central themes.¹⁴ Second is political-ideological deliberation; narratives about threats to Islamic values and Indonesia's national identity become an effective mobilization tool.¹⁵ In these cases, relative deprivation operates on a broader level, involving a comparison between the current condition and the expectations or ideal conditions envisioned by the movement proponent. This reflects the concept of "rising expectations" in the theory of relative deprivation.¹⁶

The movement to reject the Omnibus Law on Job Creation in 2020 shows a different dynamic but still reflects the element of relative deprivation. The movement involved significant participation from religious organizations and used moral-religious rhetoric in its narratives, despite being not explicitly religious-based. An analysis of this movement reveals the following: *First*, prospective economic deliberation. His concern that the new law will worsen the conditions of workers and increase economic inequality is the main motivation for the protests.¹⁷ *Second*, delimitation of rights: The perception that the legislative process ignores people's aspirations and threatens workers' rights and the environment is

¹⁴Marcus Mietzner, "Populist Anti-Scientism, Religious Polarisation, and Institutionalised Corruption: How Indonesia's Democratic Decline Shaped Its Covid-19 Response", *Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 39, no. 2 (2020), 227-249.

¹⁵Alexander Arifianto, "Is Islam an Increasingly Polarizing Political Cleavage in Indonesia?", *Brookings*, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/is-islam-an-increasingly-polarizing-political-cleavage-in-indonesia/> April 25, 2019.

¹⁶James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Association*, Vol. 27, no. 1 (1962), 5-19.

¹⁷Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity..."

an important catalyst for mobilization.¹⁸ In these cases, relative deprivation operates not only on the basis of current conditions, but also anticipation of future conditions that are considered worse. This is in line with the concept of “decremental deprivation” proposed by Gurr (1970), where threats to achievements that have been achieved can trigger collective action.

Contextual factors shapes the dynamics of social movements

Although relative deprivation plays an important role in motivating participation, analysis of all three cases shows that contextual factors are also highly influential in shaping the characteristics and trajectories of these movements.

The structure of political opportunity, as conceptualized proved to be an important factor in explaining the timing and scale of mobilization in all three cases: *First*, Action in Defense of Islam¹⁹. The momentum of the 2017 Jakarta Regional Election provides opportunities for large-scale mass mobilization.²⁰ *Second*, #2019GantiPresiden. The context of the 2019 election created space for the consolidation of the opposition and the mobilization of anti-incumbent sentiment.²¹ *Third*, the rejection of the Omnibus Law. The limited space for public participation in the legislative process in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic has become a catalyst for mass protests.²² These findings underscore the importance of

¹⁸Eve Warburton, “Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline in Indonesia, Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia”, in Thomas Carothers and Andrew O’Donohue (eds.), *Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia: Old Division, New Dangers*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020, 25–40.

¹⁹Doug McAdam, “Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency,” *American Sociological Review* (1983): 735–754.

²⁰Marcus Mietzner, “Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism: Islamist Populism and Democratic Deconsolidation in Indonesia”, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 91, no. 2 (2018), 261–282.

²¹Aspinall and Mietzner, “Southeast Asia’s Troubling Elections...”

²²Warburton, “Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline...”

considering the broader political context in analyzing religion-based social movements in Indonesia.

This analysis also reveals the crucial role of resource mobilization in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of the movement: *first* is Action in Defense of Islam²³. The vast network of Islamic organizations and the effective use of social media allow for rapid and massive mobilization.²⁴ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden. Collaboration between opposition political parties, civil society organizations, and social media influencers creates a strong mobilization infrastructure.²⁵ *Third* is the rejection of the Omnibus Law: a broad alliance between trade unions, student organizations, and environmental groups allows cross-sectoral mobilization.²⁶ These findings suggest that the success of faith-based social movements in Indonesia depends not only on the intensity of feelings of deliberation, but also on the capacity of organizations to mobilize resources and build coalitions.

The interaction between religious identity and socio-economic issues

An analysis of the three cases reveals the complexity of the interaction between religious identity and socio-economic issues in shaping the characteristics of social movements in Indonesia.

In all three cases, religious identity serves as a powerful interpretive framework for understanding and responding to socio-economic and political issues. This is in line with the concept of “framing” in the study of social movements²⁷: *first* is Action in Defense of Islam: The issue of

²³John D McCarthy and Mayer N Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” *American journal of sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212–1241.

²⁴Lim, “Freedom to Hate...”

²⁵Ross Tapsell, “The Smartphone as the ‘Weapon of the Weak’: Assessing the Role of Communication Technologies in Malaysia’s Regime Change,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 37, no. 3 (2018), 334–356.

²⁶Juliawan, “Promoting Precarity...”

²⁷Robert D Benford, David A Snow, and S. A. Hunt, “Identity Fields: Framing Processes

blasphemy is a catalyst for expressing wider dissatisfaction with economic inequality and political marginalization.²⁸ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden; narratives about threats to Islamic values are used to frame criticism of the government's economic and political policies.²⁹ *Third*, the rejection of the Omnibus Law: Although not explicitly religious-based, this movement uses moral-religious rhetoric to legitimize economic and political demands.³⁰

Identity also serves as an important resource for mobilization, providing networks, legitimacy, and a common language for collective action: *first* is Action to Defend Islam. The network of mosques and Islamic organizations is a key infrastructure for mass mobilization.³¹ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden. Islamic symbols and rhetoric are used effectively to mobilize support and create solidarity.³² *Third*, the rejection of the Omnibus Law: Although not dominant, faith-based organizations play an important role in expanding the movement's support base.³³

The analysis also reveals a tension between universalistic claims (e.g., social justice, human rights) and religious identity particularism in these movements: *first* in terms of Action in Defense of Islam, although it claims to represent the interests of Muslims at large, the movement also faces criticism because it is considered exclusive and potentially divisive.³⁴ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden; attempts to combine nationalist narratives with Islamic identity create complex and sometimes contradictory dynamics.³⁵ *Third* is the rejection of the Omnibus Law; this movement has been

and the Social Construction of Movement Identities", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 26, no. 1 (2000), 185-208.

²⁸Mietzner and Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation..."

²⁹Arifianto, "Is Islam an Increasingly Polarizing Political Cleavage in Indonesia?"...

³⁰Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

³¹Lim, "Freedom to Hate:..."

³²Tapsell, "The Smartphone as the 'Weapon of the Weak':..."

³³Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline..."

³⁴Mietzner, "Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism:..."

³⁵Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections:..."

relatively successful in combining universal demands (workers' rights, environmental protection) with specific values based on local religion and culture.³⁶ These findings show that the interaction between religious identity and socio-economic issues in social movements in Indonesia is dynamic and contextual, reflecting the complexity of the country's socio-political landscape.

Dynamics of mobilization and the role of social media

One of the important aspects that emerged from the analysis of the three cases of social movements is the significant role of social media in the process of mobilization and the formation of movement narratives. This phenomenon reflects the transformation of the political communication landscape in Indonesia and its implications for the dynamics of contemporary social movements.

In all three cases studied, social media proved to be a very effective tool for rapid and massive mobilization: *First* related to Action in Defense of Islam; the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to disseminate information about the action and mobilize the masses quickly.³⁷ Hashtags such as #AksiBelaIslam and #AksiBela212 became a trending topic and facilitated coordination of actions. *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden; the movement even adopted hashtags as its primary identity, demonstrating the centrality of social media in its mobilization strategy. Twitter and Instagram have become the main arena for spreading memes, infographics, and other viral content that supports the movement's narrative.³⁸ *Third* pertains to the rejection of the Omnibus Law. In the midst of physical restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, social media has had more importance in organizing virtual protests and coordinating field

³⁶Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

³⁷Lim, "Freedom to Hate:..."

³⁸Tapsell, "The Smartphone as the 'Weapon of the Weak':..."

actions. Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are adopted to disseminate information and mobilize public support.³⁹ This phenomenon is in line with the concept of “connective action, where the logic of digital networks allows large-scale mobilization without the need for a strong formal organizational structure”⁴⁰.

Although effective as a mobilization tool, the use of social media in these movements also creates new challenges, especially related to the phenomenon of echo chambers and polarization: *first* is the Action to Defend Islam. Social media algorithms that tend to group users with similar views reinforce the narrative of victimization and threats to Islam, making cross-group dialogue difficult.⁴¹ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden; polarization on social media reflects and reinforces broader political polarization, with both camps (pro-movement and anti-movement) trapped in their own narratives.⁴² *Third*, the rejection of the Omnibus Law. Despite its success in mobilizing broad support, the movement also faces challenges in reaching groups outside the social media “bubble” of activists and unions.⁴³ This phenomenon suggests that while social media expands the possibilities of mobilization, it can also deepen social fragmentation and make it difficult to form a broader consensus.

Analysis also reveals the vulnerability of social media-based movements to disinformation and narrative manipulation: *first* is Action to Defend Islam. The dissemination of inaccurate information about blasphemy cases and related issues through social media contributes to the escalation of

³⁹Juliawan, “Promoting Precarity...”

⁴⁰W Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, “The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics,” *Information, communication & society* 15, no. 5 (2012): 739–768.

⁴¹Lim, “Freedom to Hate...”

⁴²Mietzner, “Populist Anti-Scientism...”

⁴³Warburton, “Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline...”

tensions.⁴⁴ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden. The movement faces accusations of spreading hoaxes and disinformation, which in turn are used by authorities as justifications for restricting the movement.⁴⁵ *Third* is the rejection of the Omnibus Law. The complexity of the content of the law and the speed of the legislation process create space for misinterpretation and the spread of misleading information on social media.⁴⁶ These findings show the importance of digital literacy and information verification in the context of contemporary social movements, as well as challenges for activists in building credible and test-resistant narratives.

Intersectionality and internal dynamics of social movements

Further analysis of the three cases of social movements reveals the complexity of internal dynamics that reflect the intersectionality of identity and interests in a pluralistic Indonesia society.

Although often perceived as a monolithic movement, the three cases studied show the diversity of actors and agendas within the movement: *first* is the Action to Defend Islam. Although dominated by conservative Islamic groups, the movement also involves participation from a wider spectrum, including modernist and traditionalist groups with diverse motivations and agendas.⁴⁷ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden: The movement brings together a diverse coalition of Islamist groups, secular nationalists, and anti-corruption activists, each with different priorities and expectations.⁴⁸ *Third* is the rejection of the Omnibus Law: The broad alliance formed involving trade unions, student organizations, environmental groups, and human rights NGOs, reflects the intersection between labor issues, the

⁴⁴Lim, "Freedom to Hate:..."

⁴⁵Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections:..."

⁴⁶Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁴⁷Mietzner and Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia:..."

⁴⁸Marcus Mietzner and Edward Aspinall, "Indonesia's 2019 Elections: The New Face of the Old Guard", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 30, no. 4 (2019), 104-118.

environment, and democratic governance.⁴⁹ This diversity, on the one hand, strengthens the movement's support base, but on the other hand it also creates challenges in maintaining cohesion and managing internal differences⁵⁰.

An analysis reveals a complex negotiation process between the various identities and interests in these movements: *first* is Action in Defense of Islam. There is a negotiation between different Islamic identities, as well as between religious and practical political agendas.⁵¹ *Second* is #2019GantiPresiden. This movement must negotiate between Islamist and secular narratives, as well as between ideological-based criticism and pragmatic demands related to economic policy.⁵² *Third* is the rejection of the Omnibus Law. There is a negotiation between sectoral interests (e.g., labor issues) and the broader reform agenda, as well as between confrontational tactics and dialogue approaches.⁵³ This negotiation process reflects the complexity of identity politics in Indonesia and the challenges of building solidarity across groups⁵⁴.

The three cases also show the dynamics of internal contestation related to leadership and representation claims; *in* the Action to Defend Islam, there is competition between various Islamic figures and organizations to lead and represent the movement, reflecting the fragmentation of religious authority in Indonesia.⁵⁵ *With regards to* #2019GantiPresiden, there is

⁴⁹Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁵⁰Mansoor Moaddel, "The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 28, no. 1 (2002), 359-386; Aurelien Mondon and Aaron Winter, "Articulations of Islamophobia: From the Extreme to the Mainstream?," *Ethnic and racial studies*, Vol. 40, no. 13 (2017), 2151-2179.

⁵¹Herdiansah et al., "The Islam Defence Action:..."

⁵²Arifianto, "Is Islam an Increasingly Polarizing Political Cleavage in Indonesia?"...

⁵³Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline..."

⁵⁴David Snow and Scott Byrd, "Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (2007): 119-136.

⁵⁵Mietzner, "Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism:..."

tension between the opposition political elite and grassroots activists regarding the direction and control of the movement.⁵⁶ Concerning the rejection of the Omnibus Law, there is an internal debate about strategy and tactics, as well as about who has the most right to speak on behalf of the movement.⁵⁷ This contestation shows that social movements are not only an arena of external struggle, but also a complex arena of internal negotiation⁵⁸.

State response and contestation dynamics

An analysis of the state's response to the three social movements reveals the complex dynamics of contestation between civil society and state apparatus, as well as its implications for Indonesia's democratic trajectory.

The state's response to these movements shows a variation between accommodation and repression strategies: *In the Action to Defend Islam*, the government initially adopted an accommodative approach, facilitating dialogue and even attending mass actions, but later switched to a more repressive strategy by arresting some of the movement's key figures.⁵⁹ *With regards to #2019GantiPresiden*, the government's response has tended to be repressive, with restrictions on the use of hashtags and crackdowns on activists, reflecting concerns about potential political destabilization.⁶⁰ *In the context of the rejection of the Omnibus Law*⁶¹, the government adopted a mixed approach, accommodating some demands through law revisions, but also implementing repressive measures against protests.⁶²

⁵⁶Tapsell, "The Smartphone as the 'Weapon of the Weak':..."

⁵⁷Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁵⁸Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Framing Jihad: Intramovement Framing Contests and Al-Qaeda's Struggle for Sacred Authority," *International Review of Social History* 49, no. S12 (2004): 159-177.

⁵⁹Mietzner, "Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism:..."

⁶⁰Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections:..."

⁶¹Garry Rodan, *Civil Society in Southeast Asia: Power Struggles and Political Regimes* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

⁶²Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline in Indonesia, Political

This variation in response reflects the government's dilemma in managing political stability and maintaining democratic legitimacy⁶³.

The analysis also reveals the contestation of discourse between social movements and the state in the struggle for legitimacy: *In terms of Action to Defend Islam*. There is a narrative battle between the movement's claims of "defending Islam" and the government's narrative of "maintaining national unity."⁶⁴ *With regards to #2019GantiPresiden*. Discourse contestation occurs between the narrative of "change" carried out by the movement and the narrative of "stability and development" promoted by the government.⁶⁵ *Regarding the rejection of the Omnibus Law*: There is a narrative battle between the discourse of "economic reform" promoted by the government and the narrative of "protection of workers' rights and the environment" raised by the movement.⁶⁶ This discourse contest not only reflects different perspectives, but also struggles to define the national agenda and vision of Indonesia's future⁶⁷.

Implications for democracy

The dynamics of contestation between social movements and the state have significant implications for the quality and space of democracy in Indonesia.⁶⁸ In the *Action to Defend Islam*, although it demonstrated

Polarization in South and Southeast Asia."

⁶³Meredith Leigh Weiss, *Protest and Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

⁶⁴Herdiansah et al., "The Islam Defence Action:..."

⁶⁵Mietzner, "Populist Anti-Scientism, Religious Polarisation, and Institutionalised Corruption:..."

⁶⁶Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁶⁷Frieda Louise Sinanu, "Everyday Politics of Global Civil Society: A Study of the Relationships between International and Local NGOs in Indonesia", Ph.D. thesis Australian National University, 2010.

⁶⁸Usman, M., Aris Widodo, and Shofwatul Aini. "The existence of the Ahmadiyya in Indonesian democracy: a struggle for survival in the midst of the Islamic-movement competition." *IJoReSH: Indonesian Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Humanity* 1.2 (2022): 167-187.

the power of civil society mobilization, it also raised concerns about the politicization of religion and the threat to pluralism.⁶⁹ *Second*, in the context of #2019GantiPresiden, the government's restrictions on this movement raise questions about the limits of freedom of expression and the right to dissent in Indonesia's democracy.⁷⁰ *About* the rejection of the Omnibus Law⁷¹, the accelerated legislation process and response to protests reflect the challenge of balancing governance efficiency with democratic participation.⁷² These findings show that the interaction between social movements and the state not only shapes the specific issues that are fought for, but also plays a role in defining the boundaries and characteristics of democracy Indonesian contemporary⁷³.

Impact and transformation of social movements

An analysis of the impact and transformation of the three social movements provides insight into how these movements affect and are influenced by the broader socio-political context.

All three movements show variation in terms of direct and long-term impact. *In the* Action to Defend Islam, although it succeeded in influencing the legal process in Ahok's case, its long-term impact is more evident in the shift in public discourse about the role of Islam in Indonesia's politics.⁷⁴ *With regards to* #2019GantiPresiden. Failing to achieve its main goal of defeating the incumbent in the election, but contributing to the continued political polarization and debate about secularism vs Islamism

⁶⁹Mietzner and Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia:..."

⁷⁰Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections:..."

⁷¹Robert W Hefner, "Islamic Schools, Social Movements, and Democracy in Indonesia," *Making modern Muslims: the politics of Islamic education in Southeast Asia* (2009): 55-105.

⁷²Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline..."

⁷³Luky Djani, "Reform Movements and Local Politics in Indonesia" (Murdoch University, 2013).

⁷⁴Mietzner and Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia:..."

in Indonesia's democracy.⁷⁵ Concerning the rejection of the Omnibus Law, It has succeeded in pushing for several revisions in the law, but its long-term impact on economic policies and industrial relations still needs to be further evaluated.⁷⁶ These findings suggest that the impact of social movements is not always linear or in line with their original goals, but rather can have unpredictable and transformative consequences in the long run⁷⁷.

Analytical Movement also reveals how these movements undergo internal transformations in response to external dynamics. In the Action to Defend Islam: Post-2017, this movement is experiencing fragmentation and reorientation, with some elements turning to electoral activism while others returning to da'wah activism.⁷⁸ in the #2019GantiPresiden, after the 2019 elections, this movement transformed into various forms of extra-parliamentary opposition, reflecting adaptation to the new political reality.⁷⁹ In the rejection of the Omnibus Law, after the passage of the law, this movement underwent a transformation from mass protests to law-based advocacy and supervision of policy implementation.⁸⁰ This internal transformation reflects the adaptive capacity of social movements in responding to changing political contexts and maintaining their relevance⁸¹.

Analytical Tactics also reveals the process of learning and diffusion of tactics between movements. *First*, the effective use of social media in the Action to Defend Islam becomes a model for subsequent movements

⁷⁵Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections:..."

⁷⁶Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁷⁷Anthony Bebbington, "Social Movements and the Politicization of Chronic Poverty," *Development and Change* 38, no. 5 (2007): 793-818.

⁷⁸Mietzner, "Populist Anti-Scientism..."

⁷⁹Tapsell, "The Smartphone as the 'Weapon of the Weak':..."

⁸⁰Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline..."

⁸¹Michael McCann, "Law and Social Movements: Contemporary Perspectives," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (2006): 17-38.

in mobilizing the masses and shaping public opinion.⁸² *Second*, the #2019GantiPresiden framing strategy that combines identity issues with policy criticism is a lesson for other movements in building a resonant narrative.⁸³ *Third*, the tactic of cross-sectoral alliances in the Movement to Reject the Omnibus Law is an example for efforts to build a broader coalition in social movements.⁸⁴ This process of learning and diffusion shows that social movements in Indonesia do not operate in isolation, but rather influence and learn from each other⁸⁵.

Theoretical implications

An in-depth analysis of the three cases of social movements in Indonesia provides several theoretical implications that are important for the development and contextualization of the theory of relative deprivation.

The findings of the study show that the sources of relative deprivation in the Indonesia context are more complex than those often assumed in the classical literature. *First* is Multi-dimensional Deprivacy. In addition to the economic and political deprivation that is often the focus, these cases show the importance of cultural and identity dimensions in shaping the perception of deprivation.⁸⁶ *Second* is symbolic deliberation. Especially in Action to Defend Islam and #2019GantiPresiden, the perception of threats to the symbolic status of Islam in public life is a significant source of deprivation.⁸⁷ *Third* is aspirational deliberation. The case of the Omnibus

⁸²Lim, "Freedom to Hate:..."

⁸³Arifianto, "Is Islam an Increasingly Polarizing Political Cleavage in Indonesia?"...

⁸⁴Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁸⁵Brian D Loader, "Social Movements and New Media," *Sociology Compass* 2, no. 6 (2008): 1920-1933.

⁸⁶Kikue Hamayotsu, "The Limits of Civil Society in Democratic Indonesia: Media Freedom and Religious Intolerance", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 43, no. 4 (2013), 658-677.

⁸⁷Marcus Mietzner, Burhanuddin Muhtadi, and Rizka Halida, "Entrepreneurs of Grievance: Drivers and Effects of Indonesia's Islamist Mobilization", *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 174, no. 2-3 (2018), 159-187.

Law Rejection shows that deprivation can arise not only from current conditions, but also from threats to future aspirations or expectations.⁸⁸ This complexity points to the need to expand the conceptualization of relative deprivation to include more diverse dimensions.

Analysis also reveals the importance of considering temporal dynamics in understanding relative deprivation: *First* is Historical Accumulation. In the case of the Action to Defend Islam, the perception of deprivation arises not only from current conditions, but also from the historical accumulation of dissatisfaction rooted in the New Order era.⁸⁹ *Second* is anticipating the future. The Omnibus Law Rejection Movement shows that deprivation can arise from anticipating future conditions that are considered detrimental.⁹⁰ *Third* is Fluctuations in Expectations: The case #2019GantiPresiden reflects how fluctuations in post-Reformation political expectations contribute to the dynamics of relative deprivation.⁹¹ These findings suggest the need for a more dynamic theoretical model and consider the temporal dimension in the analysis of relative deprivation.

This study also emphasizes the importance of considering the interaction between relative deprivation and contextual factors. *First* is the Structure of Political Opportunity: The case of Action in Defense of Islam shows how the structure of open political opportunity post-Reformation allows the transformation of the perception of deprivation into large-scale collective action.⁹² *Second* pertains to Media Dynamics; the three cases show the crucial role of social media in strengthening and

⁸⁸Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁸⁹Robert W. Hefner, "Indonesia, Islam, and the New U.S Administration", *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (2018), 1-11.

⁹⁰Warburton, "Deepening Polarization and Democratic Decline..."

⁹¹Aspinall and Mietzner, "Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections:..."

⁹²Mietzner, "Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism:..."

accelerating the diffusion of deprivation perceptions.^{93,94} With regards to organizational networks, the capacity of pre-existing organizations and networks (for example, Islamic organizations in Action to Defend Islam or trade unions in the rejection of the Omnibus Law) plays an important role in transforming deprivation into collective action.⁹⁵ These findings suggest the need for an integrative model that combines the theory of relative deprivation with other theoretical perspectives such as resource mobilization theory and process political theory.

Analysis also reveals variations in the manifestations of relative deprivation that may be specific to the Indonesia context: *First* is Communal Deprivation; especially in Action to Defend Islam, the perception of deprivation is not only individual but also communal, reflecting the strong group identity in Indonesia society.⁹⁶ *Second* is Transnational Comparative Privilege; the #2019GantiPresiden case shows how comparisons with the condition of Muslims in other countries (for example in the Middle East) can shape the perception of deprivation.⁹⁷ *Third* is Intersectional Privilege; the Movement to Reject the Omnibus Law reflects how deprivation can arise from the intersection of various identities and interests (e.g., as workers, citizens, and members of local communities).⁹⁸ This variation points to the need for a more nuanced typology of forms of relative deprivation in the context of a pluralistic society such as Indonesia.

Conclusion

This article takes a closer look at three important social movements in Indonesia: the 2016-2017 Islamic Defense Action, the #2019GantiPresiden

⁹³Lim, "Freedom to Hate:..."

⁹⁴Tapsell, "The Smartphone as the 'Weapon of the Weak':..."

⁹⁵Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

⁹⁶Herdiansah et al., "The Islam Defence Action:..."

⁹⁷Arifianto, "Is Islam an Increasingly Polarizing Political Cleavage in Indonesia?"...

⁹⁸Juliawan, "Promoting Precarity:..."

movement, and the protests against the 2020 Omnibus Law on Job Creation. Using the lens of relative deprivation theory, it explores the complex ways religion, social dissatisfaction, and collective action intersect in post-Reformasi Indonesia.

Focusing on these three cases, the study examines how perceptions of deprivation, religious identity, and socio-economic challenges shape the dynamics of social movements in the country. It uncovers the intricate relationships between these factors and sheds light on what drives people to participate in such movements.

Some of the main findings of this study are: *First*, the Significant Role of Relative Privacy. The perception of relative deprivation, both in economic, political, and symbolic dimensions, plays an important role in motivating participation in religious-based social movements in Indonesia. However, their manifestations and impacts vary depending on the specific context of each movement. *With regards to* the complexity of the source of privacy, the sources of relative deprivation in the context of Indonesia are more complex than often assumed, encompassing cultural, identity, and aspirational dimensions, in addition to conventional economic and political dimensions. *Concerning* the temporal dynamics of deliberation, the perception of deprivation is not static, but rather influenced by historical accumulation, future anticipation, and fluctuations in expectations, demonstrating the importance of a temporal perspective in analysis.

Fourth, with regards to Interaction with Contextual Factors, the relative effectiveness of deprivation in mobilizing collective action is greatly influenced by contextual factors such as the structure of political opportunities, media dynamics, and organizational capacity. *Fifth*, concerning the crucial role of social media, social media plays a central role in strengthening and accelerating the diffusion of the perception of deprivation, as well as in facilitating mass mobilization. However, it also

contributes to the phenomenon of echo chambers and polarization. *Sixth*, in the context of Intersectionality and Internal Dynamics, these movements reflect the complexity of the intersectionality of identity and interests in Indonesia's pluralistic society, as well as demonstrate complex internal dynamics in agenda and representation negotiations. *Seventh*, in terms of State Response and Democratic Contestation, the interaction between social movements and state responses not only shapes the specific issues that are fought for, but also plays a role in defining the boundaries and characteristics of democracy Indonesia contemporary. *Eighth* pertains to Transformation and Movement Learning; these movements demonstrate adaptive capacity in responding to changes in the political context, as well as the process of learning and diffusion of tactics between movements.

This study provides several important theoretical implications for the development and contextualization of relative deprivation theory. *First* is Conceptualization Extension. The need to expand the conceptualization of relative deprivation to include more diverse dimensions, including cultural, symbolic, and aspirational dimensions. *Second* is the Dynamic Model; the importance of developing a more dynamic theoretical model and considering the temporal dimension in the analysis of relative deprivation. *Third* is Perspective Integration; the need to integrate the theory of relative deprivation with other theoretical perspectives such as the theory of resource mobilization and the theory of political processes to understand the complexity of social movements. *Fourth* is Nuansir Typology; the need to develop a more nuanced typology about the forms of relative deprivation in the context of a pluralistic society such as Indonesia. *Fifth* pertains to micro-macro mechanisms; the importance of further exploration of the mechanisms linking individual deprivation perceptions to large-scale collective action.

These findings also have some important practical implications. *First*

in terms of public policy, a better understanding of the sources and dynamics of relative deprivation can assist policymakers in formulating more effective and inclusive responses to social dissatisfaction. Regarding Conflict Management, insights into the complexity of intersectionality and the internal dynamics of movements can contribute to the development of more nuanced conflict management strategies in pluralistic societies. Concerning Digital Literacy, the importance of improving digital literacy and critical thinking skills in society to overcome the challenges of echo chambers and disinformation on social media. Regarding cross-group dialogue, the need to facilitate dialogue and understanding across groups to address polarization and build a broader consensus. Finally, in the context of strengthening democratic institutions, the need to strengthen democratic institutions and public participation mechanisms to accommodate social aspirations and dissatisfaction constructively.

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