

Rage with the Machine: When Cyber Troops Oppose the Regime

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Abstract

The advent of social media has brought political conversations and activities into the cyber world. One consequence of this is the emergence of cyber troops: special cyber forces that aim to manipulate public opinion on social media. These cyber troops are usually hired by political or economic entities to serve their interests. However, the concept of ludic cybermilitia challenges this, suggesting that cyber troops are not solely controlled by political and economic entities. According to this concept, cyber troops are independent actors engaged in a form of privatised violence. This study builds on findings relating to the hashtags #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe, which oppose political and economic actors. Similarities in content and posting patterns between the tweets suggest that the two hashtags represent coordinated attacks. Based on these findings, the study proposes that cyber troops may also resist political and economic actors through privatised violence.

Keywords: Cyber troops; digital politics; big data; ludic cybermilitia

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Introduction

Advances in digital technology have created a new public space in the form of social media. Social media enables people to interact with each other regardless of physical boundaries. This vast space for interaction enables widespread contestation of power. One way to influence this arena of contestation is to use cyber troops.

According to Bradshaw and Howard (2017), cyber troops are groups or teams tasked with manipulating public opinion on social media. This manipulation is generally carried out by spreading certain ideas, directing the public agenda and shaping public perception of an issue. Cyber troops are often employed by political entities

such as governments, military forces, and political parties.

Cyber troops coordinate both real and fake bot accounts. By using multiple accounts, cyber troops can make a conversation or issue appear to be widely discussed. In their operations, they use various strategies when interacting on social media, such as spreading positive and negative sentiments about an issue and using nationalistic and pro-government language. They also engage in terrorising and attacking other accounts (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017).

The study by Bradshaw and Howard (2017) found different patterns of cyber troop attacks in each country. In terms of message narrative



strategy, three types were identified. The first is to promote narratives that support the government or certain ideologies. This strategy was observed in Israel, Vietnam and Venezuela. Conversely, there is a strategy involving messages of bullying and harassment targeted at political opponents or activists. This strategy was commonly found in Azerbaijan, Mexico and Russia. The third strategy involves conveying messages or narratives that divert public attention from sensitive issues. Saudi Arabia and the Czech Republic used this strategy.

Apart from the narrative strategies employed, the organisational structure of

cyber troops also differs. In Vietnam, the United Kingdom and South Korea, for example, cyber troop operations are carried out directly by government and military units. In contrast, in Mexico, Russia and the United States, these operations are subcontracted to third parties or private entities. These third parties can be hacker groups, PR companies, or communications agencies. In the context of elections, it is also common for politicians and political parties to carry out cyber troop attacks. Examples of this can be found in the United States, Brazil, and Turkey. In addition to political and private actors, cyber troop attacks can utilise volunteers and paid citizens. Influencers are usually given

incentives to amplify certain narratives. Examples of this can be found in Israel, India and China (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017).

Research by Bradshaw et al. (2021) shows that the number of countries using cyber troops increased from 70 in 2016 to 81 in 2020. This increase occurred because political actors, such as governments and political parties, started using cyber troops on a large scale to disrupt elections, democracy and civil rights. The existence of the private sector, which coordinates cyber troops according to the directions of political actors, has made cyber troop attacks easier to carry out.

One study on cyber troops was conducted in Indonesia

by Wijayanto et al. (2024). Their research successfully identified the characteristics of cyber troops in Indonesia. According to this study, cyber troops in Indonesia are characterised by three main features: they are paid covertly, they are highly coordinated, and they use anonymous accounts. In terms of funding, Wijayanto et al. (2024) identified four groups funding cyber troop operations. These four groups are the government or government agencies, politicians, political parties and the economic elite. This suggests that cyber troops have become a profession that can be hired according to a client's interests.

This is in line with Rasidi's (2023) concept of the 'ludic



cybermilitia'. This concept suggests that cyber troops constitute a form of privatised violence. This is a type of violence that is perpetrated by non-state entities. According to Rasidi (2023), cyber troops extend this form of violence into the digital realm. Therefore, rather than being an extension of the government, cyber troops are independent actors with their own power.

On the other hand, according to Rasidi (2023), ludic cybermilitias also exhibit a playful aspect. Those behind cybermilitias derive satisfaction from the thrill of being involved in secret cyber operations. They view cybertroop operations as nothing more than a strategic game.

In their operations, ludic cybermilitias employ a variety of strategies. According to Rasidi (2023), ludic cybermilitias follow three main narrative patterns. The first is the positive narrative. This pattern is characterised by narratives that promote campaign messages and highlight the positive aspects of a particular candidate or policy. The second pattern is the negative narrative, which aims to delegitimise political opponents or groups that criticise the client's interests. The third pattern involves special operations. This pattern involves trolling, doxxing and framing opponents personally. When implementing these patterns, ludic cybermilitias also seek to provoke netizens into



participating in attacks against targets.

These four groups pay cyber troops to pursue various interests. According to Wijayanto et al. (2024), the deployment of cyber troops by these actors is not limited to electoral issues, but also extends to policy matters. The study found instances of cyber troops being paid to disseminate narratives in support of the revision of the KPK Law (Hermawan, 2024; Hermawan, 2025).² Similar patterns have been observed in other studies, including those on electoral issues (Masduki, 2022; Okthariza et

al., 2024) and the Omnibus Law (Sastramidjaja & Rasidi, 2021).

In addition to being paid covertly, cyber troops in Indonesia operate using anonymous accounts. According to Wijayanto et al. (2024), the characteristics of these accounts include an absence of personal identity or the use of false identities. Nevertheless, these cyber troops have a main account, known as a 'core account'. This main account is dedicated and is developed to attract a large follower. During operations, the core account initiates the posting of narratives to be disseminated. The anonymous accounts then retweet these posts (Wijayanto et al., 2024).

² The KPK (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi) is Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission. Established in 2002, it was long considered one of the country's most independent public institutions. The 2019 revision of the KPK Law sparked widespread public protests, as critics argued it structurally stripped the agency of its independence and investigative powers.



These accounts, both the core account and the anonymous ones, are operated in a coordinated manner. This coordination extends to both the standardisation of the presented narratives and the timing of posts. According to Wijayanto et al. (2024), cyber troops attempt to post as many messages as possible simultaneously. The aim is to get the presented narratives onto the trending topics list via the X (formerly Twitter) algorithm.

This article examined two hashtags that appeared on X's list of trending topics: #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe. Both hashtags promote a narrative that opposes the regime, with #SaveKIPKuliah appearing on

13 February 2025 and #SavePulauGebe on 5 August 2025. #SaveKIPKuliah is a response to the government's plans to cut the education budget. It conveys a narrative of opposition to these budget cuts. In contrast, #SavePulauGebe conveys opposition to mining activities on Gebe Island in North Maluku, which are considered to be damaging the island's environment.

Upon closer examination, both hashtags exhibit two of the three characteristics of cyber troops proposed by Wijayanto et al. (2024): a coordinated posting pattern and a dominance of anonymous accounts. The number of posts for both hashtags increased sharply on those days, and there is high

content similarity between the two hashtags. This was enough to prompt the X algorithm to include both hashtags in the trending topics list.

The existence of these two hashtags suggests a new phenomenon: the use of cyber troops to disseminate populist narratives or engage in activism. Using Rasidi's (2023) 'ludic cybermilitia' framework, such privatised violence, in the form of cyber troops, can also be used to resist the regime. They do not always act as an extension of the regime. While Bradshaw and Howard

(2017) and Bradshaw et al. (2021) note that cyber troops in various countries are used by governments and political actors to disrupt elections, democracy and citizens' rights, these findings suggest that cyber troops are also being used to disseminate pro-public narratives.

Methods

Data collection for this study used Tweet Harvest, a web scraping tool for collecting tweets. The keywords and time period used for data collection are shown in the following table:

Table 2. Jaccard Coefficient Results

No.	Keyword	Average Similarity Level
1	#SaveKIPKuliah	0.29
2.	#SavePulauGebe	0.17

Source: Researcher's data processing results

These keywords and hashtags were chosen because they are used by cyber troops to promote narratives critical of the state. The timeframe covers the three days prior to and the three days following the cyber troop attack. This timeframe was chosen in order to examine posting patterns before and after the attack. In this way, the study can identify the patterns of coordinated cyber troop attacks proposed by Wijayanto et al. (2024). A total of 2,486 tweets were identified using the hashtag #SaveKIPKuliah, and 1,522 using #SavePulauGebe.

The collected dataset was analysed using sentiment analysis and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). Sentiment analysis examined the emotional tone within the

dataset using the IndoNLU algorithm developed by Wilie et al. (2020). This Indonesian natural language processing (NLP) algorithm serves as a benchmark to categorise the outputs into positive, neutral, and negative sentiments.

Concurrently, CADS is employed to analyse large-scale textual data by combining corpus linguistics and discourse analysis (Ancarno, 2020). This methodological approach allows researchers to identify frequently occurring words and systematically compare shifting discourses within the data (Kusumasari et al., 2021).

The collected tweet data was tokenised into individual words, which formed the basis of the corpora analysed through CADS. During this process, stopwords were removed from the tweets to

form the corpora. The next step involved identifying keywords. According to Ancarno (2020), keywords are words that occur frequently in a dataset. These keywords were then grouped based on their discourse group, and the frequency of each keyword group was calculated.

In addition to sentiment and discourse analysis, this study analysed the metadata from the collected tweets, including the upload dates and the metrics for retweets, quotes, and replies. The number of retweets, quotes and replies were evaluated to determine the level of engagement associated with each hashtag, while the

upload timestamps were examined to identify temporal posting patterns.

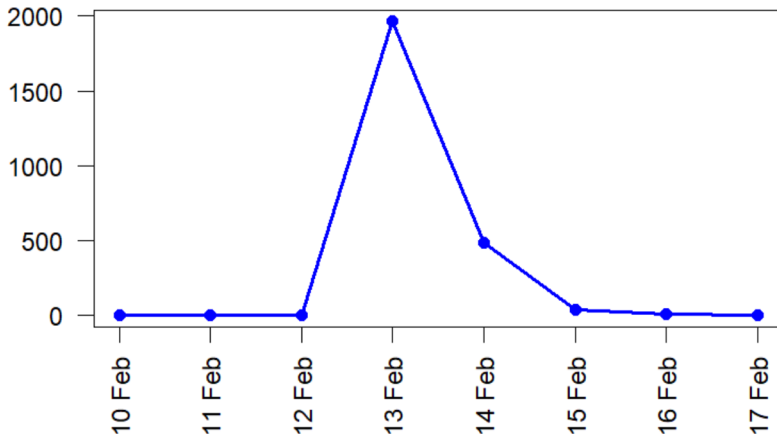
Furthermore, the level of content similarity between tweets was assessed using the Jaccard coefficient method proposed by Niwattanakul et al. (2013). This approach was selected because cyber troop attacks are typically coordinated not only in terms of posting time but also in content duplication (Wijayanto et al., 2024). The Jaccard coefficient scores ranged from 0 to 1, where 0 indicated no similarity and 1 represented identical tweet content. The equation used is as follows:

$$J(A,B) = \frac{A \cap B}{A \cup B}$$

$J(A,B)$: Level of content similarity between tweet 1 and tweet 2
 $A \cap B$: Number of identical words between tweet 1 and tweet 2
 $A \cup B$: Total number of words in tweet 1 and tweet 2

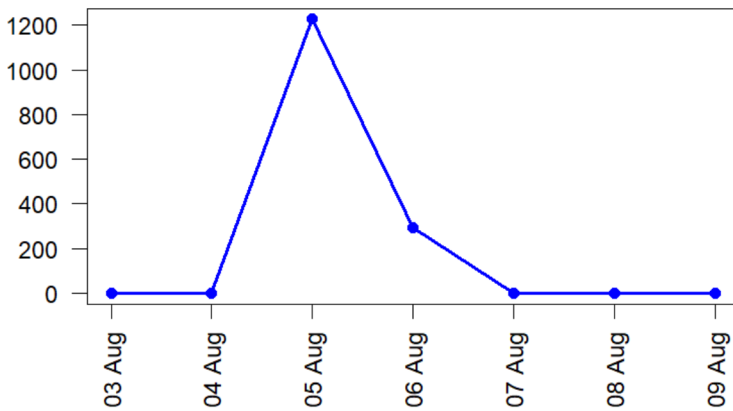
Source: Niwattanakul et al., 2013

Figure 1. Timeline of #SaveKIPKuliah Tweets



Source: Researcher's data processing results

Figure 2. Timeline of #SavePulauGebe Tweets



Source: Researcher's data processing results



Results

Of the 2,486 tweets using the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag, one was posted on 12 February 2025, 1,964 were posted on 13 February, 484 were posted on 14 February, 31 were posted on 15 February and six were posted on 16 February. In contrast, of the total 1,522 tweets under the hashtag #SavePulauGebe, 1,227 were posted on 5 August 2025, while 295 were posted the following day. This shows

that both hashtags exhibit similar patterns. Both hashtags saw a large number of tweets in one day: 13 February 2025 for #SaveKIPKuliah and 5 August 2025 for #SavePulauGebe. The number of uploads for both hashtags decreased dramatically the next day, with no new uploads on the third day.

From the data collected and analysed using the Jaccard coefficient, the following results were found:

Table 2. Jaccard Coefficient Results

No.	Keyword	Average Similarity Level
1	#SaveKIPKuliah	0.29
2.	#SavePulauGebe	0.17

Source: Researcher's data processing results

Table 3. Examples of Tweets with High Similarity Levels from #SaveKIPKuliah

No.	Username	Tweet	Similarity Level
1.	@Sawala_Rasa	@fmnpusat TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN â€¼ï¿½, #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn	1
	@origamisenn	@fmnpusat TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN â€¼ï¿½, #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn	1
2.	@mnsglovee	TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN â€¼ï¿½, #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn	1
	@runjpege	TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN â€¼ï¿½, #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn	1
3.	@gapunyanam aya_	@iubberry TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn	1
	@arreinjuna	@iubberry TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn	1

Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

Table 4. Example of Tweets with High Similarity Levels from #SavePulauGebe

No.	Username	Tweet	Similarity Level
1.	@NaylaHafizaw	Setiap hari ada nikel yang keluar dari Pulau Gebe tanpa izin tapi negara diem aja. Ini bukan lagi lalai ini pengkhianatan terhadap lingkungan! #SavePulauGebe	1
	@Melisaheraw	Setiap hari ada nikel yang keluar dari Pulau Gebe tanpa izin tapi negara diem aja. Ini bukan lagi lalai ini pengkhianatan terhadap lingkungan! #SavePulauGebe	1
2.	@DarusWj	#SavePulauGebe ayo kita selamatkan pulau gebe	1
	@jatiw9549	#SavePulauGebe ayo kita selamatkan pulau gebe	1
3.	@Xixicutesy	PT MJM dan PT BPM rampas ruang hidup warga Gebe lewat TAMBANG ILEGAL . Ekonomi lumpuh warga terpaksa tinggalkan pulau! #SavePulauGebe	1
	@AishiOishi20988	PT MJM dan PT BPM rampas ruang hidup warga Gebe lewat TAMBANG ILEGAL . Ekonomi lumpuh warga terpaksa tinggalkan pulau! #SavePulauGebe	1

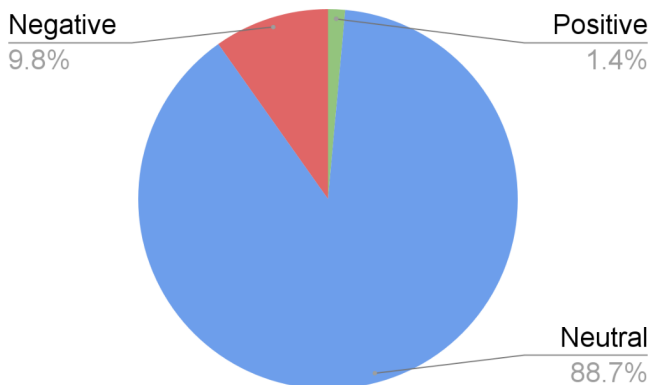


	@AishiOishi20988	PT MJM dan PT BPM rampas ruang hidup warga Gebe lewat TAMBANG ILEGAL . Ekonomi lumpuh warga terpaksa tinggalkan pulau! #SavePulauGebe	1
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Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

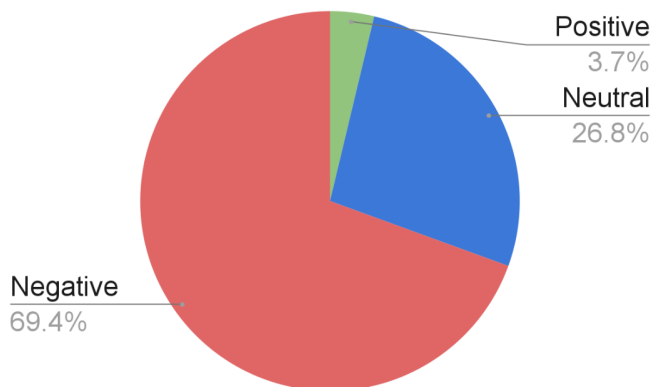
The Jaccard coefficient calculation shows that tweets with a similarity level of 1 are uploaded by different accounts. This suggests a coordinated attack. This aligns with Wijayanto et al.'s (2024) argument that cyber troop operators carry out such attacks using multiple accounts to convey similar narratives simultaneously.

Figure 3. Sentiment Distribution in the #SaveKIPKuliah Hashtag



Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

Figure 4. Sentiment Distribution in the #SavePulauGebe Hashtag

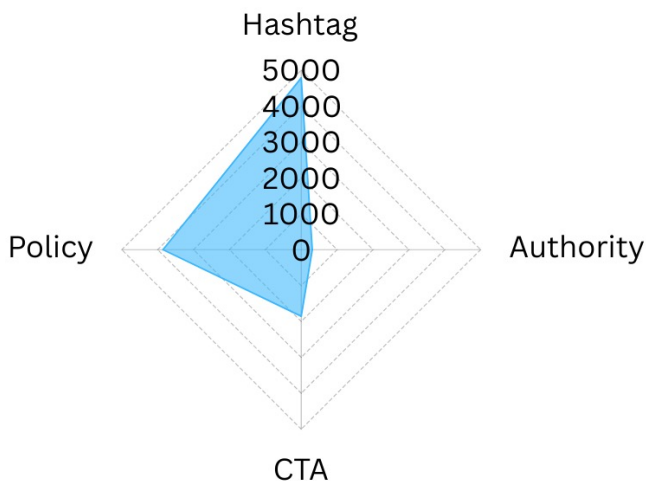


Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

The results of both hashtags exhibit the same pattern: the sentiment analysis reveal different sentiment distributions between the two hashtags. The hashtag #SaveKIPKuliah is dominated by neutral sentiment, accounting for 88.7% of the total. In contrast, negative sentiment dominates the hashtag #SavePulauGebe, accounting for 69.4% of the total. Nevertheless, the hashtag #SaveKIPKuliah has only 1.4% positive sentiment, in contrast to 9.8% positive sentiment. The #SavePulauGebe hashtag has far less positive sentiment than negative sentiment, at only 3.7%.

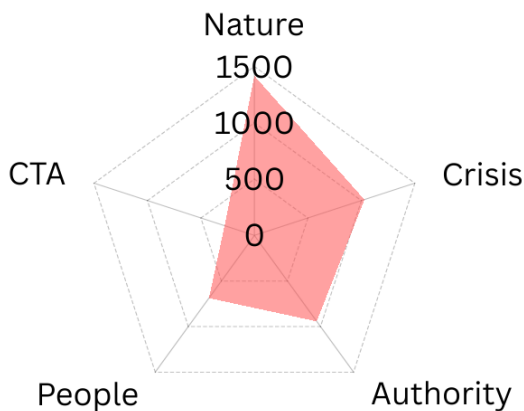


**Figure 5. Discourse Distribution
in the #SaveKIPKuliah Hashtag**



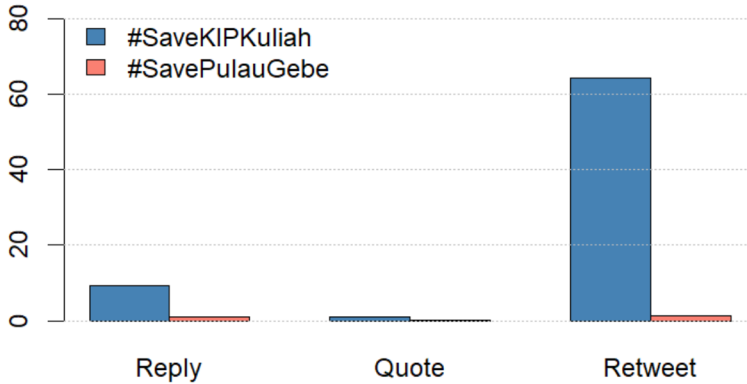
Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

**Figure 6. Discourse Distribution
in the #SavePulauGebe Hashtag**



Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

Figure 7. Comparison of Average Engagement for #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe



Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

The two hashtags show different results in the CADS analysis. The #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag is consistently used alongside other hashtags such as #DaruratPendidikan, #TurunkanUKT, and #AnggaranBijakUntukRakyat. In other words, the #SaveKIPKuliah campaign aims to promote these

hashtags in the X trending topics algorithm. Additionally, the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag also highlights policies concerning the efficiency of the education budget. However, very few #SaveKIPKuliah tweets mention government authorities. In contrast, the #SavePulauGebe hashtag focuses more on the



environmental crisis. Another difference is that the #SavePulauGebe hashtag discusses the authorities more than the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag. However, the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag contains more calls to action (CTA) than the #SavePulauGebe hashtag.

The #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag has a higher number of CTA narratives than the #SavePulauGebe hashtag, resulting in higher engagement. Tweets with the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag received an average of 9.215 replies. In contrast, tweets with the #SavePulauGebe hashtag only received an average of 1.003 replies. A similar pattern occurred in the retweet metric. Tweets with the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag

were retweeted an average of 64.272 times. Conversely, tweets with the #SavePulauGebe hashtag only received an average of 1.315 retweets. However, both hashtags had a low average number of quotes, 1.009 for #SaveKIPKuliah and 0.253 for #SavePulauGebe.

Discussions

A sudden surge in posts on a single day may suggest that they are part of a coordinated attack, which is consistent with Wijayanto et al.'s (2024) findings that cyber troop operators upload a large number of posts simultaneously and in a coordinated manner to ensure that the narrative they are promoting is picked up by X's algorithm. In other words,

these two hashtags did not emerge organically, but were coordinated and orchestrated.

In terms of the sentiment associated with the hashtags #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe, the sentiment is more negative than positive. The discourse associated with these hashtags shows that the cyber troop attack was directed at

the government and economic actors. This demonstrates that cyber troops can be used as a form of privatised violence against governments and economic actors. Power in the digital world is no longer monopolised by political and economic forces alone. These same cyber troops can be used to counter those forces.

Table 5. Examples of Negative Sentiment Tweets in the #SaveKIPKuliah Hashtag

No.	Username	Tweet
1.	@rgantas	Celios udah ngingetin. itung2-an dana surplus dalam skema pemangkasan yg bnr bs sampe: 259 76 T. Itu bisa dipake buat tambahan bantuan KIPK sebesar 13 94 T mengcover sampe 1 04 jt mahasiswa. Kenapa rezim ini selalu mengambil skenario terburuk! #savekipkuliah #PeringatanDarurat https://t.co/t7u0C5l0kq

2.	@raffimulyaa	gila ye. saking jeleknya pemerintah ni peringatan darurat sampe punya banyak warna. bisa-bisa kalo semua warna udah dipake merahnya dipecah lagi jadi maroon burgundy rose red. saking jeleknya. #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn #kipk
3.	@ilhampid	bukan lebay soal #savekipkuliah LPDP atau #daruratpendidikan tetapi potret sekolah di papua atau sulawesi masih seperti ini Stop ndasmu ndasmu fokus pd pendidikan .!!! Pemerintah bucin dan mainnya sama pengusaha atau taipan sedangkan rakyat kecil hanya bisa tolong ..!! https://t.co/JjPRy4Cgfu

Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

Table 6. Examples of Negative Sentiment Tweets in the #SavePulauGebe Hashtag

No.	Username	Tweet
1.	@gadisberjilbabb	Pulau Gebe sedang dijarah habis-habisan! Hutan digunduli air dicemari tanah diacak-acak. Semua ini ulah perusahaan-perusahaan rakus yang melakukan TAMBANG ILEGAL tanpa peduli nasib warga. Kita tidak boleh diam! #SavePulauGebe https://t.co/eSLU8nnTIJ

2.	@PartaiSocmed	@susipudjiastuti Aktivitas ilegal ini mencerminkan wajah buruk tata kelola tambang di Indonesia. Jika pulau kecil seperti Gebe saja bisa digerogeti tanpa izin siapa yang akan menjaga Indonesia Timur?
3.	@PartaiSocmed	PT MRI dan PT Smart Marsindo tidak tercatat memiliki izin resmi untuk kegiatan tersebut di Pulau Gebe. Tapi mereka terus beroperasi. Kenapa hukum tumpul ke atas tajam ke rakyat kecil? Bahkan berita tentang hal tersebut di takedown https://t.co/1irN02z68Z

Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

Furthermore, the hashtags #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe use two different strategies. The #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag aims to raise awareness of the issue by using multiple hashtags simultaneously. This increased visibility is accompanied by a strong call

to action that encourages other X users to spread the word about the issue. In contrast, the #SavePulauGebe hashtag focuses on highlighting the environmental impact and criticising those in power, including government bodies and economic actors such as mining companies.

Table 7. Examples of Call-to-Action Narratives in the #SaveKIPKuliah Hashtag

No.	Username	Tweet
1.	@alctual	LAGI LAGI BERTINDAK SEENAKNYA! Katanya mau menuju Indonesia emas? Ini sih lebih ke Indonesia cemas. Selamat karena sudah menghancurkan mimpi para generasi bangsa TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKANâ€™i, #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #AnggaranBijakUntukRakyat #turunkanuktpn #kipk https://t.co/pp34ZfheyK
2.	@ayalogi	UKT naik beasiswa juga diilangin. ketahanan pangan dijadikan prioritas nomor satu tapi anak mau kuliah makin dipersulit. kita tuh krisis pendidikan bukan krisis pangan. apa sih maunya pemerintah?! bantu naikin hastag guys! #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #turunkanuktpn #kipk
3.	@iubberry	ayo naikin tagarnya semua sebelum skema pemangkasan anggaran ini dibatalkan. #HapuskanMBG #BatalkanEfisiensiAnggaranPendidikan #savekipkuliah #daruratpendidikan

Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

The CTA narrative used in the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag encourages rejection of the policy to make the education budget more efficient. Additionally, the CTA narrative focuses on increasing

conversation traffic. This can be seen from the use of narratives that encourage people to promote and raise awareness of the hashtag, as well as the use of other hashtags in the same post.

Table 8. Examples of Call-to-Action Narratives in the #SavePulauGebe Hashtag

No.	Username	Tweet
1	@gadisberjilbab	Pulau Gebe sedang dijarah habis-habisan! Hutan digunduli air dicemari tanah diacak-acak. Semua ini ulah perusahaan-perusahaan rakus yang melakukan TAMBANG ILEGAL tanpa peduli nasib warga. Kita tidak boleh diam! #SavePulauGebe https://t.co/eSLU8nnTIJ
2.	@zy_zy_lestary	Bicara soal kemajuan itu gampang. Tapi coba tinggal di Pulau Gebe mandi air lumpur dan lihat hutan yg lo cintai berubah jadi kubangan tambang. Baru lo paham bahwa TAMBANG ILEGAL bukan cuma kriminal tp bentuk kolonialisme modern. Maka #SavePulauGebe adalah perlawanan bkn keluhan
3.	@evelyn123617	@xvciup Diamnya aparat = izin tak tertulis bagi para perusak. Saatnya bersuara untuk Pulau Gebe! #SavePulauGebe

Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

The CTA narrative on the hashtag #SavePulauGebe tends to encourage people to speak up and oppose mining development on Pulau Gebe in North Maluku. This is evident from the use of words such as "lawan", "bersuara", and "jangan diam"³.

The different strategies used for the two hashtags resulted in different levels of

engagement. On average, the hashtag #SaveKIPKuliah received 9.215 replies, while the hashtag #SavePulauGebe received just 1.003. This indicates minimal interaction resulting from these tweets. Despite the lack of discussion, tweets with the #SaveKIPKuliah hashtag received an average of 64.272 retweets per tweet.

Table 9. Five #SaveKIPKuliah Tweets with the Highest Number of Retweets

No.	Username	Tweet	Number of Retweets
1.	@bluegazings	Temen-temen boleh gak di sela ngefangirl kita sama-sama naikin ht... kondisi sekarang udah memprihantinkan banget apalagi buat kalian yang sedang kuliah. TOLAK PEMANGKASAN DANA PENDIDIKAN #daruratpendidikan #savekipkuliah #AnggaranBijakUntukRakyat #turunkanuktpn #kipk https://t.co/nQfcZk8CFw	18045

³ Lawan: *Resist*; Bersuara: *Speak up*; Jangan diam: *Don't stay silent*

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Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

Table 10. Five #SaveKIPKuliah Tweets with the Highest Number of Retweets

No.	Username	Tweet	Number of Retweets
1	@PartaiSo cmed	Raja Ampat Jilid II kembali terjadi kali ini di Pulau Gebe Halmahera Tengah. Eksploitasi tambang nikel ilegal makin brutal. Warga menolak hutan rusak laut tercemar. Tapi alat berat terus berdatangan https://t.co/LutY53twpc	1589
2.	@gadisber jilbabb	Pulau Gebe sedang dijarah habis-habisan! Hutan digunduli air dicemari tanah diacak-acak. Semua ini ulah perusahaan-perusahaan rakus yang melakukan TAMBANG ILEGAL tanpa peduli nasib warga. Kita tidak boleh diam! #SavePulauGebe https://t.co/eSLU8nnTIJ	51
3.	@jaranotja rak	miris bgt lihat Pulau Gebe makin rusak. Fauna hilang tanah gundul laut tercemar. Tapi aparat kayak tutup mata tutup telinga sprti tdk trjdi apa .. Kalau rakyat protes baru deh rame #SavePulauGebe	50
4.	@iftirarhm ayani	Pulau Gebe jadi korban semoga korban berikutnya adalah keserakahan kalian sendiri. #SavePulauGebe https://t.co/cK56vorSuE	50



5.	@PartaiSo cmed	Lokasi: Desa Kacepi Pulau Gebe Maluku Utara. Puluhan alat berat & dump truck milik cukong lokal terlihat beroperasi mengambil nikel tanpa IUP (izin usaha pertambangan). Ini jelas ilegal dan merusak lingkungan	38
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Source: X, Researcher's data processing results

The high number of calls to action to spread the narrative under the hashtag #SaveKIPKuliah corresponds with the high number of retweets for that hashtag. This suggests two possibilities. First, the CTA narrative may have successfully encouraged other users to help spread the narrative conveyed by the hashtag #savekipkuliah. The second is that the high retweet count was caused by cyber troop operators coordinating to retweet one another. This second possibility is supported by the findings of

Wijayanto et al. (2024), who found that cyber troops retweet each other's posts so that their narrative can be captured by the X algorithm. Unfortunately, Tweet Harvest, the tool used in this study, was unable to capture data on the accounts that carried out the retweets. Consequently, this study cannot confirm either of the two possibilities regarding the high number of retweets mentioned earlier.

Negative narratives demonstrate ludic cybarmilitias' use of negative narrative patterns, as



proposed by Rasidi (2023). The hashtag #SaveKIPKuliah conveys a negative narrative about the decision to cut the education budget. Similarly, #SavePulauGebe conveys a negative narrative about mining activities on Gebe Island.

Furthermore, the #SavePulauGebe campaign also employs doxxing strategies. This is evident in the naming of several mining companies operating on Gebe Island, such as PT. MRI and PT. Smart Marsindo. These companies are also accused of engaging in illegal mining activities on Gebe Island. This aligns with Rasidi's (2023) argument that ludic cybermilitias employ doxxing and framing strategies against their opponents. In the context

of the #SavePulauGebe campaign, cyber troop operators carried out doxxing and framing against the mining companies operating on Gebe Island.

These findings suggest that the narrative patterns and strategies employed by the hashtags #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe are similar to those of ludic cybermilitias, as proposed by Rasidi (2023). This suggests that both hashtags are manifestations of ludic cybermilitia operations. However, rather than defending the interests of the regime, they are used to oppose the regime.

Conclusion

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the two hashtags (#SaveKIPKuliah



and #SavePulauGebe) are not organic. These hashtags demonstrate a new pattern of cyber troop operation: cyber troops spreading narratives that contradict the positions of the government and economic actors. Both hashtags are characterised by cyber troops using anonymous accounts and coordinated posting patterns.

This finding supports the concept of the 'ludic cybermilitia' as proposed by Rasidi (2023). Rasidi (2023) argues that cyber troops in Indonesia are not part of the political and economic elite, but rather independent actors who engage in a form of privatised violence. The hashtags #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe support this

argument, as both oppose the political and economic elite.

Furthermore, this research expands upon the concept of the ludic cybermilitia. As independent actors engaged in a form of privatised violence, ludic cybermilitias act in the political and economic interests of their clients, who typically belong to the political and economic elite (Rasidi, 2023). However, this study's findings suggest that cyber troops can also act against the political and economic regime as independent actors.

This raises two possible motives behind the cyber troop's operations against the regime. The first is that the actions of the cyber troop against the political and economic regime may stem



from awareness among the operators. The operators may also derive a sense of personal satisfaction from carrying out operations against the regime, in line with the 'ludic' aspect of the 'ludic cybermilitia' concept. This suggests that cyber troops do not solely act in service of economic and political interests, as in the concept of 'privatised violence' within the 'ludic cybermilitia', but may also act in pursuit of personal ideological interests.

A second possibility is that there is a professional contract to disseminate narratives against the regime. As a form of privatised violence, cyber troops act in their clients' interests. This suggests that the two aforementioned hashtags

may have originated from a client's request for cyber troop operations against the political and economic regime. If so, this demonstrates that the digital age has made privatised violence services more accessible. Whereas previously, these services were accessible only to political and economic elites to support their interests, they are now accessible to anyone for any purpose, including opposing political and economic regimes.

Unfortunately, this study has its limitations. One such limitation is that the method used can only analyse text posted on social media. This means that the study cannot examine data beyond the text itself, such as the motives

behind cyber troop members posting these hashtags.

Due to these limitations, the study was unable to investigate the background to the two hashtags under review: #SaveKIPKuliah and #SavePulauGebe. Consequently, it was not possible to determine whether these hashtags originated from cyber troops or if there were transactional aspects

involved in their posting. Future research could explore the behind-the-scenes aspects of cyber troop activities opposing the regime. By examining these aspects, we can determine whether the activities of this anti-regime cyber troop are based on the concept of a 'ludic cybermilitia', or if they represent a new model of digital activism.

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