



## Peasant Women's Resistance to Ideology through Social Media: A Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis of Nenengisme

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the symbolic resistance of peasant women to dominant agrarian ideologies through discursive practices on social media, with a case study of Facebook user Neneng Rosdiyana. Stemming from structural inequality in Indonesia's agrarian system and the marginalization of rural women, the research examines how everyday language infused with humor, critique, and local idioms is used to construct resistance discourse. The study employed a qualitative case study design with netnographic observation, analyzing Facebook posts and a YouTube report collected between March and April 2025. The data were analyzed using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach with Fairclough's three-dimensional framework: textual description, interpretation of discursive practice, and explanation of discourse within broader social structures. The findings reveal that Neneng's practices are not merely expressive but constitute ideological articulations challenging masculinist, academic, and state-centered agrarian narratives. Symbols such as the hoe, collective labor, and vernacular expressions function as tools of resistance against patriarchy and capitalism. Her collective practices represent a model of practical feminism rooted in solidarity rather than state intervention. This research highlights the novelty of recognizing women peasants as discursive agents in digital arenas, expanding debates on agrarian feminism and everyday resistance in rural Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse; Women Peasants; Social Media; Symbolic Resistance; Agrarian Feminism

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## INTRODUCTION

Structural inequality in Indonesia's agrarian system has been a persistent reality that transcends different political regimes and reform agendas. Land ownership and access to productive resources have long been dominated by a combination of state authorities, corporate entities, and local oligarchic structures, leaving small-scale peasants with minimal bargaining power. Within this arrangement, women peasants face even deeper forms of marginalization because their contribution to farming households is frequently rendered invisible, both statistically and discursively. Studies have confirmed that gender in agrarian research remains biased and often reproduces masculinist frameworks in which women's agency is ignored (Kumari et al. 2025). This bias is reflected not only in research design but also in the formulation of agricultural development policies, which prioritize male farmers as formal beneficiaries of aid programs. Meanwhile, the broader environmental and economic costs of extractive industries continue to exacerbate rural vulnerabilities, yet they are rarely addressed in a gender-sensitive manner (Campos and Mardones 2023). Thus, the agrarian system functions as a double structure of inequality: vertically, between peasants and elites; and horizontally, within households, where women bear an unequal share of both productive and reproductive labor.

In rural contexts, the undervaluation of women's work is particularly evident in how their daily labor is relegated to a supportive role despite its centrality to food security. Women's participation in agriculture is not limited to planting and harvesting but extends to household economic management, ecological preservation, and community solidarity, yet these dimensions remain under-recognized. Research shows that women's collective participation contributes significantly to agroecological resilience, although mainstream agrarian movements and discourses rarely foreground their roles (Kelinsky-Jones, Niewolny, and Stephenson 2023). This invisibility is compounded by institutional and policy frameworks that continue to treat women peasants as dependents rather than knowledge producers. In contexts

where technological or market-driven narratives dominate, empowerment is often presented in technocratic terms without adequately considering gendered disparities (Fertó and Bojnec 2024). As a result, women peasants are caught in a paradox: they are indispensable to agricultural survival yet symbolically excluded from decision-making and recognition. Understanding this paradox requires rethinking not only the material contributions of women peasants but also their capacity to articulate resistance to dominant agrarian structures.

The emergence of digital platforms over the past decade has opened new spaces for marginalized groups, including women peasants, to articulate critical discourse and challenge symbolic exclusion. Unlike traditional modes of representation mediated by unions, NGOs, or the state, social media enables individuals to craft narratives in their own vernacular while engaging directly with wider publics. Studies on online comments highlight how digital participation can evolve into political expression, particularly for rural communities that lack access to formal arenas of debate (Onoja, Bebenimibo, and Onoja 2022). Within these spaces, personal grievances are not isolated; they are woven into broader critiques of systemic inequality, thereby transforming private reflection into collective consciousness. In the case of agriculture, digital engagement has also been linked to the dissemination of critical imaginaries and solidarity-building, though these dimensions are still underexplored in gender-sensitive contexts (Uddin and Karim 2023). By providing immediacy, accessibility, and horizontal communication, social media platforms like Facebook become micro-political arenas where discursive resistance is staged not through elite theory but through everyday speech.

Despite these openings, scholarship on agrarian discourse often fails to account for how women peasants themselves produce and circulate narratives in digital spaces. Existing literature frequently centers on collective movements, organizational structures, or abstract models of empowerment, while neglecting everyday discursive practices that emerge from the margins. In Indonesia, feminist critical discourse studies have revealed how women activists contest patriarchal norms in environmental and agrarian struggles, yet

they rarely connect these practices to the symbolic use of social media (Ernanda 2023). Similarly, collective models for digital farmer networks have been analyzed for their structural innovation, but such studies often overlook the specific contributions of women and the ways they challenge gendered power asymmetries (Kale et al. 2025). These omissions highlight an important gap: women peasants are not only passive recipients of discourse but active producers whose symbolic practices deserve scholarly recognition. Examining their digital interventions offers a unique entry point to understand how resistance is constructed and legitimized outside formalized movements.

Furthermore, research in feminist political ecology has begun to analyze how agrarian technologies are mediated through gender, but the focus remains on macro-level structures rather than micro-level practices of discursive resistance (Nelson, Faxon, and Ehlers 2024). Similarly, quantitative studies on gender and eco-efficient farming have revealed statistical disparities in labor allocation, but they seldom attend to the symbolic dimensions of women's agency (Fertó, Baráth, and Bojnec 2025). These limitations underscore a continuing imbalance in knowledge production: women peasants are studied as objects of measurement or policy intervention, rather than as discursive subjects with their own critical voices. Social media interventions by women such as Neneng thus provide an invaluable perspective, as they blur the line between domestic identity and political subjectivity. Through humor, metaphor, and vernacular idioms, these women challenge elitist narratives that monopolize agrarian discourse. By centering the experiences of women peasants as discursive agents, the present study addresses a vital gap in existing literature and underscores the need for a more inclusive approach to agrarian scholarship.

In light of these reviews, it becomes clear that while previous studies have addressed gender inequality in agriculture, digital participation among rural communities, and feminist ecological perspectives, none has systematically explored how an individual woman peasant articulates resistance through social media discourse. Prior research has either examined

structural disparities at the macro level or highlighted collective organizational models without engaging the symbolic agency of everyday actors. The present study diverges from these approaches by focusing on a single peasant woman's discursive practice Neneng Rosdiyana and analyzing how her everyday use of Facebook constitutes a counter-hegemonic articulation of agrarian feminism. This approach allows us to see resistance not as an abstract theoretical construct but as a lived, discursive practice grounded in humor, solidarity, and local idioms, thereby filling a crucial gap in existing literature.

## METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design aimed at exploring, in depth, the discursive practices of resistance expressed by a female peasant through social media. Within this framework, the case study is not merely employed to describe phenomena but also to interpret the social dynamics and symbolic meanings embedded in the discourse enacted by the research subject in a digital agrarian context. (Mtisi 2022) argues that qualitative case study research offers significant analytical strength to examine the complexities of social practices that quantitative approaches often fail to capture, as it emphasizes the interconnectedness of actors, contexts, and structures. In this study, the primary focus is directed toward the symbolic construction in Facebook status updates shared by the key informant, Neneng Rosdiyana, along with coverage published on the Liputan6 YouTube channel. These data sources represent a form of symbolic resistance by female peasant against the dominant agrarian discursive structures. Through this design, the researcher is able to trace the interplay between textual content, social context, and the power dynamics embedded within digital discourse.

To collect the data, this study applies netnography as a digital ethnographic technique for systematically observing the online social media activities of the main informant. Netnography was chosen because it is well-suited to capturing interactions, narratives, and symbolic practices that unfold through digital platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. (Kozinets and

Gretzel 2024) explain that contemporary netnography allows researchers to interpret cultural, emotional, and political dimensions of online interactions, especially in the context of grassroots social movements. The researcher monitored Facebook status updates posted by Neneng Rosdiyana between March 9 and March 23, 2025, and the YouTube coverage by Liputan6 uploaded on April 29, 2025. The data collected included textual content, public comments, visual symbols, and hyperlinks accompanying the digital narratives. This technique was conducted in a non-participant observational mode to preserve the natural integrity of the data while maintaining ethical principles such as attribution and contextual validity. All data were archived and categorized based on symbolic themes, types of audience response, and the narratives reflecting counter-discursive articulations within the framework of gender and agrarian resistance.

For the analysis, this study employed a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework: (1) textual description, (2) interpretation of discursive practice, and (3) explanation of the relation between discourse and wider social structures. According to (Pesic 2023), Fairclough's CDA highlights the need to critically uncover how language is used to construct, sustain, or challenge symbolic domination in society. In this research, every Facebook status, online comment, and visual narrative is treated as a text and contextualized within broader agrarian social structures and gendered power relations. The analysis follows three stages: textual description, interpretation of production and consumption contexts, and explanation of how discourse relates to broader social structures.

To increase analytical transparency, the coding process was conducted in several stages. Initial open coding identified recurring idioms, symbols, and critical expressions within the texts. These codes were then grouped through axial coding into broader categories such as agrarian symbolism, collective labor, and critique of authority. Finally, selective coding refined these categories into core discursive themes that structured the CDA. Reliability was supported through peer debriefing and re-reading cycles, while

triangulation between Facebook and YouTube data enhanced the validity of interpretations.

Additionally, the validation process was supported by triangulation of data and repeated contextual observation, as recommended in critical qualitative methodologies (Meydan and Akkaş 2024). Consequently, this study offers not only a descriptive account of digital agrarian discourse but also a critical interpretation of female peasants’ discursive practices as acts of symbolic resistance within agrarian and digital spheres.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The discourse data presented in the following table illustrates how Neneng Rosdiyana, a female peasant from a rural community, engages with social media particularly Facebook as a medium for articulating resistance and critical consciousness. Through her posts and the responses they generate, Neneng challenges prevailing ideological structures, including the romanticism of leftist theory detached from reality, the marginalization of women in agrarian life, and the absence of meaningful state intervention in grassroots struggles. Her language is grounded not in academic jargon but in the embodied experience of collective labor and daily survival. The expressions collected here reveal not only acts of critique but also the construction of alternative values emphasizing solidarity, mutualism, and gender equality rooted in practice rather than theory. In this sense, social media becomes a site of ideological contestation where rural women voice subaltern knowledge, resist symbolic domination, and reclaim discursive agency through the ordinary language of struggle.

Table 1.  
Summary of Selected Field Data from Facebook and YouTube

No	Data Type	Source/Link	Transcription	Discourse Theme
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1	Facebook Status	Neneng Rosdiyana, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1B8NpmuA6Q/">https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1B8NpmuA6Q/</a>	Semakin panjang teori, semakin jauh dari kenyataan. Sementara kalian sibuk berdebat soal penindasan kapitalis di coffe shop mahal, kami para petani sedang memastikan kalian tetap punya makanan di meja, meski kami sendiri nggak tahu besok bisa makan apa.	Critique of elitist leftist discourse and structural inequality.
2	Facebook Comment	Pak Tua Jenkins, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/19V1eDU3kC/">https://www.facebook.com/share/19V1eDU3kC/</a>	Bu Neneng adalah bentuk nyata dari nilai-nilai indah pemikiran kiri, ia mendedikasikan hidupnya sebagai seorang petani bersama teman-teman dari kwt mentari, semangat terus kamerad Neneng, benih revolusi tertanam dalam dirimu.	Symbolic legitimization of peasant resistance as grassroots leftist movement.
3	Facebook Status	Neneng Rosdiyana, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AqQaWDbNP/">https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AqQaWDbNP/</a>	Disini tak ada bos, tak ada buruh. Semua bekerja, semua mendapat bagian. Kesetaraan? Kami tak berteori, kami menciptakannya!	Construction of women's collectivism and labor-based equality.
4	Facebook Comment	Novanov Pavlyuchenkov a, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AqQaWDbNP/">https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AqQaWDbNP/</a>	Bentuk tindakan nyata dari feminisme, bukan cuman omon-omon menyala bu Neneng.	Validation of feminist praxis based on women's productive labor.



[cebook.com/share/1A3e4EiHBC/](https://www.facebook.com/share/1A3e4EiHBC/)

- |   |                  |  |  |   |
|---|------------------|--|--|---|
| 5 | Facebook Status  | Neneng Rosdiyana,<br><a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1YdwimdoXp/">https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1YdwimdoXp/</a> | Cangkul tak pernah takut beratnya tanah. Perempuan pun tak seharusnya takut beratnya dunia.  | Agrarian feminist emancipation through metaphorical resistance.               |
| 6 | Facebook Comment | Wahyu Restiafandi,<br><a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/1J3QBoeDnM/">https://www.facebook.com/share/1J3QBoeDnM/</a>    | Tan Malaka pasti bangga dengan Comrade Neneng. Mengimplementasikan Madilog, Gerpolek dan Aksi Massa secara nyata dan mudah dipahami oleh kaum proletar. Panjang umur Comrade.  | Representation of Neneng as an icon of local Marxist class struggle.          |
| 7 | YouTube Video    | Liputan6,<br><a href="https://youtu.be/7YDs0TfCWNY?si=TKzpRpsqZtGyVe4X">https://youtu.be/7YDs0TfCWNY?si=TKzpRpsqZtGyVe4X</a> | Kalau memang ada bantuan ya itu kita anggap bonus. Kalau enggak ya kita memang tetap berjalan seperti biasa, kita tetap seminggu sekali kerja. Ya kita mengandalkan modal kita dari itu tadi, iuran. Paling utama diperhatikan lah ya mereka bisa terjun langsung ke sini atau mereka bisa mendampingi gimana caranya nih biar kita itu lebih maju (8:22 - | Implicit criticism of the state's absence in empowering rural women peasants. |

8:45).

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**Resistance to Discursive Elitism (Diminutive Politics in Agrarian Discourse)**

In one of her Facebook statuses, Neneng Rosdiyana wrote: “Semakin panjang teori, semakin jauh dari kenyataan. Sementara kalian sibuk berdebat soal penindasan kapitalis di coffee shop mahal, kami para petani sedang memastikan kalian tetap punya makanan di meja, meski kami sendiri nggak tahu besok bisa makan apa.” (The longer the theory, the further it drifts from reality. While you're busy debating capitalist oppression in fancy coffee shops, we, the peasants, are making sure there's food on your table even though we ourselves don't know whether we'll eat tomorrow.) This post is not merely an emotional expression but a form of discursive resistance against the elitism of intellectual narratives that are disconnected from the concrete realities of the lower-class society. In this context, Neneng's statement may be interpreted as a social act that challenges symbolic structures and power relations between theoretical discourses and the lived experience of peasants. In Fairclough's framework, language is not a neutral medium but a form of social practice that constructs and reproduces power (Xing 2024). Her status exemplifies how everyday language can be employed to question symbolic authority long held by the educated elite, who often position themselves as arbiters of social truths. Through her candid and sarcastic tone, Neneng exposes the representational imbalance between those who speak about oppression and those who live under it.

**Figure 1.**  
**Facebook status by Neneng Rosdiyana criticizing the elitism of leftist discourse**



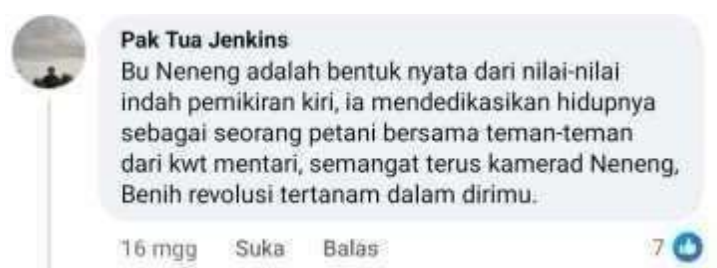
*Source: Facebook (2025)*

The response by Pak Tua Jenkins to Neneng's post becomes a significant marker of how her discursive resistance has received legitimacy from the digital community. He wrote: "Bu Neneng adalah bentuk nyata dari nilai-nilai indah pemikiran kiri, ia mendedikasikan hidupnya sebagai seorang petani bersama teman-teman dari KWT Mentari, semangat terus kamerad Neneng, benih revolusi tertanam dalam dirimu." (Ms. Neneng embodies the noble values of leftist thought; she has devoted her life to farming with her comrades from KWT Mentari. Keep up the spirit, comrade Neneng the seeds of revolution are planted within you.) This comment is more than a personal affirmation; it is an ideological articulation that reinforces Neneng's symbolic position as a subject of counter-discourse. By referring to "comrade" and "seeds of revolution," the comment attributes structural resistance rooted in the tradition of class struggle. This indicates that social media is not merely a platform for expression but a contested

discursive space filled with symbolic solidarity across various communities. (Kirasur and Jhaver 2025) argue that online communities are critical arenas where ideologies are reproduced through micro-discourses that intersect and strengthen collective identities marginalized by dominant narratives.

**Figure 2.**

**Comment from the user Pak Tua Jenkins showing ideological support for Neneng's discursive position.**



*Source: Facebook (2025)*

The public's engagement with Neneng's status shows that discursive resistance does not emerge in a vacuum; rather, it is a collective articulation of shared experiences. In critical discourse theory, power operates not only through coercion but also through regulating who is allowed to speak and how reality is interpreted. Neneng's post serves as a symbolic reclamation by those who have long been positioned as objects within social narratives. She speaks not from an ivory tower but from muddy soil, with a hoe in hand. The supporting comments validate her narrative and reflect its resonance with grassroots communities. This dynamic highlights how discursive practices on social media can open opportunities for subaltern groups to articulate their visions of justice. Her resistance is not an isolated individual act, but part of a broader social dialectic challenging dominant meaning structures.

Neneng's linguistic style plays a critical role in the efficacy of her discourse. She does not employ academic jargon but instead conveys her critique

through popular language rich in sarcasm and everyday expressions. This strategy not only makes her message accessible to fellow peasants and lay audiences but also illustrates that resistance discourse need not be elitist in form. Neneng blurs the divide between what is often called “high discourse” and “low discourse,” showcasing the rhetorical power of grassroots narrative. (Muwafiq, Sumarlam, and Kristina 2018) note that intertextual and emotionally charged communication on social media resonates more strongly because it arises from lived and relatable experiences. In this sense, Neneng’s language is not just a medium it is the message itself, affirming that peasant women can engage critically through their own voice and form.

Her critique also targets the bourgeois intellectualism that commodifies suffering into abstract discourse in exclusive settings. She subtly mocks the intellectual habit of discussing inequality while enjoying the comfort of upscale coffee shops, without ever confronting the hardships faced by the people. This form of criticism unveils the hypocrisy of the educated middle class and raises concerns over the decontextualization of oppression. Within Fairclough’s perspective, dominant discourse serves to produce and preserve symbolic power. Neneng challenges this by constructing a counter-narrative born from collective agrarian experience. By voicing her criticism from the position of those directly affected, she repositions epistemic authority previously monopolized by intellectual circles.

Neneng’s reflective awareness of her role as a female peasant adds further strength to her discursive resistance. She does not merely narrate suffering, but articulates a sharp reading of her social condition. In her discourse, she rejects developmentalist narratives that portray peasants as backward dependents in need of aid, and instead promotes a bottom-up narrative of empowerment. This narrative constitutes a claim to agency by rural women, long excluded from conventional development studies. Neneng refuses to be a passive object in the discourse of progress; she positions herself as a producer of knowledge. Her counter-discourse emerges from her daily labor, practical experiences, and critical engagement with her own social world.

Social media platforms like Facebook have become new spaces for

knowledge production that transcend academic formalism. Neneng uses this medium to convey narratives that are often excluded from formal platforms. By choosing an accessible and participatory space, she creates horizontal dialogue among peasants, activists, and wider society. (Muwafiq et al. 2018) emphasize that social media fosters interdiscursivity, enabling personal grievances to evolve into broader public discourses. In Neneng's case, Facebook becomes not just a tool for sharing, but an epistemic battlefield where alternative narratives can grow and challenge the hegemonic.

The involvement of the digital community, as seen in Jenkins' supportive comment, illustrates that Neneng's discursive resistance is not a solitary action. It is part of a broader chain of meaning-making where audiences actively affirm and reproduce counter-discourses. According to Fairclough's framework, the public's consumption of discourse is integral to the reproduction of ideology. Comments, reactions, and digital participation form a symbolic ecosystem in which meaning is collectively shaped. Solidarity among the lower classes, in this case, is built not only through material relations but also through symbolic processes enacted consciously via language, storytelling, and discursive action.

Neneng's resistance to discursive elitism stands as a form of cultural opposition that targets the core of ideological domination: the question of who has the right to speak, and whose knowledge is considered legitimate. She disrupts representational structures historically dominated by the educated middle class, offering a new narrative grounded in labor, experience, and the moral courage of peasant women. The discourse of Nenengism is not only oppositional it is a constructive project aimed at building a more inclusive, just, and democratic representational system. In an era increasingly dominated by elite narratives, voices like Neneng's remind us that resistance does not always emerge through protest or scholarly writing it can also take the shape of a single Facebook status, composed with conviction, awareness, and courage.

### **Equality and Solidarity in Collective Labor**

The collective practice of peasant women represents a form of social

articulation that transcends their conventional roles in the agrarian sector. In many rural communities, labor relations are often shaped by masculine structures that position women as mere auxiliaries in agricultural production. However, in the context of the Nenengism movement, we observe an alternative narrative emphasizing the essential role of women as key actors in shaping a just and equitable labor system. This indicates that collective labor is not merely about subsistence economics, but a social and symbolic project resisting unequal power relations. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework helps us understand that the linguistic practices embedded in Facebook posts and comments are not simply communicative acts, but also reflections and constructors of emerging social structures.

From the perspective of social practice, the collective labor performed by Neneng's community reflects a form of democratization in agrarian production, one rarely acknowledged by mainstream development discourses. When formal institutions repeatedly fail to deliver justice for peasant women, small grassroots collectives like Neneng's demonstrate that productive systems can function without hierarchical domination. Beneath the structure of "working together," there lies a discourse that rejects oppressive superior-subordinate relationships. Within Fairclough's framework, such narratives should be read as resistance to capitalist hegemony, and the creation of symbolic space where women's voices become the center of the discourse. Collective labor is not merely a pragmatic solution; it is a political arena where social identities are re-negotiated.

Furthermore, this collective labor opens the way to an ethical redistribution system. In Neneng's community, labor relations are depicted as free from domination. Everyone works according to their ability and receives an equal share. This directly contradicts conventional agricultural structures that rely heavily on land ownership, wage labor, and control of production tools. In the midst of formal structures saturated with inequality, Neneng's model shows that economic systems can be built on reciprocity and mutual respect. Fairclough's approach provides room to interpret discourse not only through textual elements, but also through the surrounding social practices, including the values that govern subject-to-subject relations.

Such practices do not emerge in a vacuum. They are built through shared experiences and become part of the collective memory of peasant women communities. Neneng Rosdiyana's Facebook post states: "Disini tak ada bos, tak ada buruh. Semua bekerja, semua mendapat bagian. Kesetaraan? Kami tak berteori, kami menciptakannya!" (Here, there is no boss, no laborer. Everyone works, and everyone gets a share. Equality? We don't theorize we create it!). This line is a powerful symbolic marker that the narrative of equality is no longer in abstract theoretical form, but present in daily realities. It reveals how texts function not merely to inform but to intervene and shape reality. Within Fairclough's framework, this post functions as a social act challenging the symbolic domination of old structures and presenting a labor model rooted in reciprocity and horizontal participation.

**Figure 3.**

**Facebook status by Neneng Rosdiyana on collective labor and agrarian equality among peasant women communities**



*Source: Facebook (2025)*



The comment from Novanov Pavlyuchenkova reinforces this narrative: “Bentuk tindakan nyata dari feminisme, bukan cuma omon-omon menyala bu Neneng.” (A real act of feminism, not just flashy rhetoric, Ms. Neneng). This remark affirms that the labor of peasant women deserves not only economic recognition, but also ideological significance. It introduces the values of practical feminism not confined to slogans or academic discourse but embodied through real, collective, and equitable labor. By linking Neneng’s practices to feminism, this comment reclaims discursive space long dominated by elite academics, transferring it to grassroots women. As (Onoja et al. 2022) noted, social media comments can become powerful mediums of ideological articulation equal to formal discourse.

**Figure 4.**

**A comment from Novanov Pavlyuchenkova affirming collective feminism through practical labor**



*Source: Facebook (2025)*

The collective labor model also affects constructions of time, workload, and domestic role distribution. In this model, women are no longer confined to reproductive labor but are fully acknowledged in productive labor. However, as (Barrios, Taborda, and Rueda 2025) point out, women’s participation in collective systems often increases their time burdens since they still manage households, childcare, and communal duties. In this context, although Neneng’s model offers principled equality, structural challenges remain and must be read as part of complex social practices. The phrase “everyone works and everyone gets a share” is symbolically liberating, yet it demands critical engagement with invisible labor and fair recognition.

The model initiated by Neneng also allows for transformation in agrarian

labor culture itself. Amid market-driven systems emphasizing efficiency and profit, her approach emphasizes social relations, solidarity, and appreciation of individual labor. These values form the ideological basis that repositions labor from a space of competition to one of collaboration. (Njuki et al. 2025) frame this transformation as part of agrarian feminism that does not merely demand political representation, but renegotiates labor values, spatial roles, and power relations in rural life. In essence, Neneng's collective labor is not just survival it is an ideological project to build a more just and humane social order.

This collective approach also proves that justice structures need not always be top-down through policy or institutional intervention. Neneng's community shows that social justice can be rooted locally in honest labor distribution and respect for all contributions. This system includes no exclusive ownership of production tools, no symbolic domination, and no gender-based exclusion. It also critiques development models that fail to recognize the agency of rural women. As (Perelli et al. 2024) noted, the success of women adopting socially just labor systems is often hindered by the lack of formal recognition from institutions. In this context, Neneng's discourse becomes a crucial representation of how women's communities generate justice through self-built labor systems.

Through posts and comments circulating on Facebook, women's collective labor no longer hides behind the fields but emerges as a political narrative that challenges the system. In Fairclough's view, such texts possess transformational power to reshape how society perceives labor, leadership, and equality. Facebook becomes a symbolic battlefield where peasant women not only share stories but also construct reality and reclaim the right to speak. This affirms that social media is not merely a platform for personal expression but a significant site of meaning-making. Within a critical discourse framework, what Neneng and her community practice is not merely agrarian labor but the production of counter-ideologies that disrupt dominant narratives of formal development.

The collective labor pursued by Neneng and her fellow peasant women is

not just about economic efficiency. It is a symbolic struggle, a space of representation, and an articulation of counter-discourses against hierarchical and patriarchal systems in agriculture. By replacing the “boss-worker” model with “everyone works, everyone shares,” they intervene in dominant narratives and propose a new model of social justice. In Fairclough’s approach, this illustrates how texts, social practices, and discursive practices are interconnected in shaping a more equitable social order. Thus, the Nenengism discourse on equality is not merely local resistance it reflects a broader social transformation within Indonesia’s agrarian structures.

### **Agrarian Symbolism and People’s Language as Resistance Tools**

In the structure of agrarian life, peasant women are often seen merely as complements to subordinated domestic activities. However, within the discursive context of Nenengism, a new spirit emerges that subverts this dominant structure through symbolic narratives born from the concrete experiences of female peasants. In one of her Facebook posts, Neneng wrote: “Cangkul tak pernah takut beratnya tanah. Perempuan pun tak seharusnya takut beratnya dunia.” (A hoe is never afraid of heavy soil. Likewise, women should not fear the weight of the world).

**Figure 5.**

**Neneng Rosdiyana’s Facebook post on women peasants’ resilience as a symbol of social resistance**



*Source: Facebook (2025)*

This quotation is not merely a personal motivation but reflects the contradiction between the stereotype of women's fragility and their resilience in confronting the harsh realities of agrarian life. The symbol of the "hoe" becomes a metaphor for women's courage and determination in challenging social structures. It demonstrates that the everyday language used by peasant women is not merely a means of expression, but an instrument of dismantling the symbolic structures of patriarchy that have long been normalized. This marks the starting point for understanding that vernacular language has symbolic power in articulating resistance that is authentic and grounded.

The resonance of that status was reinforced by a comment from the account Wahyu Restiafandi, who wrote: "Tan Malaka pasti bangga dengan Comrade Neneng. Mengimplementasikan Madilog, Gerpolek dan Aksi Massa secara nyata dan mudah dipahami oleh kaum proletar. Panjang umur Comrade." (Tan Malaka would surely be proud of Comrade Neneng. She's implementing Madilog, Gerpolek, and Mass Action in real terms, in ways that the proletariat can truly understand. Long live, Comrade).

**Figure 6.****A digital comment affirming Neneng's post with references to class struggle and revolutionary symbols**

*Source: Facebook (2025)*

This comment affirms that Neneng's symbolic narrative is not only acknowledged by fellow peasants but also embraced by digital communities with ideological inclinations toward class struggle. The invocation of "Comrade" and references to Madilog and Gerpolek reflect an ideological solidarity and position Neneng as a revolutionary subject within contemporary agrarian discourse. It shows that the everyday language used by peasant women can inspire wider political readings. As (Yang, Guo, and Arteel 2023) note, digital space has become fertile ground for grassroots feminist counter-discourses that utilize vernacular expressions to extend ideological influence.

Neneng's Facebook posts and visual narratives embody symbolic articulation that rejects the domestication of women's roles in agrarian structures. The language she uses is neither theoretical nor academic, but rooted in simple vocabulary that evokes collective awareness. Her phrase "perempuan pun tak seharusnya takut beratnya dunia" (women should not fear the weight of the world) reclaims bravery a trait historically disassociated from rural women. Her language invites reinterpretation of social constructions about labor and courage, long regarded as male domains. (de Melo 2024) explain that farmers' resistance on social media exhibits strong multimodal and symbolic characteristics, functioning as a site of legitimacy in contesting dominant discursive powers. Neneng's decision to frame her identity and her community through agrarian symbols is not spontaneous, but part of a deliberate symbolic strategy to reclaim development narratives from elite control.

In the context of discursive resistance, vernacular language draws its

strength from concrete experience, not academic authority. Often, peasant women lack access to formal public discourse. Hence, social media becomes the most democratic avenue they can access. Neneng's statuses carry grounded, easily understood phrases, turning them into political tools that raise collective consciousness among subaltern groups. (Varsa 2024), in her study of peasant women's activism in 19th-century Hungary, emphasized that local symbols used by women became tools for class identity formation and political consciousness. Here lies the relevance of people's language as both a cultural and ideological device. Unlike formal development narratives that are saturated with technocratic jargon, vernacular expressions like Neneng's are participatory and awaken the collective imagination of a just world.

Within the digital ecosystem, Neneng's post is not merely text it is a space of meaning-making constructed through social interaction. Each comment, reaction, and repost contributes to the discursive chain that forms a "conscious public." (Çelik 2024) notes that symbolic violence in the agrarian world often operates through narratives that normalize inequality. Neneng's status reverses that logic, positioning female agricultural labor as both symbolic and material resistance. Social media thus functions not merely as a platform for expression, but also as an ideological arena where new interpretations of labor, roles, and gender justice are formulated. In this light, vernacular language is performative not only conveying messages but also enacting social transformation.

Digital communities thus emerge as collective agents strengthening resistance symbols rooted in everyday life. The support shown for Neneng's post reflects a form of social legitimacy equal to institutional recognition. On Facebook, Neneng is no longer a marginal figure but a symbolic protagonist shaping values, meaning, and direction of struggle. This shows that resistance symbols can be forged through consistent, simple discursive acts, particularly when performed in public spaces that enable mass participation. (Perelli et al. 2024) highlight how relational agency in female farming communities flourishes when there is a collective space to formulate shared narratives and visions. Neneng's status belongs not only to her but to a broader community that

distributes and affirms it.

Public support for Neneng's narrative is not passive; it is a form of discursive participation. Wahyu Restiafandi's comment draws parallels between Neneng's struggle and Tan Malaka an icon of Indonesia's class resistance. This shows how the discourse of peasant women can be absorbed and recontextualised into broader frameworks of political thought. Vernacular discourse is therefore not inferior in public dialogue. On the contrary, it establishes ideological links with historical and social movements. As (Kopf 2025) explains, critical discourse studies in the context of social media can capture how meanings are collectively shaped through the exchange of symbols and narratives especially among marginalized groups.

Neneng's narrative also reclaims symbolic space long dominated by masculine discourse. In agrarian culture, attributes like bravery and leadership are often assigned to men. Through her statuses, Neneng asserts that women too possess symbolic authority to interpret and confront the world. She does not seek recognition from formal structures but builds it from below through consistency and a narrative rooted in labor and lived experience. This is the strength of symbolic resistance in people's language: it does not wait for institutional validation but is legitimated by the community that feels and affirms it. This marks a shift in discursive authority from institutions to civil society's symbolic practices.

Neneng's symbolic resistance illustrates that vernacular language is far from apolitical. Precisely because it emerges from concrete experience, it carries an ideological weight that is more authentic. Unlike formal language, often abstract and institutionalized, people's language delivers experience directly. Consequently, narratives like Neneng's hold transformative potential because they speak directly to feeling, memory, and collective imagination. In this context, a symbol is not just a sign it is an act. It calls, mobilizes, and unites.

In addition to serving as tools of resistance, the symbols crafted by Neneng and her community also expand the political horizon for groups often viewed as apolitical. Peasant women, typically framed as aid recipients in

development discourse, are now repositioned through social media narratives as meaning-makers and agents of change. This role is reinforced by digital audiences who do not merely observe but engage and participate in discussion. By crafting new phrases, using agrarian metaphors, and aligning with ideas like class struggle and grassroots feminism, Neneng bridges two worlds: the local and the global, the symbolic and the practical. Such articulation rarely surfaces in formal discourse, as it demands lived experience and strong ties with the community. In this regard, people's language has become a legitimate channel for knowledge and resistance. The success of Neneng's narrative is not measured by likes or shares, but by its capacity to shift thought toward who is allowed to speak, in what form, and to whom.

This narrative form is inseparable from its digital context, which accelerates the distribution and discourse of resistance symbols. Previously, such narratives circulated within small community circles. Now, they penetrate broader public arenas. This marks a decentralization of meaning production, disrupting dominant narrative hegemony. Vernacular language in digital space functions as a "micro-discourse" that can scale into a "macro-discourse" once it finds resonance. In the framework of critical discourse analysis, this is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but a social one that reflects changes in how society constructs experience and injustice. (Kopf 2025) notes that when local language enters digital arenas and is collectively framed, it becomes not only a representation of reality but a tool to transform it. Thus, symbols of resistance in people's language, like those shown by Neneng, are not just expressions they are acts of real political practice.

The resistance symbol embedded in vernacular expressions, constructed by Neneng through social media, constitutes an ideological articulation not to be underestimated. It is not merely a Facebook status but a discursive practice that produces meaning, builds solidarity, and intervenes in the social order of representation. Through metaphors, folk speech, and digital community support, Neneng has created a new discursive space in which peasant women are no longer passive recipients of policy but active and conscious political subjects. Symbols



such as “the hoe” and her unique rural idioms have transformed into emblems of courage, equality, and resistance against patriarchal agrarian systems. These symbols show that people’s language has strong performativity the capacity to enact social actions through linguistic representation. Within the frame of critical discourse theory, what Neneng and her community have done is the legitimate, authentic, and strategic production of counter-discourse. In short, they are not merely confronting structural inequality but reshaping the public discursive landscape by boldly using their own language.

### **Independent Resistance and Grassroots Agency amid State Absence**

In the dynamics of small-scale peasant communities, especially among women, the state often manifests as formal rhetoric with minimal practical intervention. Field data collected indicates that Neneng’s community does not rely on government assistance to sustain its collective work system. The absence of state intervention does not diminish the initiative of women peasants in constructing autonomous social structures. (Cheong, Bock, and Roep 2024) emphasize that smallholder communities often develop autonomous adaptive strategies based on local social relations when state support mechanisms fail to function optimally. This finding aligns with the pattern of independent resistance observed in Neneng’s community, where collective labor practices emerge from communal necessity without structural intervention. In this context, the state does not appear as a welfare facilitator but as a symbolic entity absent in practical terms.

The narrative of independent resistance is further evident through the practice of mutual cooperation and the contribution-based funding system adopted by Neneng’s community. When asked about expectations of state support, Neneng did not express explicit complaints but instead emphasized the sustainability of the self-help system they had built. This reflects a repositioning of the state’s significance within the consciousness of women peasants. The state is no longer seen as the central power shaping the community’s fate but as a secondary actor whose role can be ignored when irrelevant. (Pontes et al. 2024) describes this

condition as a form of silent disobedience a strategic indifference toward hegemonic institutions resulting from repeated structural disappointment. Such an attitude demonstrates that the absence of the state becomes a productive space for women peasants to establish practical autonomy grounded in lived experience and horizontal solidarity.

This context is reinforced by the tendency of Neneng's community to rely on member contributions as the primary source of production capital. The continuity of agricultural activities does not depend on external aid but on the collective awareness that community sustainability hinges upon each member's contribution. Such practices not only reflect resistance to formal agrarian systems but also represent an alternative political economy grounded in reciprocal ethics.

Concrete evidence of Neneng's community's independent resistance can be seen in Neneng's direct statement in a Liputan6 YouTube video: "Kalau memang ada bantuan ya itu kita anggap bonus. Kalau enggak ya kita memang tetap berjalan seperti biasa, kita tetap seminggu sekali kerja. Ya kita mengandalkan modal kita dari itu tadi, iuran. Paling utama diperhatikan lah ya mereka bisa terjun langsung ke sini atau mereka bisa mendampingi gimana caranya nih biar kita itu lebih maju." (If there is aid, we consider it a bonus. If not, we still carry on as usual, working once a week. We rely on our capital from membership dues. What matters most is that they (the state) can directly come here or guide us on how we can progress.) This statement functions as a symbol of everyday resistance. There is no frontal rejection of the state, but rather an affirmation of the community's autonomous strength as the foundation of their livelihood. This transcript also reflects that hope in the state persists, yet in the form of horizontal relations not structural subordination.

**Figure 7.****Neneng's Interview Transcript on Liputan6 YouTube**

*Source: YouTube (2025)*

Reading this transcript, it is clear that the state's position has undergone deconstruction within the consciousness of women peasants. Rather than a vertical authority to be obeyed, the state is treated as a potential partner whose presence is acknowledged only if it demonstrates practical relevance. According to (Akram-Lodhi 2024), this situation exemplifies how marginal agents successfully reposition structures of domination into structures of negotiation, where the state's role shifts from instructive to consultative. In Neneng's community, expectations of the state are not placed as the foundation of collective action but as an optional addition. This indicates the success of the women peasants' discursive resistance in altering power relations from the center to the periphery.

The autonomous work practices sustained by Neneng's community also constitute a practical critique of the injustices in agrarian aid distribution. In formal systems, access to aid is often mediated by patronage logics and bureaucratic mechanisms that discriminate against women peasants. Findings by (Schwendler 2023) show that in many cases, women peasants occupy marginalized positions within state aid distribution schemes. Neneng's community intentionally built a community-based redistribution system in response to such exclusion. This pattern reveals that resistance does not always manifest as open confrontation but can take the form of alternative system-building that disregards the state's role as a welfare distributor.

This reality further highlights the ideological dimension of the independent resistance practiced by Neneng's community. What this community enacts is essentially the creation of a more equitable and participatory agrarian social system, external to the state's technocratic development logic. (Vergara-Camus and Jansen 2022) term this phenomenon insurgent agrarianism the formation of new agrarian social orders by local communities through autonomous labor practices and horizontal solidarity. By constructing a production system based on member contributions and collective labor, Neneng's community does not merely sustain survival but actively builds a counter-discourse to formal agrarian systems. This practice constitutes an important political articulation in understanding resistance dynamics in the contemporary digital agrarian sector.

The state's absence is not the endpoint for peasant women's communities like Neneng's. Instead, this absence is leveraged as a space to build autonomous community sovereignty. By prioritizing principles of solidarity, mutual cooperation, and self-managed redistribution, Neneng's community demonstrates that resistance to injustice does not necessitate open conflict. In this context, their narrative embodies a form of quiet resistance effectively constructing an alternative social system. Through the power of vernacular language, discursive practices, and collective labor, Neneng's community has reclaimed agency long neglected by the state, turning the state's absence not into a void but into an opportunity for building authentic resistance.

Beyond its theoretical contribution, the findings of this study also suggest practical implications for strengthening women peasants' agency. Grassroots organisations and NGOs working in rural areas can facilitate digital literacy and community-based communication strategies that amplify women's counter-discourses against agrarian marginalisation. Local media institutions may also play a key role by giving visibility to narratives like Neneng's, transforming them from isolated acts of resistance into collective awareness. Meanwhile, state agricultural programs should recognize women peasants not only as beneficiaries but as discursive actors who produce knowledge about land, work, and justice.

Such recognition would bridge the gap between policy and lived experience, making agrarian reform more inclusive and gender-sensitive.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the symbolic resistance practiced by Neneng Rosdiyana reflects a broader pattern of peasant women's agency in constructing alternative discourses outside elite, patriarchal, and state-controlled narratives. Her everyday digital expressions ranging from humor to agrarian symbolism illustrate how rural women transform local idioms into counter-discursive power. This form of resistance, though emerging from a local Javanese context, resonates with similar struggles of peasant women in various regions, such as the "Srikandi Tani" movements in Central Java, the women-led ecological protests in India's Chipko movement, and grassroots digital activism by rural women in the Philippines. These parallels suggest that digital spaces increasingly function as translocal platforms where subaltern women articulate feminist consciousness rooted in local experience yet connected to global struggles. Therefore, the resistance voiced by Neneng does not stand alone it represents a new chapter in the long genealogy of agrarian feminism that merges offline labor solidarity with online discursive power.

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