

The Transformation of The Government's Digital Political Communication: A Study of The Relationship Between The Indonesian Communications Agency and Homeless Media

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the integration of government political communication with digital media platforms, focusing on the role of homeless media accounts and counter-narratives in shaping public perceptions. The research highlights how government programs, traditionally delivered through formal and bureaucratic channels, are now repackaged into digital content such as short videos, infographics, memes, and pop culture elements to align with social media algorithms. Using a case study of 40 homeless media accounts announced under INMF, this study analyzes how 27 of these accounts provide counter-narratives “statements of attitude” to quickly influence public discourse, generate speculation, and challenge dominant narratives. The findings reveal that immediacy, diversity of cues (visual, audio, textual), multilingual communication (Indonesian and English), and direct personal interactions are key factors enhancing audience engagement and political communication effectiveness. From a programmable politics perspective, these results illustrate the government’s increasing reliance on platform mechanisms and digital engagement logic, emphasizing the shift from top-down, bureaucratic communication to participatory, digitally mediated communication. The study contributes to understanding how digital media reshapes political communication, public perception management, and symbolic resistance through social media, providing practical insights for government communication strategies in the digital era.

INTRODUCTION

Political public relations is a management function that does not have to be top-down but rather must be understood as multidirectional, involving political actors and all publics and stakeholders (Spiro Kiouisis et al., 2024). Political communication in the past was dominated by mainstream media as *gatekeepers* of public information. However, the development of digital technology and social media has fundamentally changed the structure of contemporary political communication.

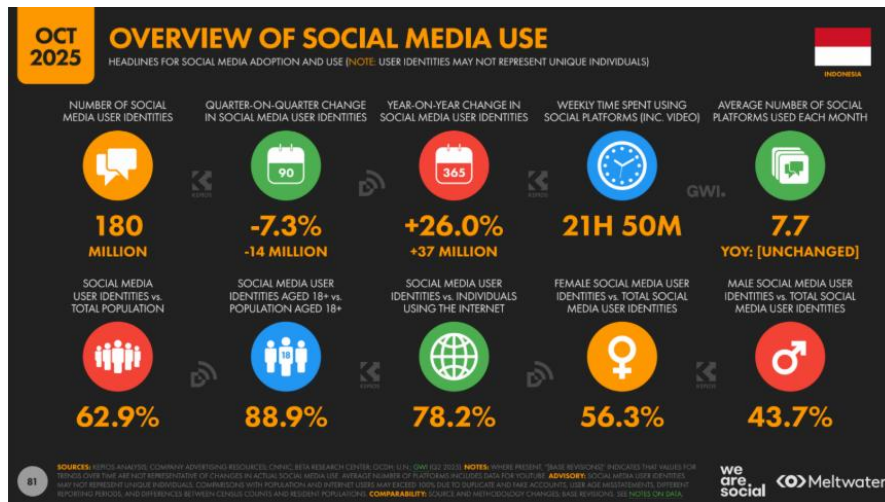


Figure 1. Social Media and Smartphone Penetration in Indonesia's Digital Ecosystem (2025)

Databoks states in 2025, users *smartphone* reached 89.2% of Indonesian population. Even with the use of social media in Indonesia growing 26% from 2024, or reaching 180 million, equivalent to 62.9% of the total population. Me in the digital era is not again only functioning as *gatekeeper* who determines issue, angle views, and disseminated representations to public (Personal & Wastap, 2025; Srikandi, 2023), but also become part from ecosystem increasingly digital politics influenced by platform logic and technology.

In context ecosystem in this regard, Lindgren and Kaun (2024) introduced draft *programmable politics* for explain interaction complex between technology, society, and politics in the 21st century. The concept shift from digital politics which was previously marked by the integration of the internet and social media in discourse as well as practice politics towards political programmed that places platform architecture, algorithms, intelligence artificial, and non-human agencies as factor important things that form landscape political contemporary (Lindgren & Kaun, 2024).

The penetration of platforms such as Instagram, X, TikTok, and Threads has created a new digital political infrastructure for information dissemination, public engagement, and policy advocacy, while also raising challenges related to misinformation, political polarization, and public opinion management (Ronny et al., 2023; Tongat & Salahudin, 2024). Thus, the government is no longer the sole center of political narrative production, as other digital actors have the ability to reproduce, modify, and distribute political issues widely (Bennett & Segerberg, 2023; Chernobrov, 2024; Golumbia, 2024).

A government's political legitimacy is determined not only by its institutional strength but also by its ability to build issue resonance and public *engagement* on social media (Lindgren & Kaun, 2024). Social media is no longer simply a channel for government communication, but rather an arena for contestation and *framing* of digital political agendas (Adiba, 2025; Ali & Ali, 2026; Bennett & Segerberg, 2023; Fuadi et al., 2026; Szabo & Bader-Jurj, 2026).

This transformation of political communication has encouraged the emergence of new communication actors outside conventional media institutions, which are referred to as *homeless media (pseudo media)* (Azizah et al., 2026; Bajusz, 2023; Wolfsfeld, 2022). Remotivi-Internews research with the title *Understanding Homeless Media* in 2024, refers to

digital platform-based media that operate without a formal *newsroom* or the institutional structure of mainstream media, but are able to build audiences, credibility, and public influence through the logic of social media *engagement*. *In the digital platform ecosystem, homeless people Media* evolves through community engagement, speed of information distribution, audience participation, and the ability to adapt to the platform's algorithmic logic. This situation demonstrates that public communication authority is no longer solely vested in official government media outlets but is beginning to be distributed to networked digital actors.



Figure 2. Bakom RI's Collaboration with Homeless Media through the Indonesia New Media Forum (INMF)

Choice of Communication Agency Government of the Republic of Indonesia (Bakom RI) for holding hands *homeless media* - or formally called *New Media* - as partners communication public mark shift extreme in dissemination strategy country information. This step is response on change behavior consumption information an increasingly diverse society avoid from conventional media.

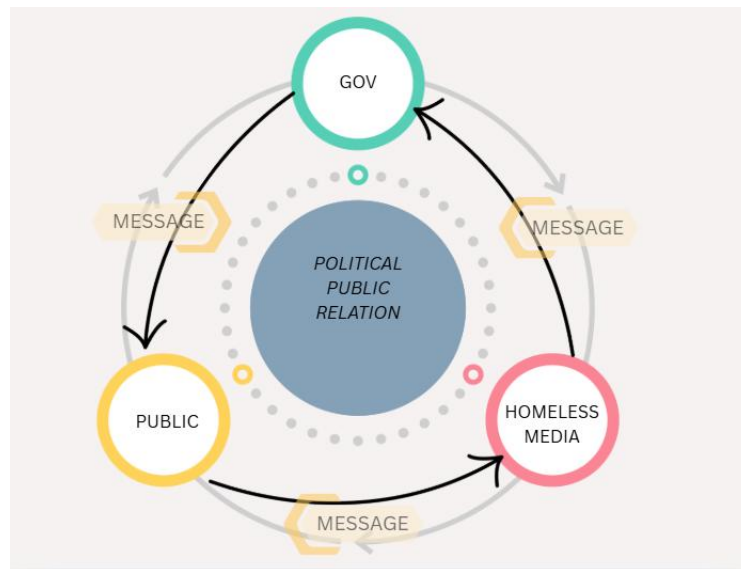


Figure 3. Political Public Relations Communication Model between Government, Homeless Media, and the Public

Bakom RI's main strategy through partnership This is dissemination information without partition (seamless *dissemination*). During this, communication government often trapped in Language rigid bureaucracy and rare channels accessible child young. Involvement *homeless media* becomes tactics *Native Content Integration* government in dissemination of policy programs through packaging repeat appropriate content with style partner media language, both That pop infographics, short videos, and memes. In addition, the focus its distribution more segmented, such as issue economy to account literacy finance, issues social to account based humanities, issues style life to account *pop culture* (jernih.co, 2026).

In his press conference, the Head of Bakom RI, Muhammad Qodari, mentioned several prominent figures who are members of the Indonesia New Media Forum (INMF), accounts that cover various segments. In Lifestyle and Pop Culture: Folkative, USS Feed, Creativox, Indozone, and Dagelan. In the Education and Humanities segment: Kok Bisa?, Menjadi Manusia, GNFI (Good News From Indonesia), and Big Alpha. Meanwhile, in Social and Community: Infipop, Muslimvlog, Taubaters, Kawan Hawa, and Pandemic Talks. As well as several others.

However, efforts to "embrace" the *new media ecosystem* as a government partner sparked public attention, with speculation surrounding the government's close ties to independent digital media outlets. This controversy quickly became a hot topic of public discourse, often discussed on Instagram, X, TikTok, and Threads, the primary platforms for digital debate.

The ongoing controversy demonstrates that the transformation of digital *political public relations* has not only changed communication channels but also altered the power relations between the state, media, platforms, and the public. Within the digital platform ecosystem, the government needs platform-based media to reach a public increasingly reliant on social media as a primary source of information. However, the close communication between the government and *homeless media* has the potential to create a legitimacy crisis regarding the independence of digital media. This situation demonstrates the tension between the state's need

to expand political communication and the demands for media autonomy within the digital democratic space.

In the perspective of *political public relations*, it is understood as a multidirectional and data-based process Network. Through *the interaction-engagement matrix*, the patterns of relationships, interactions, and involvement between Bakom RI and *homeless media* in digital political communication are mapped into two dimensions. First, the horizontal axis shows the level of stakeholder involvement, ranging from a focus on reputation to the quality of the relationship. Second, the vertical axis shows the relationship from the individual level (*dyad*) to the broader network.

This research gap is significant because the Bakom RI and homeless media case demonstrates how government communication strategies are adapting to platform logic while simultaneously creating tensions around media independence and public trust. The urgency of this research is underscored by the declining trust in news in Indonesia, which has plummeted to 32% in 2026, the lowest since 2021, with 64% of Indonesian respondents getting their news from social media platforms. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of programmable politics theory, critical discourse analysis, and the interaction-engagement matrix to analyze the transformation of government-digital media relations in Indonesia's platform era.

Based on the current situation, Bakom RI and *homeless media* are important to study because they demonstrate the changing relationship patterns between the government and non-institutional digital media actors in the digital platform era. This research is crucial not only for analyzing the transformation of government communication strategies but also for examining how platform-based media, algorithms, and non-institutional communication actors are reshaping the ecology of contemporary digital political communication in Indonesia.

With Thus, research This expected can give contribution to development study communication digital politics, transformation state- alternative media relations, as well as dynamics legitimacy communication political in the era of *programmable politics*.

Based on the background description, relevant issues can be identified for further study, namely: 1) How relation communication between Bakom RI and homeless media was built in room communication digital politics through draft *programmable politics* 21st century ? 2) How *homeless media* represent position and independence in relation communication with Bakom RI? 3) How *Interaction-Engagement Matrix* explain pattern relationships and involvement between Bakom RI and *homeless media* in the era of digital platforms?

The problem formulation is the core of the research, serving as the primary direction and focus of the research process. In this study, the problem formulation is based on the background and problem identification outlined previously. The problem formulation is designed to describe the research questions to be answered through the analysis process. In the context of qualitative research, the problem formulation is not narrow or quantitative, but rather exploratory and open to various possible findings (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the problem formulation in this study is formulated as follows: " **How transformation relation communication between Bakom RI and *homeless media* constructed in communication digital politics in the platform era? "**

METHOD

This study used paradigm critical with approach study qualitative critical for understand relation communication between Bakom RI and homeless media in communication digital politics in the era of platforms that focus on interpretation meaning, practice discursive, and construction social via social media, statement public, as well as reproduction narrative in digital space.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from official statements from Bakom RI, statements of position or clarification from homeless media, social media posts, public comments, and digital documentation related to the INMF polemic. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from scientific journals, research reports, online media news, and literature related to political public relations, programmable politics, counter-narratives, and digital political communication.

Data collection techniques used digital documentation and social media observation. Researchers collected posts, statements, screenshots, reposts, comments, and other forms of digital interaction related to the controversy between Bakom RI and homeless media. Furthermore, the study utilized a literature review to strengthen the theoretical analysis of the transformation of digital political communication in the platform era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Programmable Politics in the 21st Century: Counter-Narratives and Homeless Media Resistance

In ecosystem communication digital politics, alternative media and non- institutional actors play crucial role as strength significant that forms discourse public outside control institution government and traditional media. Actors this covers non- institutional media producers, *influencers* digital politics, communicator root grassroots, activist media organizations, and so - called as " *homeless media* " or community media marginalized who do not own anchor institutional.

In the context of this research, Bakom RI and *homeless media* can be understood as a form of *programmable politics* in Indonesian digital political communication. Bakom RI's efforts to engage *homeless media* through INMF demonstrate that the government is beginning to adapt its political communication strategy to the logic of digital platforms.

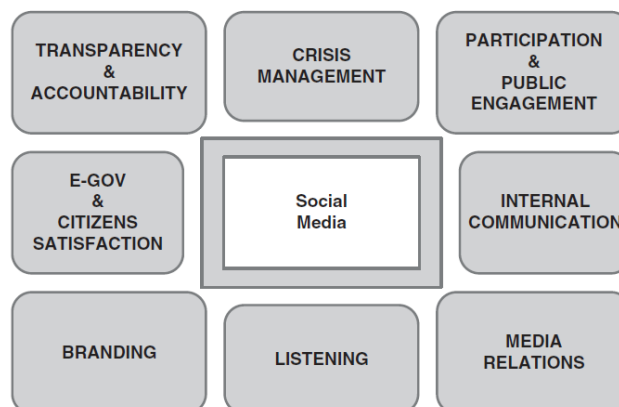


Figure 4. Social Media Integration in Government Political Communication Strategies

Native Content Integration is a Bakom RI tactic that demonstrates how government political communication is beginning to adapt to digital platform culture. Government programs are no longer delivered through formal, bureaucratic communication, but are instead repackaged into popular content such as short videos, infographics, memes, and pop culture content that aligns with the characteristics of social media algorithms. From a programmable politics perspective, this step demonstrates the government's increasing reliance on platform mechanisms and digital engagement logic.

Accounts announced as government partners, such as @folkative, @indozone, @indomusikgram, @infipop, @narasi, and @muslimfolks, segmented by lifestyle, entertainment, social issues, community, and current pop culture trends, have applied several important elements. First, immediacy of information distribution is achieved through Instagram Feeds, Instagram Reels, and Instagram Stories features, as well as the Like, Comment, and Share features to measure speed of engagement. Second, diversity cues (multiple cues) in information distribution cover image design, fonts, logos, and audio across multiple posts. Third, language variation consists of both Indonesian and English, which allows for a more extensive audience reach. Fourth, personal sources are shown through interactions between the folkloristic teams and their followers, including responses to direct messages shared on Instagram Stories.

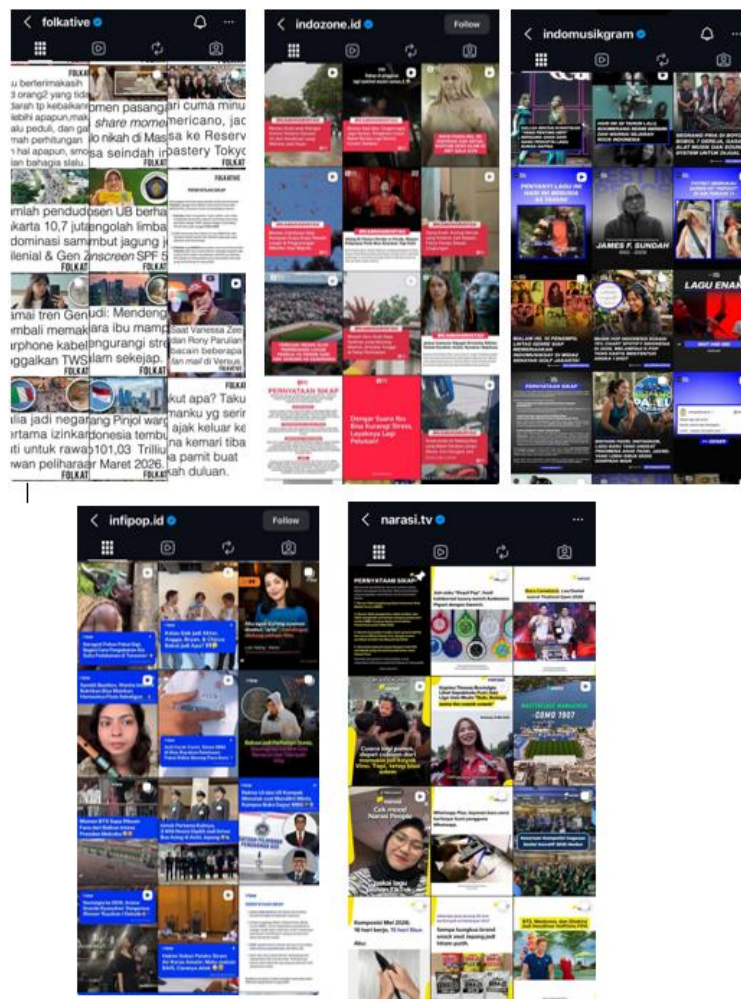


Figure 5. Examples of Government Partner Homeless Media Accounts within the INMF Network

Furthermore, through draft *counter-narratives* and *narrative resistance* as Nowicki (2020) explains that non- institutional actors often face delegitimization through narrative dominant built government. As response, they building resistance strategies narrative with do *reframing* to identity them, avoiding negative labels, as well as build representation alternative to practices carried out

From the list of 40 homeless media accounts announced as part of INMF, including: @folkative, @indozone.id, @dagelan, @indomusikgram, @infipop.id, @narasinewsroom, @muslimfolks.id, @ussfeeds, @bapak2id, @menjadimanusia.id, @gnfi, @cretivox, @kokbisa, @taubatters, @pandemictalks, @kawanhawa, @volix.media, @bicarainuang, @bigalphaid, @goodstats.id, @hai.dudu, @proud.project, @vibizmedia, @unframed.it, @kumpul.leaders, @cxomedia, @themaplemedia, @htbn.id, @everestmedia.id, @geometrymedia, @folksdaily, @dreamcooid, @melodi.alam, @nantikitasambattantanghariini, @modestalk.id, @lead.co.id, @redaksinalartv, @mahasiswadanjakarta, @notchnplus, and @mature.idn, there are 27 homeless media accounts providing counter-narratives “statements of attitude” to public perceptions that quickly produce speculation, comments, framing, and discourse in an effort of symbolic resistance.

Suspicious activity detected

It looks like someone else may be using your ChatGPT account. Please secure your account to regain access to all features. Learn more.Social media algorithms accelerate the spread of the polemic through *reposts*, *trending discourse*, and public *engagement* on various platforms such as Instagram, X, TikTok, and Threads.



Figure 6. Narrative Resistance through Official Statements of Homeless Media Accounts

In this context, *homeless media* not only serve as channels for distributing government information but also as digital communication actors with agency in constructing their own representation and legitimacy. The clarification, understood as a form of *narrative resistance*,

by a number of *homeless media outlets* regarding editorial independence demonstrates a negotiation of position within the digital platform ecosystem. They seek to maintain credibility with a digital audience sensitive to issues of media independence and close ties to the government.

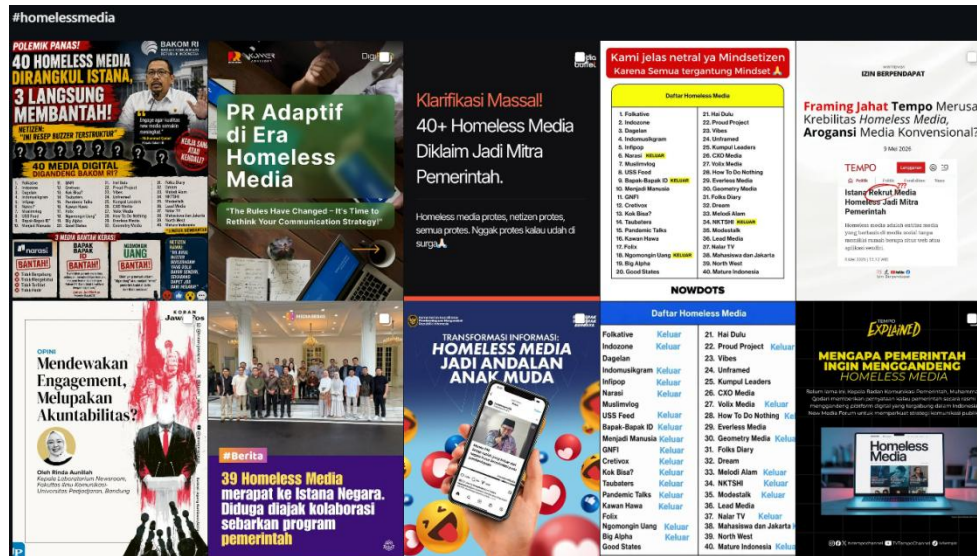


Figure 7. Digital Public Discourse on the Bakom RI–Homeless Media Controversy

The ongoing controversy has demonstrated that contemporary digital political communication takes place within a complex relationship between government, alternative media, digital platforms, algorithms, and the public. Interactions no longer proceed linearly, but rather within communication networks influenced by algorithmic logic, *engagement metrics*, and the reproduction of digital narratives. From a *programmable politics perspective*, the power of political communication is determined not only by state authority but also by the ability of a narrative to gain visibility and resonance within the digital platform system.

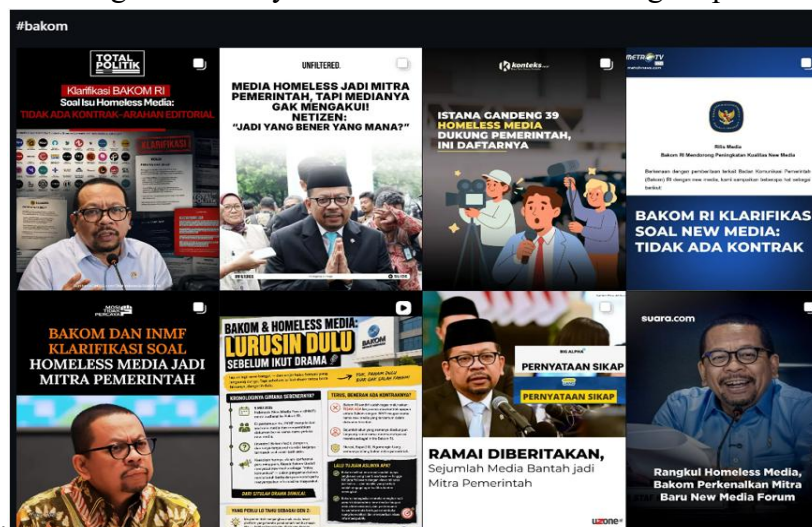


Figure 8. Bakom RI's Public Clarification across Digital Media Platforms

Reported by @totalpolitik, @unfiltered, @konteks, @metrotv, @uzone, @suara.com, Bakom RI provided clarification as a *political public relations effort* to control the escalation of polemics and restore the legitimacy of government communications in the digital space. In

its official statement, Bakom RI emphasized that there is no cooperation contract, editorial direction, or business relationship with *homeless media*. The INMF forum is only a public hearing and communication to understand the development of the digital media ecosystem and expand access to the dissemination of government information to the public.

At the same time, Bakom RI's clarification also demonstrates how the government is beginning to recognize the changing landscape of digital political communication. Bakom RI acknowledges that platform-based media has a significant influence in reaching a younger audience that is increasingly distancing itself from conventional media. Therefore, the approach to *homeless media* is positioned as part of the government's communication strategy to adapt to the logic of digital platforms and the culture of social media *engagement*. In the context of *programmable politics*, this step demonstrates that the legitimacy of government communication no longer relies solely on institutional authority, but also on the ability to build resonance on issues through social media networks.

The controversy surrounding Bakom RI and *homeless media* demonstrates how digital platforms are reshaping power relations in political communication. Social media allows the public to directly respond to, critique, and reproduce government communications without the mediation of conventional media institutions. This situation has made the legitimacy of political communication more fluid and continuously negotiated in the network-based digital space.

Thus, the concepts of *programmable politics*, *counter-narrative*, and *narrative resistance* help explain that the relationship between Bakom RI and *homeless media* is not just a communication relationship between the government and digital media, but... is an arena of contestation narrative, legitimacy, and representation in communication. Contemporary digital politics influenced by platforms, algorithms, *engagement*, and networks. Transformation communication Bakom RI digital politics and *homeless media* reflect How communication political produced in a way collective through interaction complex between technology, state, alternative media, and digital public in room communication-based network.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Bakom RI and Homeless Media

Norman Fairclough, through *Critical Discourse Analysis*, views discourse as a social practice that is not neutral, but rather related to power relations, ideology, and the production of meaning in society. Fairclough explains that language is not only a means of communication, but also a medium used by social actors to build legitimacy, defend interests, and represent certain realities. Thus, CDA not only analyzes texts linguistically, but also examines how texts are produced, distributed, and related to broader social structures. Discourse analysis falls into three main dimensions:

1. text *analysis* ;
2. discursive *practice* ; and
3. sociocultural *practices*.

These three dimensions are very relevant to analyze the case of Bakom RI and *homeless media* in the digital political communication space.

CDA dimensions	Application in the Bakom RI-Homeless Media Case
Text Analysis	framing, representation, language choice, narrative independence
Discursive Practices	production and distribution of clarifications and polemics on social media
Socio-Cultural Practices	government-alternative media power relations in the digital platform era

Figure 9. Application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the Bakom RI–Homeless Media Case

Text Analysis

At the text analysis level, CDA is used to analyze language choices, *framing*, representation, diction, metaphors, and the construction of meaning in Bakom RI statements and clarifications from *homeless media*. In the context of this polemic, the analysis focuses on how Bakom RI represents *homeless media* as “public communication partners,” while *homeless media* represents itself as an independent media with no political ties to the government.

The use of terms like "audience," "communication forum," and "public communication partner" by Bakom RI can be understood as a discursive strategy to establish legitimacy in its communication relationship with digital media. Conversely, the use of terms like "no contract," "no editorial direction," and "maintaining independence" by *homeless media* demonstrates an effort to maintain their reputation and credibility as independent media outlets before the digital public.

At this stage, CDA views language as not being neutral, but rather representing certain interests, positions, and relationships in digital political communication.

Discursive Practice

At the level of discursive practices, CDA is used to analyze how discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed in social media spaces. In the polemic between Bakom RI and *homeless media*, discursive practices can be seen in how Bakom RI's statements were published through press conferences and social media, how *homeless media* provided clarifications through Instagram, X, TikTok, and Threads, and how the digital public reproduced the issue through *reposts*, comments, memes, and online discussions.

In this context, social media is understood as a space for discursive reproduction that allows narratives to develop rapidly through algorithmic engagement. Polemics are no longer solely controlled by the government or formal media, but are instead produced and disseminated collectively through digital networks. Discursive practices also demonstrate that *homeless media* are not merely objects of government communication but also digital communication actors actively constructing *frames* and influencing public perceptions of Bakom RI.

Socio-Cultural Practices

At the level of socio-cultural practice, CDA is used to read the power relations, ideology, and social context that underlie the polemic between Bakom RI and *homeless media*. The

polemic reflects the transformation of digital political communication in the platform era, namely the government's need for platform-based media to reach the digital public, while *homeless media* strives to maintain their independence and legitimacy as alternative media.

From this perspective, CDA sees that the polemic that occurred was not merely a debate about media cooperation, but reflected changes in power relations between the state and digital media, the transformation of *political public relations*, and the contestation of the legitimacy of political communication in the digital space.

Furthermore, sociocultural practices are also influenced by social media logic, *engagement culture*, platform algorithms, and *programmable politics*. In the context of digital political communication, legitimacy is no longer solely determined by state institutions, but also by how a narrative gains resonance, visibility, and engagement within social media networks.

***Interaction–Engagement Matrix* pattern relationships and involvement between Bakom RI and homeless media**

Kiouis, Strömbäck, and Proverbs (2024) explain that *political public relations* is a managerial process carried out by political actors through communication and actions to build, maintain, and manage relationships *and* reputation *with* the public and stakeholders to support certain political goals. From this perspective, *political public relations* is not understood as linear and top-down communication, but rather as a multidirectional communication process between political actors and various publics in an increasingly complex communication space.

The development of social media, *mobile communication*, and globalization has made the linear model of political communication increasingly irrelevant. Kiouis et al. assert that contemporary political communication has shifted from a *two-way communication model* to a *multi-way and multi-public communication model*. In this context, political communication no longer occurs solely between the government and the public directly, but involves a network of actors influencing each other through digital media, social platforms, online communities, and engagement-based communication networks.

Furthermore, *political public relations* is also concerned with building reputation and long-term relationships with the public. Hutton et al. (2001) explain that reputation is more relevant to audiences who are not directly involved with an organization, while relationships *relate* to audiences who are more closely and actively involved. In the era of social media, public engagement *has* become a crucial element in understanding how reputation and political relationships are built through digital interactions.

To understand these dynamics, Kiouis et al. introduced *the Interaction-Engagement Matrix* as a conceptual framework *for political public relations* that explains the relationship between political actors and the public based on two main dimensions. First, the horizontal axis shows the orientation of communication from reputation to relationship quality. Second, the vertical axis shows the form of interaction from individual relationships (*dyad interaction*) to *network-* based interactions. This matrix emphasizes that *political public relations* is not only related to the dissemination of information to the public with low involvement, but also includes network relations with the public and stakeholders with high *involvement*.

Characteristics	Bakom-Homeless Media Case
Network interaction	occurs through social media networks
High engagement	polemics generate responses, reposts, comments, virality
Relationship-oriented	relationships are built through framing and public engagement
Multi-public communication	involving digital communities, followers, social media public
Reputation contestation	the legitimacy of government communications is disputed

Figure 10. Interaction–Engagement Characteristics of the Bakom RI–Homeless Media Relationship

In the context of this research, the relationship between Bakom RI and *homeless media* can be understood through quadrant 2: *relationship via network* in the *Interaction–Engagement Matrix*. This relationship shows that digital political communication between the government and *homeless media* takes place through social media-based interactions with a high level of *engagement*.

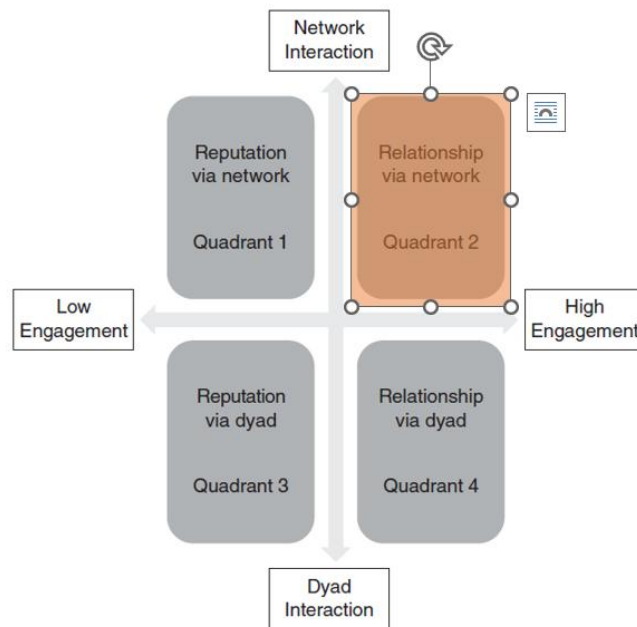


Figure 11. Interaction–Engagement Matrix of Government and Homeless Media Communication

Bakom RI, as a government communications institution, is no longer solely reliant on mainstream media for public information distribution. It has begun building relationships with digital platforms that foster community engagement and high social media *engagement*. Bakom RI's partnership with *homeless media* through *INMF* demonstrates the government's transformation from linear communication to digital network-based communication.

On the other hand, *homeless media* are not passive audiences of government communications, but rather digital communication actors capable of constructing *frames*, reproducing narratives, and influencing public perception of government political

communications. The responses and clarifications of a number of *homeless media outlets* regarding their involvement in the Bakom RI forum demonstrate that the communication relationship is not one-way, but rather multidirectional and negotiative.

Through social media, the relationship between Bakom RI and *homeless media* has developed into a *network interaction* involving the digital public, platform algorithms, audience engagement, *reposts*, comments, and the reproduction of narratives within the social media space. The resulting controversy demonstrates that digital political communication is not only concerned with conveying government messages but also serves as an arena for contestation over legitimacy, *framing*, and representation between state institutions and digital alternative media. This situation compels Bakom to clarify matters not only with the media but also with the digital public, who are key actors in the reproduction of political narratives.

From the perspective of *the Interaction–Engagement Matrix*, it shows that the communication relationship between the government, alternative media, and the public has moved from a *dyadic communication pattern* to a *relationship via network*, namely network-based communication with high *engagement* and reproduction of collective narratives.

From a digital political communication perspective, Bakom RI's clarification not only functions as an administrative response to the polemic, but also as an effort to maintain the legitimacy of the government's *political public relations* amidst the contestation of digital narratives.

Thus, *the Interaction–Engagement Matrix* helps explain how the communication relationship between Bakom RI and *homeless media* reflects the transformation of *political public relations* in the digital platform era, which is multidirectional, network-based, and influenced by the logic of social media *engagement*. In this context, *homeless media* becomes part of the digital political communication actors that not only distribute information but also shape the relationships, reputation, and legitimacy of government communication in the digital public space.

CONCLUSION

Relation communication between Bakom RI and homeless media has form repeat ecology constructed communication as transformation communication digital politics in the platform era in Indonesia. In perspective political public relations, Bakom RI with effort holding hands homeless media confirms that legitimacy communication politics in the platform era Again determined solely by authority state institutions, but by the ability something narrative get resonance, visibility, and engagement public in digital social media ecosystem.

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