

Critical discourse analysis of 'Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru' in digital political communications

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Abstract The development of digital technology has changed the landscape of political communication, especially through social media, which has now become the main arena for narrative battles and political meaning production. This study analyses the cyber politics strategy in the 'Garuda Biru Emergency Warning' content uploaded by the Instagram account @narasi.tv, as a form of symbolic criticism of the democratic situation in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm, this study applies Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis combined with classical propaganda theory and digital political communication theory. Data was obtained through the documentation of visual and textual content. This study seeks to answer three main questions: (1) How are political propaganda strategies constructed in the "Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru" content through visual symbols, diction, and narrative? (2) How does this content shape public opinion and position the media as an actor resisting elite domination? (3) To what extent does social media enable a shift in the production of political discourse from the state to independent media and digital influencers? The results of the study indicate that digital propaganda in this content is constructed through a combination of visual symbols (blue Garuda), authoritative diction (emergency warning), and aesthetic narratives that evoke public emotion. This strategy shapes opinion through affective resonance and demonstrates a shift in symbolic power from the state to independent media and digital actors. This research confirms that social media is not merely a communication tool, but also an arena for ideological contestation and discourse production in contemporary democracy

Keywords: critical discourse analysis; cyber political communications; social media

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has revolutionised access to and distribution of political information, particularly through social media, which has become the primary medium for political communication, propaganda, and mass mobilisation. The dissemination and propaganda of political narratives can now be carried out by individuals and independent media with wide and instant reach (Castells, 2009; Hussain & Howard, 2013). Social media has become an arena for the exchange of opinions and symbols, where various political interests compete to shape public perception (Couldry, 2012). This phenomenon is clearly seen in a post on the Narasi TV Instagram account, @narasi.tv, titled '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning), which satirises the decision of the Constitutional Court and the House of Representatives regarding the threshold for regional head candidacy. The symbolic poster went viral, triggering widespread reactions in the form of comments, reposts, and public content, reflecting the dynamics of digital politics and citizens' resistance to democratic inequality (Tufekci, 2017). In this context, social media has become a space to produce political meaning that helps shape the direction of democracy in Indonesia. Founded by Najwa Shihab and her team in 2018, Narasi TV consistently raises issues of democracy and plays a strategic role as an alternative media outlet that shapes public opinion, especially among young people. Through the power of visuals and digital storytelling, the content of '*Peringatan Darurat*' not only voices criticism of the oligarchy of power but also creates a space for public discussion and resistance. Instagram, as an interactive visual platform, enables the content to reach a wide audience and frame criticism effectively (Hidayatullah in (Sutrisno & Mayangsari, 2022)). This study focused on the Instagram account @narasi.tv as its main object of analysis, examining how this digital platform is used to construct political messages and shape public discourse. Through its visual and narrative strategies, Narasi TV uses digital propaganda to represent collective anxiety about the lack of transparency and the dominance of the political elite. The visual depiction of the blue Garuda serves as a symbol of public unrest and a medium to challenge the dominant ideology (Grabe & Bucy, 2022). In the realm of digital politics, as noted by (Bleiker, 2018), such images and symbols reinforce political meaning and evoke emotional engagement among audiences. Therefore, this study positions the Narasi TV Instagram account not only as a conveyor of information, but as a digital political actor that is active in shaping the narrative of democracy in the era of social media.

This phenomenon confirms that digital media has now become a highly effective propaganda tool not only conveying information but also shaping ideological awareness and directing public perception. Advances in information technology have opened up more direct and open spaces for political participation (Aziz & Zakir, 2022), with social media communication structures differing from conventional media and tending to increase citizen engagement (Noer & Farabi, 2022), (Chadwick, 2013) However, this freedom also poses challenges, such as opinion polarisation and the creation of echo chambers, where users are only exposed to similar views, narrowing the space for dialogue and reinforcing political segregation (Sunstein, 2009). Viral content such as 'Emergency Warning' shows how symbols and visual narratives are used to convey criticism, but also have the potential to shape collective bias. In this context, Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis becomes a relevant approach to unpack how media such as Narasi TV shape socio-political reality through text, images, and socially charged contexts rich in ideological meaning. As demonstrated in M. Akbar Hasyim's study on the relocation of the national capital through the YouTube channel TvOne, media plays a crucial role in framing public opinion through selective and targeted discourse strategies and visualisation.

The phenomenon of the 'Blue Garuda Emergency Warning' content on the Instagram account @narasi.tv shows how digital narratives can both shape and dismantle political hegemony through visual symbols that are widely disseminated in the digital public sphere. This content represents a practice of symbolic propaganda that constructs a discourse of democratic emergency in Indonesia, making it an important object of study in digital political communication. Ilhamsyah (2024), using Gamson and Modigliani's framing approach, highlights the construction of the blue Garuda symbol and the phrase 'emergency warning' as a form of criticism of the decisions of the Constitutional Court and the House of Representatives. However, there is a methodological error in referring to framing as a qualitative method, when framing is more accurately an analytical approach (Entman, 1993). Another study by Trifanny & Aulia,

(2024), uses McCombs and Shaw's agenda-setting approach to examine the viral strategies of political content on the @matanajwa account. Their findings emphasise the importance of visual elements, hashtags, and narratives in building audience engagement and turning issues into public discourse (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Meanwhile, Hasyim (2022) applied Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis to dissect TVOne's YouTube content on the relocation of the IKN, emphasising macro, superstructure, micro, and social cognition dimensions as ways the media shapes public opinion. This approach is relevant to studies of TV Narrative content that visually and narratively critiques power.

Research related to the content of '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) on the Instagram account @narasi.tv shows that digital media plays a strategic role in shaping public opinion and conveying criticism of those in power through symbols, visual narratives, and diction laden with political meaning. Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach was chosen to examine how visual and textual discourse is constructed to shape public perception and position the media as a counterforce against political elite dominance. Simon & Farid Pribadi (2024), research in the Paradigma Journal shows that although television media such as Kompas TV remains dominant in shaping public opinion, the framing used still reflects bias. This provides a stark contrast to the visual and symbolic approach of digital media like Narasi TV. Meanwhile, Sianturi et al. (2024), in the Intelek dan Cendekiawan Nusantara Journal highlight the use of ambiguous diction and sentence structure in political campaigns, which is relevant for understanding the micro aspects of digital political discourse. Aprilia & Feri Firdaus (2024), in Lontar: Journal of Communication Studies researched the TikTok account @gerindra using Van Dijk's approach, showing how the 'gemoy' narrative was used to attract the sympathy of Gen Z by leveraging humour, emotions, and visual language.

This demonstrates that emotional engagement is key to the success of digital propaganda, as also seen in the 'Emergency Warning' content. Several previous literature and studies are relevant in understanding how digital media is used to shape political discourse. Van Dijk (2006), in his book titled *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, provides an important analytical framework on how ideology is formed and disseminated through texts and communication, which is very useful in examining the practice of symbolic political propaganda. Fairclough (1995), in media discourse explains how media shapes social reality through discursive practices, highlighting the important role of language and narrative structure in influencing public opinion.

Meanwhile, (M, 2012) in his work *Discourse of Twitter and social media* discusses how language and symbols are used on social media to create affiliations and form bold communities, which is highly relevant in analysing visual communication strategies on platforms such as Instagram. Finally, Haryatmoko (2017) in his book titled *Kritik Ideologi: Menyingkap Kepentingan di Balik Wacana* (Ideological Criticism: Uncovering the Interests Behind Discourse) outlines the discursive strategies used to reveal hidden power dominance in social texts, providing an important theoretical foundation for ideological analysis of digital content such as '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Garuda Biru Emergency Warning). These five works provide a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics of discourse, symbols, and power in contemporary digital spaces.

Several previous studies provide a strong theoretical and methodological foundation for this research. Simon & Farid Pribadi (2024), using Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, examined the framing strategies used in political talk shows on television and found that although television remains dominant in shaping public opinion, it still reflects narrative bias. Meanwhile, Sianturi et al. (2024), conducted a linguistic analysis of political campaign language, showing that the use of ambiguous words and unclear sentence structures effectively shapes political messages.

Similarly, Aprilia & Feri Firdaus (2024), applied van Dijk's CDA model to political content on TikTok, revealing that emotional engagement plays a crucial role in the success of digital political propaganda. From a theoretical perspective, Van Dijk (1998) provides a multidisciplinary framework for understanding how ideology is embedded and disseminated through language and discourse, while Fairclough (1995) explains that media discourse actively constructs social reality by framing and influencing public perception. In the context of digital communication, Zappavigna (2012) emphasises that symbolic and linguistic expressions in social media encourage audience affiliation through visual language. Complementing this

perspective, Haryatmoko (2016) offers an ideological critique that reveals power relations and hidden interests in textual discourse. Collectively, these studies highlight the interconnection between language, ideology, and media power which form the conceptual basis for analysing the political propaganda strategies of Narasi TV's Instagram content in this study.

This study analyses political propaganda strategies in the content of '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) on Narasi TV's Instagram account using Teun A. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach. The primary focus is to uncover how visual symbols, diction, and narratives are used to shape public opinion, influence perceptions of specific political actors, and position the media as an agent of resistance against elite dominance. The theoretical framework combines classical Propaganda theory, Digital Political Communication theory, and Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis. Propaganda theory explains systematic efforts to shape opinion through symbols and emotion (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012), while digital political communication theory highlights the role of social media as a viral and ideological participatory space (Castells, 2009; Chadwick, 2013). Through Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, the analysis focuses on text structure, symbols, and social context to understand how digital content reproduces power or becomes a means of resistance.

The integration of these three approaches enables a deep understanding of the function of digital media as both a propaganda tool and a space for political resistance. This study is expected to complement previous studies, which have generally focused solely on textual aspects or virality in the analysis of political content on social media, without delving deeply into the ideological dimensions and power structures hidden behind visual narratives.

This study examines political propaganda strategies in the '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) video on Narasi TV's Instagram, interpreting the content as a symbolic resistance discourse rooted in Indonesia's complex political landscape of 2023-2024. The movement symbolized by the Blue Garuda image on a dark blue background emerged as a viral political statement reflecting public dissent against controversial decisions by the Constitutional Court and the Indonesian parliament. It serves as a call for vigilance and active citizen oversight regarding threats to democracy, corruption, and elite manipulation. Inspired by the American Blue Alert system, the content's aesthetic and auditory design evoke an emergency atmosphere that intensifies the urgency of political participation and resistance. Narasi TV leverages this symbol to articulate collective anxiety about perceived regressions in democratic governance and the dominance of non-transparent political elites. The digital campaign blends visual symbolism with sparse yet powerful narrative elements, fostering a digitally participatory space where ideological contestation and civic alertness converge. This interplay underscores the potency of social media not only as a platform for spreading political messages but as a contested site of symbolic power that shapes political realities and public consciousness in contemporary Indonesia

Most previous studies, such as those using the framing or agenda-setting approach, tend to emphasise how issues are framed and popularised, but have not critically examined how symbols, language, and social context intertwine in shaping public opinion and power relations. By applying Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach and combining it with propaganda theory and digital political communication, this study offers a more comprehensive perspective in interpreting symbolic political propaganda practices in the social media era. The focus on visual content such as the 'Blue Garuda Emergency Warning' also expands the scope of analysis to include non-verbal discourse, which has previously received little attention, thereby contributing to the literature on digital political dynamics and contemporary visual communication strategies.

This study aims to examine political propaganda strategies in the content of '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) on Narasi TV's Instagram account using Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach. The focus is to reveal how visual symbols, diction, and narratives are used to shape public opinion, guide perceptions of certain political actors, and position the media as an agent of resistance against elite domination. This study also maps the forms of ideological infiltration on social media, which is no longer monopolised by the state or political parties but is also played out by independent media and digital influencers. Theoretically, this research enriches studies in political communication and critical discourse, particularly in the visual and digital context. Practically, the research results are useful for

scientists, activists, the public, and policymakers in critically reading political content and formulating fair regulations to maintain the integrity of the digital public sphere.

Based on the objectives and literature review, this study formulates several key questions: (1) How are political propaganda strategies constructed in the content of 'Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) by Narasi TV through visual symbols, diction, and narration? (2) How does this content shape public opinion and position the media as an actor of resistance against the dominance of the political elite? (3) To what extent does social media enable a shift in the power of political discourse production from state actors to independent media and digital influencers? The object of this study is the Instagram account @narasi.tv, which functions as a digital platform for disseminating visual and narrative political content. This account was chosen because it is an example of independent media that is actively involved in the construction of political meaning and ideological discourse in the digital public sphere, particularly through symbolic and affective communication strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm, which views social media as an arena for the production and reproduction of power through symbolic and narrative discourse. The aim is to uncover political propaganda strategies in the content of the 'Blue Garuda Emergency Warning' on Instagram @narasi.tv, by combining classical Propaganda theory (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012) Digital Political Communication (Chadwick, 2013), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by (van Dijk, 2006). This theoretical framework enables an in-depth analysis of how symbols, visual narratives, and social contexts are used to shape public opinion. Propaganda theory explains the systematic use of symbols and emotions to shape perceptions.

Digital political communication theory emphasises the role of social media as a space for ideological contestation, while Van Dijk's CDA provides structural analysis through three dimensions: text (macrostructure, superstructure, microstructure), social cognition, and social context. Data collection was conducted by documenting the content of the video 'Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru' (Garuda Biru Emergency Warning). The data was analysed using Van Dijk' structural approach: first, analysing the text structure to identify the main themes, narrative flow, and language elements (diction, metaphors, visual symbols). Second, analysing social cognition to understand how Narasi TV frames the issue and how the audience interprets the message. Third, analysing the social context by looking at power relations, structures of domination, and the national political situation that underpins the content. The main unit of analysis is the video content 'Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru' as a form of progressive propaganda that voices symbolic criticism of power ahead of the elections. The political dynamics of Indonesia in 2023-2024 serve as the analysis to explain the construction of the narrative of resistance.

In addition to textual and contextual analysis, this study also employs multimodal analysis to interpret the interplay between audio-visual elements and ideological meanings. Visual semiotic cues such as colour schemes, camera angles, editing rhythm, and sound design are examined to reveal how emotional resonance and ideological positioning are constructed. These multimodal dimensions are crucial because Instagram, as a visual-based platform, communicates political messages not only through verbal texts but also through visual and auditory symbolism that subtly reinforces meaning. The process of analysis involves repeated viewing and transcription of the content to capture verbal and non-verbal features comprehensively. Analytical memos were developed during the interpretation stage to trace emerging patterns of resistance, framing, and counter-narratives. Triangulation was achieved by comparing interpretations with relevant media reports, audience responses in the comment section, and previous research on digital political propaganda in Indonesia. This ensured analytical rigor and minimized subjective bias in interpretation. The final stage of analysis synthesised the findings across textual, cognitive, and contextual dimensions to produce a holistic understanding of how Narasi TV's content reconstructs democratic discourse and critiques the political establishment through digital media narratives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the content of '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) uploaded by the Instagram account @narasi.tv is a representation of progressive political propaganda strategies in digital format. This content utilises visual symbols such as a dark blue Garuda, strong language like 'emergency warning', and visual narratives that steer public opinion towards the disparities in national political decision-making, particularly following the Constitutional Court and House of Representatives' decisions regarding the threshold for regional head nominations. The short video serves not only as an information medium but also as a tool for mobilisation and amplifying criticism of political elites. This is evident from the high level of public interaction, including comments, reposts, and the reuse of symbols by netizens as a form of resistance.

The coding process was made by dividing the data based on Van Dijk's five-dimensional analysis. In the macrostructure dimension, the content conveyed major themes in the form of criticism of power, which was considered to encompass democracy, with codes such as 'Democracy Crisis', 'Criticism of Power', and 'Constitutional Emergency'. At the superstructure level, the narrative is constructed sequentially through the visualisation of unusual national symbols, striking colours, and brief messages that evoke a sense of crisis, with codes such as 'narrative of resistance' and 'visual warning'. At the microstructural level, emotional diction such as 'emergency' is found, along with visual metaphors and graphic elements (red light, alarm sounds, intense music) that reinforce the rhetorical impact, coded as 'crisis rhetoric' and 'visual metaphor'. Meanwhile, in the social cognition dimension, the public showed high emotional engagement through comments, reposts, and symbolic interpretations of the blue Garuda as a form of resistance, with codes such as 'political awareness' and 'digital participation.' Finally, the social context dimension shows that this content emerged in the run-up to the 2024 elections and was marked by a crisis of public trust in state institutions, coded as 'political oligarchy' and 'crisis of trust.'

The encoded data was then converted into a thematic matrix to identify narrative patterns and dominant meanings. This process was carried out inductively by linking textual, visual, and audio elements to main themes based on the theoretical framework. Public comments were also analysed as a form of collective interpretation by the audience of the message conveyed. Validity is strengthened through triangulation of sources, i.e., by comparing primary data, public comments, and scientific literature. Symbolic interpretations such as the blue Garuda and the term 'emergency' are contextualised with current socio-political conditions to ensure accurate and relevant meanings. The results show that this content systematically conveys political messages that are resistant and symbolic through digital media that effectively reach public awareness.

Political propaganda strategy in the content of "*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*" by Narasi TV

The political propaganda strategy in Narasi TV's 'Garuda Biru Emergency Warning' content is constructed through a combination of visual symbols, strong diction, and aesthetic narratives that contain implicit ideological messages. Unlike conventional propaganda, which was frontal and centralised such as that carried out by the New Order regime through its complete control of TVRI and print media (Sen & David T. Hill, 2007), or World War II propaganda, which relied on nationalistic posters and radio as tools for mass mobilisation contemporary digital propaganda is symbolic, dispersed, and algorithm based (Taylor, 2003). In this context, propaganda no longer appears as an explicit call to action but rather in the form of visual symbols such as the blue Garuda, which carries a critical message about the state of democracy but is packaged in an emotionally charged visual aesthetic open to interpretation. This reflects a shift from a one-way communication model to horizontal participatory propaganda. Harold Lasswell has long stated that, '*Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols*' (Lasswell, 1927), and now the manipulation of these symbols is reinforced by the algorithmic dissemination mechanisms of social media. Zuboff (2019) asserts that power in the digital age no longer operates on what is said, but on what is calculated and disseminated through data flows. The 'Blue Garuda' content serves as a concrete example of how national symbols can be transformed into tools for political criticism that spread rapidly through visuals, short narratives, and emotional resonance. Unlike previous eras that relied on the dominance of

a single narrative from top to bottom, propaganda today is shaped within the open, interactive, and participatory digital public sphere.

The dark blue Garuda symbol in the 'Garuda Biru Emergency Warning' content is the main visual strategy constructed to shape the perception of an 'abnormal' condition in Indonesia's democratic system. The change in colour from gold or white which are commonly used in the country's official emblems to dark blue creates a disruptive effect on the symbolic stability that has long been interpreted as the authority of the state. The colour blue, which is usually associated with calmness, stability, and authority, is used in this context as a signal of danger or crisis. This dissonance of meaning is carefully utilised to stir collective anxiety among the public regarding the political situation. This strategy demonstrates how visual communication can manipulate colour associations and national symbols to convey political messages in a subtle and aesthetically pleasing manner. From a semiotic perspective, symbols are not neutral entities they always carry socially constructed ideological connotations. As Barthes (1977), emphasises in *Image, Music, Text*, visual signs that appear 'natural' or neutral often function as tools for conveying certain ideological myths. In this case, the Garuda symbol is not used to reinforce the dignity of the state as in conventional propaganda but is instead reinterpreted as a means of criticising abuses of power (Chandler, 2007). In *Semiotics: The Basics* also emphasises that the meaning of a symbol is largely determined by the socio-cultural context and can undergo re-semiotisation that is, focusing the meaning of the symbol in a direction different from its original meaning.

Furthermore, the use of colour in visual communication design has psychological and political functions. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* explain that colour is not only a matter of aesthetics, but also a powerful means of shaping social meaning. In this context, dark blue is not merely an alternative visual nuance but a visual code that produces the meaning of 'state abnormality strategically' combined with the national emblem to create a deep political resonance. Not only visuals, but the power of diction also plays an important role in shaping the ideological message of the 'Garuda Biru Emergency Warning' content. The phrase 'emergency warning' is designed to resemble the official communication language of the state, such as early warning systems for disasters or national security threats. By adopting this authoritative style, the phrase creates the impression that the current political situation is critical and requires a public response. This strategy is a form of symbolic mimicry of state discourse, where the communication style typically used by official institutions is instead employed by independent media to criticise the authorities themselves. As explained by Bhabha, (1994) in *The Location of Culture*, mimicry is not merely imitation, but also a strategy of resistance that creates tension within power structures through 'unequal resemblance'.

This diction not only conveys information but also serves to build a tense atmosphere and indirectly encourage viewers to realise the urgency of the democratic situation. In this context, meaning is formed through the ambiguity of a targeted strategy, in which political messages are packaged in a semi-formal form that allows for multiple interpretations, making them easier to absorb by people from diverse backgrounds. (Fairclough, 1995) in *Media Discourse* states that language in the media is not only a tool of representation but also a tool of production and reproduction of social power. The diction chosen carries ideological content that operates on a symbolic level and influences readers' consciousness implicitly. Furthermore, in the context of digital media, this practice aligns with (Hall, 1980) view on coding/decoding, where messages are ideologically encoded by producers (in this case, Narasi TV) and will be interpreted diversely by audiences depending on their social, political, and emotional positions. The term 'emergency warning' allows for critical decoding by the public who already have political awareness, while also being legally safe because it does not explicitly mention the object. Thus, the use of diction in digital propaganda is not merely a matter of language style but becomes part of an effective ideological communication strategy in shaping public discourse.

Furthermore, Instagram's algorithm played an important role in spreading the 'Garuda Biru Emergency Warning' content widely and quickly. Features such as reels, stories, and interaction-based recommendation systems for example, the number of likes, shares, comments, and saves directly increased the visibility of content that was able to evoke an emotional response from the public. Within the framework of the attention economy, as explained by Davenport & Beck (2001) in *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business*, user attention is the primary commodity being contested in the digital age. Platform algorithms work to maintain this

attention by continuously presenting content that is most capable of triggering emotional engagement. This aligns with the concept of algorithmic governance, as articulated by Gillespie (2018) in *Custodians of the Internet*, which explains that digital platforms are not neutral. Instead, they actively curate and filter public discourse through algorithms that determine what is worthy of being seen, shared, and discussed. In this context, provocative, emotional, and easily shareable content such as 'Emergency Warning' is more likely to trend because it fits the engagement parameters valued by the algorithm. As revealed in Van Dijck & Poell's (2013) *Journal Social Media and the Transformation of Public Space*, social media platforms have now become algorithmic infrastructure that systematically shapes the political communication ecosystem from the production to the consumption of information.

The effectiveness of the 'Garuda Biru' content also lies in its ability to evoke emotional resonance, especially negative emotions such as anger, fear, or anxiety, which, according to framing theory, play a major role in shaping perceptions and strengthening collective memory on certain issues (Entman, 1993). These emotions fuel virality because they psychologically trigger the desire to react and share a dynamic often exploited by social media algorithms to increase engagement (Brady et al., 2017). In this context, the visual strategy employed by Narasi TV not only serves to convey information but also creates an emotionally compelling experience that unites collective feelings toward the narrative of the 'democratic emergency.' This concept is reinforced by Papacharissi's (2015) theory of affective publics in her book *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics*, which explains that collective emotions in digital spaces play an important role in driving political discourse. Social media allows for the rapid expression of emotions, which are then reposted through likes, comments, and shares, forming a kind of shared emotional political consciousness. In this context, content such as 'Garuda Biru' does not only target cognitive or informative aspects but also builds emotional solidarity in the form of digital participation through comments, reposts, reuse of visual symbols, and creative remixes made by users as a form of support or criticism. The effectiveness of this strategy is evident from the participatory reactions of the public. The content is not only reposted but also remixed, turned into memes, and visually modified by netizens as a form of political expression. This demonstrates what is referred to as participatory propaganda (Tufekci, 2017), where the audience is not only consumers but also producers of political meaning. They express personal narratives, blending the blue Garuda symbol with current issues such as the weakening of the KPK, revisions to the law, and dissatisfaction with state institutions. Thus, the content becomes an open platform facilitating horizontal political discourse.

Shaping public opinion and positioning the media as an actor of resistance

The content of '*Peringatan Darurat Garuda Biru*' (Blue Garuda Emergency Warning) uploaded by the Instagram account @narasi.tv not only presents symbolic political criticism, but also strategically shapes public opinion through a combination of visual power, collective emotion, and digital algorithms. In this context, Narasi TV positions itself not merely as an information disseminator but as a cultural and political actor consciously challenging the dominance of the ruling elite. This is evident in the use of the national emblem (Garuda) recontextualised with dark blue, the term 'emergency warning' resembling the state's communication system, and the choice of visual format resembling the Emergency Warning System. This framing positions the political situation as a 'crisis,' prompting the public to respond emotionally and critically. This phenomenon reflects the shift in the role of alternative media from the New Order era to the present. During the New Order era, underground media such as campus pamphlets, illegal pamphlets, critical bulletins such as '*Suara Independen*,' and community radio became silent spaces of expression that opposed authoritarianism (Heryanto, 2008), (Sen & David T. Hill, 2007). These types of media were hidden, had limited circulation, and operated under the threat of repression. Meanwhile, alternative media in the digital era, such as Narasi TV, utilise open platforms and algorithmic social media systems to disseminate criticism widely, quickly, and participatively. Within this lies the transformation: from silent and marginal media to dialogical and viral media yet still carrying the same spirit of resistance. This comparison can be read through the lens of Downing (2001) in his book *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Downing states that radical or alternative media function as symbolic and political tools of struggle aimed at challenging the hegemony of state power and opening new discursive spaces for civil society. In this regard, Narasi TV can be categorised as radical media

in a contemporary digital format, as it promotes counter-narratives to the mainstream and reclaims public space previously dominated by elite narratives. By utilising audiovisuals, symbolic aesthetics, and digital affections, this media shapes public opinion through mechanisms that are more decentralised yet still ideological in nature.

From Van Dijk's (2006) perspective, this practice forms a macro-structure of discourse in the form of the theme 'democratic emergency,' reinforced by micro-structures in the form of symbols, metaphors, and visual narratives that target public cognition and affections. By presenting reality through aesthetic symbols, Narasi TV creates a broad interpretive space where the public is not merely consumers of messages but also co-producers of meaning through comments, reposts, remixes, and memes. This phenomenon reflects the shift in the role of the media from an institution that conveys messages to a space to produce collective discourse, as explained by Castells (2009), that in social networks, power is formed through the production of meaning in the public mind, not only through instructions from above. McLuhan (1964) ideas are highly relevant in understanding this dynamic, particularly through his famous concept: 'the medium is the message.' According to McLuhan, the form of the medium itself, not just its content, determines how messages are perceived, understood, and framed by the audience. In this context, the use of Instagram as a fast, interactive, and algorithmic visual medium influences how society responds to political messages. Short video formats, brief texts, and intense visuals shape instant, emotional, and aesthetic ways of thinking. Thus, it is not only the content of the 'democratic emergency' message that is important, but how and in what format it is conveyed that determines its reach and influence. Furthermore, Postman (1985), in his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death* reflects on how visual culture and entertainment have changed the way society understands serious issues, turning them into something light, spectacular, and impression-based. In the context of the 'Garuda Biru Emergency Alert,' this critique can be seen from two angles: on one hand, visual aesthetics make political criticism more accessible; on the other hand, it risks losing its meaning if it is merely seen as 'engaging content' without deeper understanding. However, the strength of TV Narrative content lies in its ability to embed political awareness into a format that aligns with the current digital cultural ecosystem: brief, symbolic, and viral.

Thus, as emphasised by McLuhan and Postman, the form of media determines how society thinks. In this context, platforms like Instagram are not neutral but actively participate in shaping patterns of thought, attention rhythms, and how society interacts with political issues making content like 'Garuda Biru' not just a message but a visual and affective experience that drives political engagement. Furthermore, the interactivity generated by this post shows that public opinion is not formed top-down, but rather through a participatory horizontal process. The participation of public figures such as @najwashihab and other public accounts in disseminating this content demonstrates the domino effect of digital politicisation, where the visualisation of ideology spreads organically through social networks. This phenomenon reflects a shift in the production of public opinion, from the mainstream dominance of the media to the involvement of netizens in collectively creating and distributing political meaning. This concept aligns with Gerbaudo (2018), idea of viral politicisation, which explores how visuals, symbols, and digital emotions are used as tools for horizontal ideological mobilisation outside formal institutions and political parties. In this context, social media is not merely a channel for disseminating messages but also a space for collaboratively and emotionally reconstructing political discourse.

Similar to what Bennett (2013) said in *The Logic of Connective Action*, political mobilisation these days is more personalised and connective, not the traditional collective kind. This means that each individual is involved in spreading messages based on emotional affiliation, not just formal ideology. Papacharissi (2015) also states that political discourse in the digital age is shaped by what he calls the affective public digital communities connected through shared emotions and digital interactions that enable the formation of flexible and spontaneous political solidarity. With this strategy, Narasi TV demonstrates that the media is not merely a 'neutral observer' in politics but can serve as an agent of resistance against the status quo, particularly in the context of democracy diminished by the dominance of power oligarchies. Content like 'Garuda Biru' serves as a symbolic expression of resistance against elite dominance, subtly yet firmly urging society to redefine the mainstream political narrative through digital aesthetic approaches and national symbols. Thus, the function of media in this context transcends its informative role; it transforms into a tool for mobilising political discourse and an instrument of

cultural resistance. This idea is in line with Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which emphasises that media and education should be spaces for critical dialogue, where people are actively involved in recognising and resisting structures of domination. Downing, (2001) in *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements* also asserts that alternative media plays a crucial role in challenging state hegemony and creating spaces for expression for marginalised groups through forms of communication that are not always linear or institutional. Furthermore, Couldry & Mejias (2019) in *The Costs of Connection* highlight how digital media can also be a means of transmission if used to disrupt dominant narratives controlled by political and corporate elite

Shifts in political discourse production in the social media era

Social media has revolutionised the landscape of political communication by disrupting traditional power structures in discourse production. Whereas in the past, political discourse authority was almost entirely in the hands of the state and mainstream media affiliated with the government, this power has now shifted significantly to independent media and digital influencers. In the Indonesian context, the state's dominance over political narratives was particularly evident during the New Order era (1970-1998), when the government strictly controlled the media through the SIUPP (*Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers*) licensing mechanism and oversight by the Press Council, which functioned as an extension of state power. Media outlets deemed to deviate from the official narrative could have their licenses revoked, as was the case with the closure of Tempo, Editor, and Detik in 1994 form of repression against press freedom that created an atmosphere of self-censorship and homogenisation of information (Heryanto, 2008; Sen & David T. Hill, 2007)

In today's different landscape, the 'Garuda Biru Emergency Warning' content uploaded by Narasi TV is concrete evidence of this dynamic shift. Independent media such as Narasi are no longer just conveyors of alternative information but have become major producers of political meaning capable of shaping public opinion widely and effectively through symbolic strategies, visual aesthetics, and the use of social media algorithms. Here, it becomes clear that the production of political discourse is no longer monopolised by the state and official institutions but has been opened up to non-state actors who are able to utilise digital media as a space for expression and resistance. In this context, power is no longer determined by who controls formal information channels, but by who can frame reality in a way that resonates emotionally and visually. As explained by Castells (2009), in a networked society, power is formed through the framing of meaning in the public mind, not through structural coercion. Media such as Narasi TV uses Instagram as its primary medium to build an 'emergency framework for democracy' using a semiotic and affective approach, which is spread virally through public participation and the support of influencers.

This approach clearly actualises the classical communication model proposed by Lasswell (1927): '*Who says what, through which channel, to whom, with what effect?*' In this context: '*who*' refers to independent media such as Narasi TV; '*what*' is the symbolic message of the democratic crisis; the '*channel*' is Instagram and its features (reels, stories, feeds); '*to whom*' is the active digital public; and the '*effect*' is the emergence of collective affection, public participation, and massive message dissemination. This shows that visual and emotional framing is not merely an aesthetic expression, but a structured political communication strategy that touches on all elements of the communication process as modelled by Lasswell. Thus, visualisation tactics such as those employed by Narasi TV bridge classical communication theory with contemporary digital practices, demonstrating that although the channel has shifted from newspapers to social media algorithms, the basic principles of communication remain relevant but are now packaged with dimensions of affect and digital virality (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012; Papacharissi, 2015). The emergence of digital influencers like @najwashihab in amplifying the spread of such content also underscores that discourse production now occurs horizontally and interactively, rather than top-down. Influencers function as nodal actors (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013) who accelerate discourse distribution and expand the reach of alternative narratives through their large and loyal audience bases. Their involvement enables the creation of what Papacharissi (2015) refers to as an affective public digital community bound not only by rational opinions but also by collective affections and emotions.

This phenomenon is also consistent with the Two-Step Flow of Communication theory proposed by Katz (1955) which states that the media does not directly influence the masses at large, but rather first influences opinion leaders, who then convey and reframe the information to their social networks. In the context of social media, digital influencers act as modern opinion leaders who possess affective and cognitive power in shaping public perception. Through the trust and personal relationships they have built with their audience, they are able to transmit political messages in a more persuasive and emotional manner than the media itself. This phenomenon also marks what is referred to as the deinstitutionalisation of political authority, a process in which the state's authority in defining political reality is obscured by counter-narratives produced autonomously by non-state media. Through social media, political discourse is no longer exclusive and elitist but has become an open arena that allows the wider community to participate in shaping and disseminating political meaning. Furthermore, this digital space paves the way for the emergence of so-called subaltern voices - voices that were previously marginalised in the hegemonic narrative of the state. In this context, the concept of subaltern, as explained by Spivak (1988) in her *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, refers to socio-political groups that have historically lacked access to voice their interests in systems of knowledge and power domination. Social media, with its open and participatory nature, provides a new symbolic infrastructure for these groups - from civil society, indigenous communities, marginalised activists, to independent journalists - to appear as equals and articulate their own narratives in public. On platforms like Instagram, Twitter or TikTok, minority voices that were previously silenced or not considered 'relevant' can now gain visibility and widespread support. They are no longer dependent on the editorial curation of mainstream media, but can build horizontal networks of solidarity through likes, reposts and community participation. This is in line with Couldry & Mejias (2019) view in *The Costs of Connection*, which states that digital infrastructure provides alternative spaces for non-elite political expression and reshapes the structure of socio-political relations globally. Thus, the deinstitutionalisation of political authority in the social media era not only increases the state's dominance over discourse production but also activates a radical transformation in the landscape of political representation, where subaltern voices can intervene in the digital public sphere and seize the right to speak that has been monopolised by elites.

Furthermore, logic algorithms on digital platforms such as Instagram contribute to amplifying emotionally engaging, visual and controversial content. As argued by Gillespie (2018) in the concept of algorithmic governance, digital platforms play an active role in determining what is seen, talked about and debated in the public sphere. In the context of 'Garuda Biru', the algorithm expanded the reach of the content due to its high visual appeal and massive public reaction-both positive and negative-that triggered a further cycle of engagement. However, the effect of this algorithmic selection is not entirely neutral. As Pariser (2011) argues in his notion of bubble filters, social media users tend to be exposed to information that is uniform with their own preferences and beliefs, as algorithms filter content based on previous interactions. This creates a digital space that is protected from different viewpoints and reinforces existing beliefs. At the same time, there is also the phenomenon of echo chambers, where certain opinions and emotions are echoed repeatedly.

The echo chamber phenomenon in the digital space shows how certain opinions and emotions are repeatedly reflected in homogeneous communities (See Figure 1), thereby exacerbating political polarisation. In the case of 'Garuda Biru', algorithms not only expand the reach of content but also shape a discursive environment that reinforces certain symbolic narratives. Research shows that algorithms can act as ideological actors, not merely distribution tools, because algorithms have the rhetorical and ideological capacity to direct public attention (Dillet, 2022; Mager, 2014). Those who are critical of power tend to be continuously exposed to similar content, reinforcing the perception that democracy is in a state of emergency, while pro-government groups may not be exposed to this narrative at all (Bakshy et al., 2015). This confirms that algorithms function as agents in digital political communication practices (Zamith, 2020) and form a new symbolic infrastructure that regulates the visibility of discourse (Ludwig, 2023). Furthermore, recent research also shows that social media algorithms play a role in reinforcing echo chambers that shape political beliefs and public behaviour, although recent literature emphasises that the effects of algorithmic polarisation can vary depending on the context and research design (Barbera, 2025). Thus, social media has democratised the production of political

discourse by shifting the centre of meaning production from the state and mainstream media to independent digital actors, opening space for participatory propaganda, and positioning affective resonance as the main driver in shaping public opinion (Beckers, 2023).

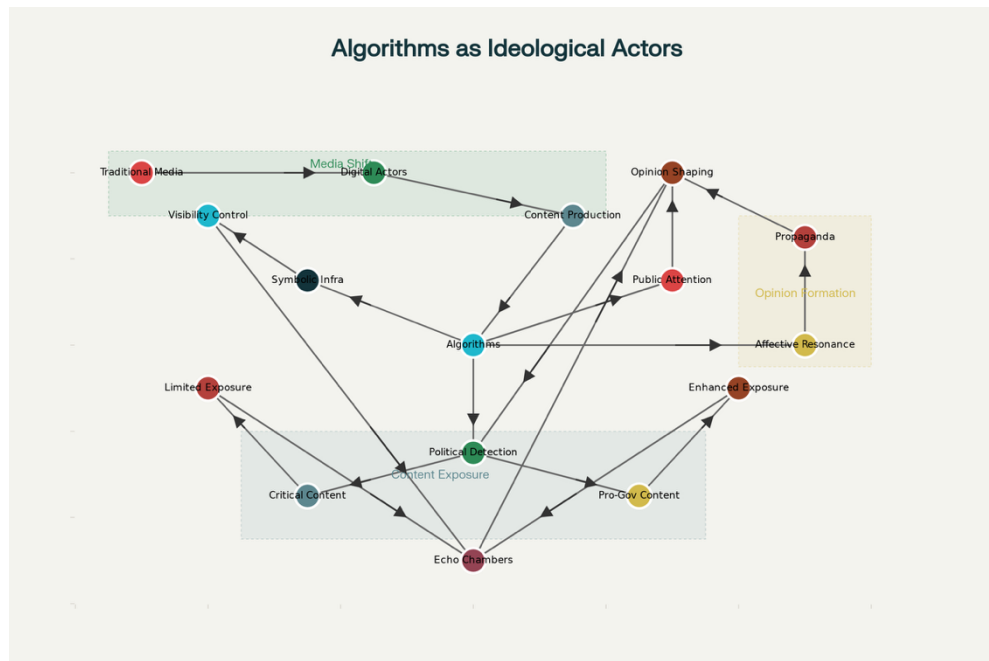


Figure 1. Conceptual model of algorithms as ideological actors in digital political communication
Source: Author (2025)

Social media is not just a medium of communication, but an arena for contestation of meanings, symbols, and the direction of democracy itself. In this context, it is relevant to refer to the theory of mediatisation of politics developed by Strömbäck, (2008). Strömbäck states that in the era of mediatisation, politics is no longer only controlled by institutional logics (such as parties, parliaments, or bureaucracies) but has been heavily influenced by media logics - namely demands for visibility, dramatisation, personalisation, and simplification of messages to fit the media format. Politics, in other words, is increasingly 'playing' by the rules set by the media. With the emergence of social media as a new mediatic force, media logic is no longer monopolised by mainstream media, but is also controlled by algorithms, visual trends and digital interactions. Thus, content such as the Garuda Biru Emergency Alert not only conveys political ideas but also operates within the logic of digital media: visual, emotional, concise, and easily disseminated. This shows that in the digital era, anyone who controls the logic of the media - not just formal authorities - can influence public opinion and the direction of democracy.

CONCLUSION

The political propaganda strategy in the Blue Garuda Emergency Alert content shows a shift from conventional propaganda patterns to symbolic, participatory, and algorithmic digital forms. Through the transformation of colours, symbols, and meaningful visual narratives, political messages are no longer conveyed explicitly but rather through symbolic codes that evoke emotional resonance. This practice indicates that digital propaganda relies more on symbols and emotions as a means of raising public awareness about democratic issues.

In addition, the patterns of political communication formed in this content reveal the emergence of a horizontal process of meaning production. The audience no longer merely acts as recipients of messages, but also participates in interpreting, disseminating, and reinforcing the political meanings contained therein. This shows that independent digital media has the capacity to become a space for symbolic resistance as well as an arena for ideological negotiation, thus opening the possibility for the creation of counter-narratives to the dominant discourse.

Ultimately, social media has changed the structure of political communication by democratising the digital public sphere. The centre of symbolic power, which was previously

concentrated in the state, has now shifted to independent digital actors. This dynamic shows that contemporary propaganda not only serves to persuade, but also to challenge, disrupt and redefine national symbols. In this way, the digital space has become an arena for democratic contestation, where symbols, emotions, and ideologies constantly interact and compete with one another.

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