

# Examining The Scholarly Literature on The Methods of Political Communication in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study systematically reviews the evolution of political communication research in Indonesia from 2004 to 2024, emphasizing East Java as a dynamic sub-national context within the country's democratic transition. It bridges theoretical and regional gaps by integrating the agenda-setting, framing, and mediamorphosis theories to interpret the shifting landscape of political discourse. Using a PRISMA-based protocol, data from national and international publications were thematically analyzed to trace conceptual developments and methodological trends. The findings indicate a transformation from traditional mass media to algorithmic digital platforms that reconfigure campaign strategies, issue salience, and public framing in both national and local arenas. Through the lens of mediamorphosis, this shift illustrates how media convergence and technological adaptation reshape participatory democracy and regional political engagement. However, existing studies remain urban- and elite-oriented, often neglecting local language, rural participation, and everyday communicative practices. This review contributes a synthesized theoretical framework and a regional perspective to understand Indonesia's mediated democracy, while recommending ethnographic and discourse-based approaches to capture the lived realities of political communication across diverse local contexts.

**Keywords:** *Campaign strategy; Digital media; Participatory democracy; Political communication; Systematic review*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's transition to democracy in 1999 marked a pivotal moment in the nation's political trajectory, transforming it from an authoritarian regime into one of the most vibrant democracies in Southeast Asia. Over the past two decades, from 2004 to 2024, this political transformation has been accompanied by dynamic changes in the realm of political communication, driven by decentralization, the proliferation of private and local media, and

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the exponential growth of digital technology and social media platforms. These evolving communication ecosystems have significantly influenced how political narratives are constructed, contested, and consumed, not only at the national level but also within sub-national and regional contexts.

Despite these transformations, scholarly engagement with Indonesia's political communication remains uneven. Most existing studies have concentrated on national elites and major electoral events, often overlooking the complex, everyday practices of political communication in local political settings. This article addresses this gap by systematically reviewing the academic literature on political communication in Indonesia from 2004 to 2024, with specific attention to regional political dynamics using East Java Province as a focal case. As one of Indonesia's most populous and politically active provinces, East Java provides an important lens for examining how local actors, media institutions, and citizens participate in and shape democratic processes.

Although the past two decades have witnessed growing decentralization and increased access to communication technologies, the scholarly literature still lacks theoretical integration and adequate empirical focus on sub-national developments. This gap is particularly evident in the context of local media practices, political discourse in vernacular languages, and the influence of local cultural norms on political messaging. Moreover, political communication in Indonesia has become more digitally mediated, with citizens increasingly accessing political content via social media, online news portals, and messaging apps—often within localized, culturally embedded frameworks (Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020; Aspinall et al., 2021; Farkas & Bene, 2021).

The significance of regional variation in political communication demands renewed scholarly attention. As local governments and actors have gained more influence, understanding how political communication functions at these levels is crucial for assessing the quality and inclusiveness of Indonesian democracy. This paper argues for expanding the analytical scope of political communication studies in Indonesia to better reflect the realities of decentralized governance, digital transformation, and regional diversity. It also calls for deeper engagement with theoretical perspectives such as agenda-setting, media framing, and elite–mass communication in local contexts.

By bridging these theoretical and empirical gaps, this study contributes to broader discussions about strengthening democratic governance, fostering media accountability, and enriching the academic discourse on political communication in Indonesia's evolving democratic landscape from 2004 to 2024 (Sumarto, 2020; Objantoro & Diana, 2023; Tapsell, 2020; Ahmad, 2022; Yilmaz & Barton, 2021).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

***Evolution of Political Communication Studies in Indonesia (2004–2024)***

Over the past two decades, political communication studies in Indonesia have gradually evolved from traditional campaign analysis to more nuanced explorations of digital communication and public engagement. During the period 2004–2014, research predominantly focused on media institutions and political marketing during electoral cycles. Tapsell (2015) emphasized the dominance of media oligarchs in controlling political narratives, while Aspinall (2014) noted the personalization of political campaigns as a defining feature of post-Suharto elections.

Since 2014, the surge in internet penetration and smartphone usage has shifted scholarly attention toward digital political behavior. Lim (2017) examined how social media platforms—particularly Facebook and Twitter—serve as arenas for both elite-driven propaganda and grassroots activism. Similarly, Nugroho, Siregar, and Laksmi (2019) documented the rising role of influencers and online volunteers in shaping public discourse during the 2019 general elections.

Despite these developments, the theoretical foundations remain fragmented. Few studies have applied integrated frameworks such as agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), framing theory (Entman, 1993), or gatekeeping (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) in analyzing Indonesia’s multi-layered political communication landscape. Table 1 below provides a summary of thematic trends and methodological focus across two key decades.

**Table 1. Trends in Indonesian Political Communication Studies (2004–2024)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Key References</b>
<b>2004–2014</b>	Campaign strategy, media ownership, electoral politics	Content analysis, media ethnography	Tapsell (2015); Aspinall (2014)
<b>2015–2024</b>	Digital activism, social media, algorithmic politics	Digital ethnography, discourse analysis	Lim (2017); Nugroho et al. (2019); Aspinall et al. (2021)

***Research Gaps in Local and Regional Political Communication***

A significant gap in literature lies in the limited exploration of political communication at the regional and local levels. Most studies concentrate on national-level actors, leaving provincial dynamics—such as those in East Java—under-researched despite their electoral and cultural significance (Ahmad, 2022; Strassler, 2020).

Existing works rarely investigate how political messages are interpreted within local cultural frameworks, including the use of vernacular languages or Islamic symbolism common in regions like East Java and West Sumatra. Moreover, little attention has been paid to how local media function as gatekeepers or agenda-setters in relation to local governments and political elites. Yilmaz and Barton (2021) call for deeper analyses of religious populism

at the local level, noting how it often merges with digital campaigns. Similarly, Gandasari and Dwidienawati (2020) observe that while local social media groups influence voter perceptions, they are often overlooked in formal research.

This paper addresses these gaps by advocating for regionally grounded approaches that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods. Applying frameworks such as agenda-setting, framing, and reception theory can offer new insights into how regional actors and citizens co-construct political meaning within Indonesia’s decentralized governance model.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **Systematic Literature Review (SLR)** approach to assess how political communication methods in Indonesia evolved between 2004 and 2024. The SLR methodology allows for a structured synthesis of existing research, the identification of key theoretical frameworks, and the detection of empirical gaps relevant to both national and sub-national political contexts (Snyder, 2019; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

### *Data Collection*

Building upon the systematic design outlined above, the data collection process was designed to capture the breadth of scholarly discussions on political communication across both national and sub-national contexts. Data were collected from multiple scholarly databases, including **Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, SINTA, and Garuda**, to ensure both international and local perspectives were represented. In addition to peer-reviewed journal articles, relevant grey literature such as policy briefs, civil society reports, and credible online media publications was also included to contextualize the evolving media and political landscape in Indonesia (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015).

The search strategy utilized Boolean operators and a combination of keywords, including: (1) Political communication in Indonesia. (2) Digital political media. (3) Elite-mass communication. (4) Online political participation. (5) Local politics and media framing. A PRISMA-based protocol guided the data filtering process to maintain transparency and replicability (Page et al., 2021).

### *Selection Criteria*

To ensure relevance and quality, the review applied both **inclusion** and **exclusion** criteria as outlined below:

**Table 2. Selection Criteria**

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Year of Publication	Articles published from 2004 to 2024	Publications outside this time range

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<b>Geographic Scope</b>	Focus on Indonesia (national or local/sub-national level)	Studies unrelated to Indonesia
<b>Publication Type</b>	Peer-reviewed journal articles, NGO reports, media analyses	Blogs, non-academic opinion pieces
<b>Thematic Focus</b>	Political communication, media, participation, campaigns	Business communication, marketing unrelated to politics
<b>Language</b>	English or Bahasa Indonesia	Articles in other languages without translation

(Sources: Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003)

The criteria outlined above ensured that the selected studies were methodologically sound, contextually relevant, and aligned with the research objectives. By combining both international and local sources, the review maintained a balanced representation of Indonesia’s political communication scholarship. The inclusion criteria emphasized studies that explicitly addressed political participation, media framing, and campaign strategies, while the exclusion criteria filtered out unrelated or non-academic works. This systematic screening process strengthened the validity of the dataset and provided a clear foundation for the subsequent thematic and NVivo-assisted analysis.

### **Analytical Procedure**

Following the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the retained studies were subjected to a structured analytical process to identify theoretical orientations, thematic trends, and empirical gaps across the reviewed literature. The selected literature was analyzed using **thematic analysis**, following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step process: (1) familiarization with data, (2) initial coding, (3) theme identification, (4) theme review, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) report production. The analysis was supported by **NVivo software**, enabling robust coding and visualization of emerging patterns across the dataset. To ensure analytical rigor, NVivo (version 12) was utilized not only as a data management tool but as a systematic coding environment. The coding procedure combined **deductive and inductive strategies**. A **deductive codebook** was initially constructed based on key theoretical lenses—**agenda-setting**, **framing**, and **mediamorphosis**—which guided the identification of recurrent concepts such as *issue salience*, *media framing logic*, and *technological adaptation*. Subsequently, **inductive codes** emerged from the data to capture context-specific patterns, including *grassroots mobilization*, *regional discourse*, and *digital populism*.

Each document was coded across **three hierarchical levels**: (1) *nodes* representing theoretical constructs, (2) *themes* indicating interpretive categories, and (3) *patterns* reflecting comparative or temporal relationships (e.g., shifts between pre-reform and digital-democracy eras). To enhance credibility, **two independent coders** analyzed a 25% subsample of the materials. **Inter-coder reliability** was evaluated using **Cohen’s Kappa ( $\kappa = 0.82$ )**, indicating

strong agreement (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Discrepancies were resolved through iterative discussion and refinement of the codebook. NVivo's visualization tools (cluster maps and matrix coding) were then used to explore intersections among theories, actor types, and media platforms, thereby clarifying how **agenda-setting**, **framing**, and **mediamorphosis** theories collectively interpret evolving political communication trends in Indonesia.

Although the analytical process was conducted systematically and supported by NVivo-assisted coding, it is important to recognize several inherent limitations that may affect the scope and generalizability of this review.

### ***Limitations***

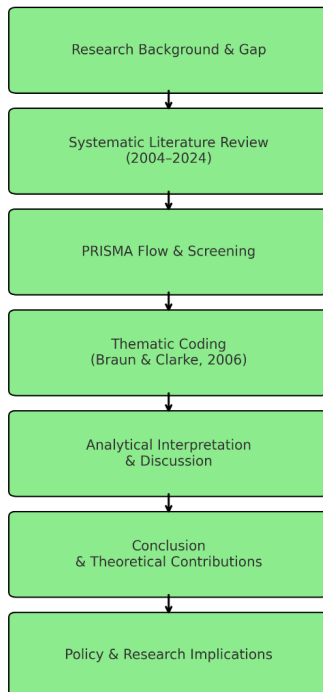
Despite the rigor of the systematic approach, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, access to subscription-based journals may have excluded some high-impact studies, creating a potential **open-access bias** (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015). Second, many local case studies—especially from district-level elections, remain unpublished or only appear in non-indexed formats, limiting the comprehensiveness of the dataset. Third, the analysis relies solely on secondary sources and does not include field data or interviews, which could provide deeper insights into actor motivations and communication nuances.

Future research could complement this review with ethnographic fieldwork or discourse analysis to explore how political communication is practiced in everyday contexts, especially in rural and under-represented regions (Silverman, 2020). Such qualitative approaches would offer deeper insights into the lived experiences of citizens, the role of local languages and symbols in conveying political messages, and the influence of socio-cultural norms on communication dynamics. This would help bridge the existing empirical gap by moving beyond elite-centric and urban-focused studies, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and grounded understanding of Indonesia's diverse political landscape. Moreover, this approach would also allow researchers to examine the interpretive processes through which citizens engage with political content, and how digital technologies intersect with traditional communication practices at the grassroots level.

By acknowledging these methodological constraints, the study ensures transparency and paves the way for translating the analytical outcomes into broader theoretical insights and policy recommendations.

### ***From Research Question Formulation to Policy Implication***

This research flow illustrates the complete trajectory of the study—from the initial formulation of research questions, through systematic literature review and thematic analysis, to the development of conclusions and recommendations with potential implications for public policy and future academic inquiry.

**Enhanced Research Flowchart (2024 Edition)**

**Figure 1.** *Enhanced Research Flowchart Illustrating the Systematic Review Process on Political Communication in Indonesia (2004–2024)*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### ***The Importance of Understanding Indonesia's Political Communication History***

Political communication in Indonesia has evolved substantially in response to sociopolitical liberalization and technological expansion. Since the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998, Indonesia has transitioned toward a more open and participatory democracy, with vibrant electoral contests and increasing public involvement (Mietzner, 2020). From 2004 to 2024, the convergence of media deregulation and digital innovation fundamentally reshaped how political messages are crafted, distributed, and consumed.

Indonesia's internet penetration rose from around 34% in 2014 to nearly 80% in 2024, enabling massive shifts in public engagement (Asia-Pacific Solidarity, 2024). Mobile connectivity surpassed 353 million lines, and political communication strategies increasingly relied on mobile advertising and app-based voter targeting (APSense, 2024). These structural changes supported a wave of citizen-led political mobilization and facilitated the mainstreaming of grassroots voices. Commentary on platforms like Reddit further reflects this change, revealing how everyday users in Indonesia actively analyze, parody, and disseminate political content (Reddit Indonesia, 2024). Although not peer-reviewed, these platforms offer valuable insight into real-time political sentiment and discourse trends.

Despite these democratic gains, challenges such as media partisanship, disinformation, and algorithm-driven echo chambers persist, underscoring the need for critical media literacy and regulatory attention (Yoedtadi et al., 2021; Tapsell, 2020).

### ***Pre-Reform Era (Before 1998)***

During the New Order regime (1966–1998), Indonesia’s political communication system was defined by strict state control, centralized information flow, and the suppression of dissenting voices. The Ministry of Information (*Departemen Penerangan*) exercised pervasive authority over all forms of mass communication—licensing, censorship, and content approval—ensuring that media narratives aligned with state ideology (*Pancasila Democracy*). Journalistic autonomy was virtually absent: data from the Indonesian Press Council (1997) show that over 60 media outlets were banned or forced to close between 1980 and 1997, including major publications such as *Tempo*, *Editor*, and *DeTik*.

Public access to political information was heavily filtered through state-owned outlets like **TVRI and RRI**, which functioned as propaganda arms promoting the image of national stability and obedience to leadership (Strassler, 2020; Hill, 2021). Political communication was thus **top-down**, privileging elite discourse and marginalizing grassroots voices. Surveys conducted in the late 1990s by LP3ES indicated that **less than 25% of citizens felt free to express political opinions in public**, reflecting widespread self-censorship and fear of reprisal (Olivia, Utami, & Sarwono, 2020).

The so-called “**porcupine index**”—a metaphorical measure of political speech safety—placed Indonesia among the lowest-ranked in Southeast Asia for open political discussion (Tambunan, 2021). This repressive communication environment not only curtailed civic participation but also **hindered the emergence of deliberative and critical public spheres** (Sen & Hill, 2011). Consequently, the pre-reform period entrenched an authoritarian media culture that would later shape the challenges of democratization in the post-1998 era, including public distrust, limited media literacy, and structural dependence on elite-controlled information channels.

### ***Post-Reform Era (1998–2024)***

The post-reform media ecosystem illustrates what Fidler (1997) conceptualized as *mediamorphosis*—a process in which old and new media co-evolve rather than replace one another. In Indonesia, legacy media such as newspapers and television have not disappeared but have adapted to digital formats, creating a hybrid communication system that blends traditional authority with interactive participation (Lim, 2017; Nugroho & Syarief, 2020). Political actors increasingly exploit this hybridity by synchronizing television coverage with online virality, exemplified by the strategic use of televised debates that are simultaneously amplified through YouTube and TikTok snippets. This convergence has transformed audience behavior from passive consumption to participatory circulation, making citizens both receivers and distributors of political messages.

The rise of *digital populism* further complicates Indonesia’s post-reform communication order. Scholars such as Tapsell (2018) and Aspinall & Fossati (2020) argue that digital populism thrives in algorithmic environments that reward emotional and moralized content over factual discourse. In Indonesia, populist leaders and online influencers utilize digital affordances—hashtags, memes, and viral videos—to construct authenticity and mobilize identity-based solidarity, often bypassing journalistic gatekeeping. This dynamic resonates with Moffitt’s (2016) notion of mediated populism, where performative immediacy replaces institutional deliberation. As a result, political communication becomes increasingly affective and polarized, shaping voter perceptions through spectacle rather than substance.

Empirical data supports these theoretical shifts. A 2023 survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) reports that over 78% of voters rely on social media as their primary political information source, while only 15% still depend on print or broadcast media. Moreover, algorithmic personalization has intensified *echo chamber* effects, reinforced partisan divisions and contributing to the spread of disinformation (Wijayanto et al., 2023). In this context, mediamorphosis and digital populism offer crucial interpretive frameworks: the former explains structural transformations in media ecology, while the latter elucidates the new logic of emotional mobilization and symbolic politics dominating Indonesia’s democratic communication landscape.

**Table 2. Evolution of Political Communication in Indonesia:  
 Pre- and Post-Reform Comparison**

Aspect	Pre-Reform Era (≤ 1998)	Post-Reform Era (1998–2024)
<b>Media Control</b>	Total state monopoly and censorship	Regulatory liberalization; digital broadcasting; co-existence of public, private, and user-generated content (Asia-Pacific Solidarity, 2024)
<b>Political Participation</b>	Suppressed; limited to elite circles	Expanded through social media; citizens engage directly in campaigns and protests (Reddit Indonesia, 2024; APSense, 2024)
<b>Information Flow</b>	Top-down; state-filtered	Multidirectional; peer-to-peer communication; live-streamed debates, digital petitions (Yoedtadi et al., 2021)
<b>Technology Use</b>	Minimal; highly regulated	Smartphone-driven, AI-enhanced campaigns; virtual town halls; data-based targeting (APSense, 2024)
<b>Public Discourse</b>	Uniform and state-approved	Fragmented but pluralistic; includes parody, satire, activism (Reddit Indonesia, 2024)
<b>Media Ownership</b>	Concentrated in state hands	Commercialized; media conglomerates often tied to political interests (Tapsell, 2020)

Aspect	Pre-Reform Era (≤ 1998)	Post-Reform Era (1998–2024)
Civic Empowerment	Suppressed	Digital civic platforms; participatory governance initiatives; e-Gov apps (Hermawan, 2024; Asia-Pacific Solidarity, 2024)

As illustrated in Table 2, the evolution of Indonesia’s political communication landscape reveals a profound structural and cultural transformation. The transition from the pre-reform to post-reform era marks a shift from state-controlled and centralized communication toward a participatory, digitally mediated, and commercially diversified ecosystem. This transformation not only reflects the liberalization of media institutions but also signifies the reconfiguration of power relations between the state, political elites, and citizens.

Moreover, the comparative patterns underscore that technological innovation and regulatory change are not merely instrumental but constitutive forces that reshape the nature of political engagement itself. While the post-reform era has expanded opportunities for civic participation and pluralistic discourse, it has also introduced new vulnerabilities—such as digital inequality, misinformation, and political polarization—that challenge the consolidation of democratic communication. Thus, understanding these continuities and ruptures provides a critical foundation for interpreting Indonesia’s contemporary political communication through frameworks like *agenda-setting*, *framing*, and *mediamorphosis*.

## DISCUSSION

Political communication in Indonesia between 2004 and 2024 has undergone a paradigmatic shift—from an authoritarian, top-down structure to a more participatory and horizontal model of communication. The political reform of 1998 paved the way for media liberalization and rapid growth of information technology, which collectively democratized the public sphere (Mietzner, 2020; Tapsell, 2020). Digital transformation has empowered citizens not only as consumers but also as producers of political content. With internet penetration reaching 79.5% in 2024 and more than 353 million active mobile connections, political discourse has become real-time, multidirectional, and citizen-driven (Asia-Pacific Solidarity, 2024; APSense, 2024).

Nevertheless, this progress has not come without challenges. The proliferation of misinformation, identity politics, and digital polarization have emerged as unintended consequences of an open media landscape (Lim, 2017; Hermawan, 2024). Viral political content on social media tends to prioritize emotional appeal and sensationalism over policy substance or ideological clarity. On a more positive note, political engagement among young generations—particularly Gen Z and millennials—has significantly increased. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have become key tools for expressing political opinions and

forming digital civic identities (Yoedtadi, Yusuf, & Wulandari, 2021; Hermawan, 2024). This reflects a shift in the modes and meanings of political participation.

This discussion underscores the need to enhance political communication theories that are grounded in Indonesia's digital reality. While agenda-setting and framing remain relevant (Entman, 1993; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), emerging frameworks such as mediamorphosis theory (Fidler, 1997) and digital populism are increasingly necessary to capture the complexity of the current media ecosystem. Amid the risks of polarization and media commercialization, fostering digital literacy and accountable information governance is imperative for sustaining participatory democracy in Indonesia.

### ***Theoretical Construction***

The findings of this review reveal that the evolution of Indonesia's political communication cannot be fully explained by a single theoretical lens. Instead, an integrative framework combining **agenda-setting**, **framing**, and **mediamorphosis** theories provides a more comprehensive understanding of how communication power is distributed, negotiated, and transformed across time. From an **agenda-setting** perspective (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the shift from centralized to decentralized media structures has diversified the sources of political influence. In the pre-reform era, the state defined the public agenda through tight media control. After 1998, however, the proliferation of private and digital media allowed multiple actors—politicians, influencers, and ordinary citizens—to compete in shaping public priorities. This pluralization of agenda-setting reflects a diffusion of communicative power, yet it also creates fragmented attention cycles that make collective deliberation more difficult.

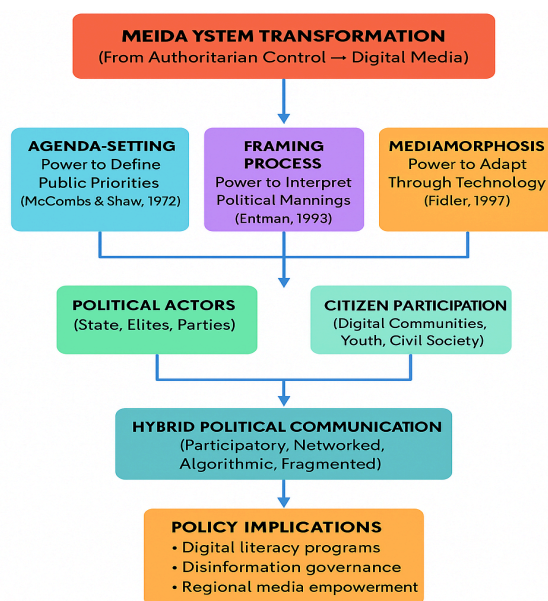
Meanwhile, **framing theory** (Entman, 1993) helps to explain how issues are constructed and contested within Indonesia's hybrid media ecosystem. Post-reform political discourse is marked by competing interpretive frames—ranging from nationalist to religious-populist narratives—that influence how audiences perceive political legitimacy and moral authority. The rise of social media amplifies this contestation by enabling the rapid circulation of emotionally charged content, often reinforcing selective exposure and echo chambers.

Finally, **mediamorphosis theory** (Fidler, 1997) offers a meta-framework to understand how technological convergence and institutional adaptation drive structural transformation in political communication. The migration from analog broadcasting to algorithmic platforms has not merely changed the medium but also redefined modes of interaction, temporality, and participation. In this context, Indonesian political communication demonstrates a pattern of *hybrid mediamorphosis*, where traditional media logics coexist and overlap with digital affordances such as virality, personalization, and participatory co-creation.

This theoretical synthesis highlights that political communication in Indonesia between 2004 and 2024 embodies both continuity and disruption. The convergence of these frameworks suggests a dynamic model where political power, media technology, and civic agency constantly evolve in relation to one another. Hence, future studies should refine this integrative model through mixed-method or longitudinal approaches to better capture the

interplay between media transformation, political strategy, and civic culture in Indonesia’s diverse democratic landscape.

To clarify the interrelations among variables and illustrate the trajectory of transformation in Indonesia’s political communication landscape, the following **Integrative Theoretical Framework** visualizes the transition from an authoritarian communication system to a participatory digital ecosystem. This conceptual model integrates structural, technological, and participatory dimensions, reflecting the dynamic evolution between 2004 and 2024.



Integrative Theoretical Framework of Indonesia  
(2004–2024)

### Conceptual Diagram

**Figure 2.** Integrative Theoretical Framework of Political Communication in Indonesia (2004–2024)

#### Explanation:

The integrative framework visualizes how **three major theoretical pillars—agenda-setting, framing, and mediamorphosis—interact dynamically** to explain Indonesia’s evolving political communication landscape.

1. **Agenda-setting theory** clarifies how control over public attention has shifted from state-dominated institutions to a pluralistic, multi-actor environment where citizens, influencers, and digital platforms shape issue salience.
2. **Framing theory** emphasizes how political meanings are constructed and contested through mediated narratives, memes, and visual storytelling—reflecting ideological and cultural pluralism in the post-reform public sphere.

3. **Mediamorphosis theory** captures the technological and institutional adaptation that underpins these changes, where old and new media coexist, hybridize, and continuously reshape political discourse.

Together, these theoretical dimensions converge into a **hybrid political communication model** characterized by participatory engagement, algorithmic mediation, and regional diversity. The lower tier of the framework links these transformations to **policy implications**—including digital literacy initiatives, regulation of online misinformation, and the empowerment of regional media ecosystems—to ensure inclusive and democratic communication governance.

The diagram above illustrates that the evolution of political communication in Indonesia is not linear but rather a dynamic interaction among media liberalization, technological innovation, and digital citizen mobilization. The model highlights that classical theories such as *agenda-setting* and *framing* remain relevant but must be complemented by emerging frameworks such as *mediamorphosis* and *digital populism* to capture the complexity of political participation in the era of media convergence.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that political communication in Indonesia has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades, evolving from a centralized and elite-dominated system into a more decentralized, participatory, and digitally mediated sphere. The post-1998 political reforms, combined with the rise of digital technologies and social media, have expanded the spaces of political expression, allowing citizens to participate more actively in shaping public discourse and campaign narratives.

However, this broadening of participation also introduces new risks. The literature consistently highlights the growing influence of **disinformation, polarization, and algorithmic manipulation**, which threaten the integrity of Indonesia's democratic communication ecosystem. These findings carry several important **policy implications**. First, policymakers must strengthen **digital and media literacy programs** within schools, communities, and public institutions to build citizens' critical capacity to evaluate online information. Second, a **national disinformation management strategy** should be developed, combining fact-checking networks, regulatory oversight, and cross-sector collaboration between the government, academia, civil society, and technology platforms. Third, the **empowerment of regional and local media**—through capacity-building grants, digital infrastructure support, and ethical journalism training—can serve as a counterbalance to the dominance of Jakarta-centered narratives and help sustain pluralistic public debate across Indonesia's diverse regions.

Theoretically, this review underscores the importance of integrating **agenda-setting, framing, and mediamorphosis** frameworks to capture Indonesia's evolving media ecology.

These perspectives explain how digital convergence and participatory communication reshapes power relations between elites, media institutions, and citizens.

Looking forward, future research should incorporate **interdisciplinary, data-driven, and regionally grounded approaches**—including ethnographic and discourse-based methods—to better understand sub-national political dynamics, particularly in regions such as East Java that represent microcosms of Indonesia’s mediated democracy. Such scholarship will not only advance academic theory but also provide **evidence-based insights for inclusive, transparent, and resilient communication policies** in the digital age.

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