

# Media as an Arena of Power: Ideology, Discourse, and the Construction of Social Reality

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## Abstract

This article conceptualizes media as an arena of power in which ideology, discourse, and communication practices shape the construction of social reality across both conventional and digital environments. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach through a systematic literature review, the study develops a conceptual framework based on thematic classification, source triangulation, and synthesis of key debates in communication, sociology, and critical media studies. The findings reveal that media operate as a symbolic field where competing actors struggle to define reality, while legitimacy and authority determine which meanings are accepted as natural and unquestionable. Ideology is reproduced through language, representation, and everyday narratives that normalize unequal relations and generate social consent. In digital contexts, power is increasingly exercised through platform infrastructures, algorithmic visibility, moderation systems, and attention-based economies that regulate what can be seen, said, and considered acceptable, thereby producing subtle forms of social control. Although spaces of resistance exist through alternative discourses, digital activism, and citizen-generated content, these are often constrained or commodified within platform logics. The study concludes that media should be understood as socio-technical institutions embedded in power structures and contributes an integrated conceptual framework that links media power, ideology, and discourse as relational processes shaping social reality in contemporary algorithmic environments.

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## 1. Introduction

Media occupies an increasingly strategic position in modern social life, as it plays a role not only as a transmitter of information but also as an arena for the production of meaning and power relations. In a society increasingly mediated by communication technology, media serves as the primary space where social reality is perceived, debated, and negotiated. This process makes media an active social actor, not simply a neutral intermediary between events and audiences. Various political, economic, and cultural interests intertwine within media practices, forming a communication landscape rife with interests (Prasetya, Prayogi, et al., 2024). Therefore, studies on media cannot be separated from the analysis of power that works through symbolic and discursive mechanisms.

In the tradition of communication and media studies, the relationship between media and power has long been a central concern, particularly from a critical sociological perspective. Media are understood as part of a social structure that contributes to both maintaining and challenging the existing order. Power does not always operate through direct coercion, but rather through the regulation of discourse, representation, and the legitimization of meaning. Media play a crucial role in this process by determining what issues are worthy of discussion and how they are framed. Through these practices, media contribute to the formation of social consciousness that often seems natural and unproblematic to audiences (Prayogi, Nasrullah, et al., 2024).

Ideology is a key element in understanding how power operates through media. Ideology in the media context does not always appear as explicit teachings, but operates through language, symbols,

and narratives that shape particular perspectives on social reality. Media serves as a space where ideology is produced, reproduced, and normalized in everyday life. This process allows the values and interests of dominant groups to circulate widely without always being recognized as a form of domination (Prasetya, Marina, et al., 2024). Thus, the media becomes an important arena in ideological struggles that influence how society understands itself and its environment.

The development of digital media further complicates the relationship between power and ideology in contemporary communication practices. Digital platforms open up opportunities for broader participation, but simultaneously introduce new mechanisms of control through algorithms, the attention economy, and user data management. Power is no longer entirely concentrated in conventional media institutions, but rather dispersed within technological systems that regulate the visibility and circulation of information. This situation demands a re-reading of the concept of media power, which is not solely based on ownership and regulation, but also on technological logics that operate invisibly. Digital media becomes a strategic space for the reproduction of symbolic power in more complex forms (Prayogi, Hami, et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have discussed the relationship between media, ideology, and power, but some have focused on a single aspect, such as media ownership or message content. This approach has the potential to overlook the interconnectedness of structure, discourse, and communication practices, which operate simultaneously. Studies are needed that position media as a social arena where power, ideology, and the production of meaning are intertwined. A sociological approach to media communication offers an analytical framework that allows for a more comprehensive reading of these relationships. With this perspective, media can be understood as an integral part of the power dynamics in contemporary society.

However, previous studies have not sufficiently integrated the structural dimension of media power (ownership, institutional control, and political-economic interests) with the discursive mechanisms through which ideology is produced and normalized in everyday communication. Many analyses tend to examine these elements separately, either emphasizing media ownership and regulation, or focusing mainly on textual/message content, so the interconnections between structure, discourse, and communicative practices that simultaneously shape social reality are often underexplored. There remains a gap in conceptual work that positions media as a single arena where power operates at once through institutional arrangements, symbolic authority, and discourse production, particularly in the context of contemporary digital environments where algorithmic visibility and platform logics increasingly mediate meaning. This study addresses that gap by offering a sociological communication perspective that reads media power as a relational process linking ideology, discourse, and the construction of social reality.

Based on this background, this article aims to examine media as an arena of power, emphasizing the role of ideology, discourse, and communication practices in shaping social reality. This study seeks to demonstrate how media operates as a space for the production of meaning, imbued with power relations, both in the context of conventional and digital media. The article's primary focus is on conceptual readings of the mechanisms of symbolic power, ideological production, and social discipline that operate through media. This article matters because it offers an integrative sociological communication perspective that connects these dimensions into one analytical framework, enabling scholars to better diagnose how social reality is constructed, stabilized, and contested through media. By clarifying these interconnections, the article provides a conceptual tool useful for analyzing both legacy media and platform-based communication, including debates on polarization, misinformation, and the politics of visibility. With this approach, the article is expected to enrich the discourse on communication and media studies, particularly in understanding the media's position within the power structures of modern society.

## 2. Method

This article uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to formulate the relationship between power, ideology, and media within the framework of a sociological study of media communication. The main focus of this approach lies in the exploration and deepening of conceptual ideas synthesized from various relevant secondary data sources, such as academic books and scientific journal articles related to media, symbolic power, and discourse production (Suwendra,

2018). The writing process begins with data collection through a systematic literature review to map the spectrum of theoretical thinking on media as an arena of social power. The collected data is then classified based on key themes, such as media power structures, ideologization mechanisms, discourse practices, and the role of media in shaping social discipline and the reproduction of power. This classification is carried out to build a coherent and structured analytical framework, allowing for analytical exploration of the relationships between concepts.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques to identify patterns of meaning, ideological assumptions, and logics of power contained in the academic texts studied. Furthermore, conceptual comparative analysis was used to reconcile and compare various theoretical perspectives in understanding the role of media as a social institution. The analysis process also involved a data reduction stage to filter the concepts, arguments, and theoretical findings that were most relevant to the focus of the study. The results of the reduction were then presented in the form of a logical and systematic analytical narrative to demonstrate the relationship between media, ideology, and power in the context of contemporary society (Aziza et al., 2024).

To maintain the accuracy and consistency of the analysis, this article applies source triangulation techniques by comparing various theoretical references and findings from previous studies from the disciplines of communication, sociology, and critical media studies. Cross-checking is carried out between key concepts in classical and contemporary theories to ensure that the arguments developed are not partial or detached from the broader scientific context. The research framework is directed at producing a conceptual mapping that can explain the mechanisms of power reproduction through media, both in conventional and digital media practices. The final stage of the research is carried out through a process of conceptual synthesis, in which all analytical findings are arranged to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the media's position as an arena of ideological and discursive power. This synthesis is not only based on the historical development of media and power studies, but also considers the current dynamics of contemporary media, thus producing ideas relevant to the development of critical communication and media studies.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### Media as an Arena of Social Power

In the sociology of communication, media cannot be understood solely as a neutral channel for conveying information, but rather as a social arena where power relations are produced, exchanged, and maintained. Media operate within a social structure fraught with interests, whether economic, political, or ideological, so that every message disseminated always carries relational content. From this perspective, media becomes a symbolic space where social actors with different resources compete to define reality. The media communication process is never value-free, as it is always influenced by the social positions of the parties involved (Islam, 2015). Therefore, media analysis in sociology is positioned as part of a power structure that operates subtly but effectively. The media, at this point, has become one of the main instruments in managing social consciousness.

The concept of power itself in sociology has a variety of approaches that enrich media analysis. Max Weber viewed power as an actor's ability to enforce their will despite resistance, while Karl Marx emphasized relations of domination based on ownership of the means of production. In the media context, these two views are intertwined, as capital ownership and institutional control determine the direction of message production. Modern media generally exist within a capitalist structure, so economic logic often influences editorial logic. Power does not always manifest itself in the form of direct coercion, but rather operates through issue selection, perspective determination, and visibility regulation. Through these mechanisms, media becomes a strategic arena for the reproduction of social domination (Prayogi et al., 2025).

Media, as a social institution, holds a relatively autonomous position, yet remains tied to broader networks of power. The relationship between media, the state, and the market forms a power triangle that determines the dynamics of public communication. The state is interested in maintaining stability and legitimacy, the market pursues profit and expansion, while the media stands between the two as both mediator and actor (Susanti et al., 2024). In practice, media independence is often tested by simultaneous political and economic pressures. This situation makes the media not merely observers

of social reality, but rather an active part of the process of shaping that reality. The media arena then becomes a space for negotiating interests that is constantly shifting and changing.

Pierre Bourdieu also enriched our understanding of media with the concept of symbolic power, namely the ability to impose meaning without realizing it as coercion. Media have symbolic authority because they are considered legitimate sources of information and knowledge. This legitimacy allows them to determine what is considered important, newsworthy, or worth ignoring. Symbolic power operates through language, images, and representations that gradually shape public perception. In this context, media not only convey messages but also frame how society understands the social world. The media arena becomes the primary location where social meaning is produced and normalized ([Suryadi, 2011](#)).

Power relations in the media are evident through the ownership structure and organization of the media industry. The concentration of media ownership in the hands of certain groups has the potential to narrow the diversity of perspectives circulating in the public sphere, as the interests of capital owners can influence editorial policies, both directly and through managerial mechanisms. As a result, certain issues receive significant attention, while others are marginalized. Unequal access to media strengthens the position of dominant groups in defining the public agenda ([Gani et al., 2025](#)). The media arena, under these conditions, tends to reproduce existing social hierarchies.

Beyond structural aspects, media power also operates through professional practices and journalistic routines. Editorial decisions, standards of newsworthiness, and the professional values embraced by journalists shape the boundaries of public discourse. These practices are often perceived as technical and neutral, yet they contain specific ideological preferences. The process of source selection, the choice of sources, and the style of news presentation contribute to the formation of dominant viewpoints. Media, as an arena of power, operates not only through the content of messages but also through the procedures of their production ([Dahlan, 2011](#)). So, a sociological analysis is needed to examine these layers so that we can understand how this practice of power is carried out.

The development of digital media has expanded and then transformed the configuration of the arena of social power. Digital platforms have opened up broader spaces for participation for various actors, but have also given rise to new forms of control through algorithms and the attention economy. Power is no longer entirely concentrated in conventional media institutions, but rather distributed among global technology companies. While seemingly more democratic, the digital space remains characterized by invisible relations of domination. Algorithms determine the visibility, popularity, and circulation of information with logic that is difficult for the public to access ([Purwati & Widaningsih, 2025](#)). The digital media arena then became a new field for complex symbolic power struggles.

Within the framework of the sociology of media communication, understanding media as an arena of social power is a crucial step in understanding the dynamics of contemporary society. Media do not exist outside of society, but rather are embedded within social structures rife with interests and conflicts. Every media communication practice is always related to questions about who speaks, for what interests, and with what social impact. This approach encourages people to be critical of media messages that seem ordinary and normal. By positioning media as an arena of power, sociological analysis opens up space for reflection on how communication shapes, maintains, or challenges existing social structures. This sub-topic provides an important foundation for understanding the relationship between power, ideology, and media in subsequent discussions.

### **Ideology and the Production of Meaning in the Media**

Ideology is a key concept in the sociology of media communication because it directly relates to how social reality is understood, interpreted, and given meaning through the communication process. In the media context, ideology does not always appear as explicit doctrine, but rather operates latently through language, symbols, and representation. Media becomes a space where ideology operates in ways that appear natural and appropriate to audiences. The process of meaning production that occurs in the media often conceals the power relations that underlie it ([Yunanto et al., 2024](#)). Therefore, discussing ideology in the media means unpacking the mechanisms by which social meaning is formed and normalized. This sub-topic positions the media as a crucial arena in the struggle for meaning in modern society.

In the critical sociological tradition, ideology is understood as a system of ideas that serves to maintain the dominance of certain groups. Karl Marx viewed ideology as a false consciousness that masks the exploitative relations within the capitalist structure. Later, thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci expanded this concept through the idea of hegemony, namely, domination achieved through consent, not mere coercion. The media plays a central role in establishing hegemony due to its ability to disseminate values and worldviews widely. The production of meaning in the media becomes a crucial means of forming social consensus. Through this mechanism, ideology operates subtly in everyday life ([Prasetya, Prayogi, et al., 2024](#)).

The production of meaning in the media does not occur spontaneously, but rather through a complex and structured social process. Every media message is the result of a series of decisions involving specific actors, institutions, and interests. The choice of topic, perspective, narrative, and visualization are all part of the process of constructing meaning. Ideology is present in these decisions, whether consciously or unconsciously. The media then presents the results of this construction as a reflection of reality, when in fact it is a representation. Within this framework, the media functions as a producer of meaning, not simply a means of conveying information ([Pardiani et al., 2025](#)).

Language is a key instrument in the production of ideological meaning in the media. Word choice, metaphors, and sentence structure influence how audiences understand an event. Media language often contains certain assumptions and values that reflect specific ideological positions. Through language, media can reinforce stereotypes, normalize inequality, or conversely open up space for criticism. This process demonstrates that meaning is not neutral but is always tied to social and ideological contexts. Analyzing media language is crucial for understanding the ideology at work behind the text ([Nasrullah et al., 2024](#)).

Besides language, visuals and symbols also play a significant role in the production of media meaning. Images, graphics, and audiovisuals possess a persuasive power that often surpasses verbal text. Visual representations can evoke emotions and shape perceptions quickly. Ideology operates through repeated and naturalized symbols in media. This repetition creates the impression that certain meanings are universal and unquestionable. Media serves as a highly effective space for the production of ideological symbols ([Bachtiar et al., 2016](#)). In this case, the meaning of media is not entirely determined by the producer. The concepts of encoding and decoding explain how media messages can be interpreted in various ways by audiences. Although dominant ideologies are attempted to be instilled through the encoding process, audiences have the possibility of negotiating or opposing interpretations ([Noviadhista et al., 2019](#)). This shows that the production of meaning involves a dynamic relationship between media and audience. Media remains an ideological arena, but not a completely closed one.

However, the audience's ability to engage in critical reading is heavily influenced by social structures and access to knowledge. Education, social class, and life experiences influence how individuals interpret media messages. Dominant ideologies tend to be more readily accepted when they align with the audience's everyday experiences. The media exploits this familiarity to reinforce particular meanings. The production of ideological meaning becomes effective when it is integrated with established social practices. In this context, the media plays a role in deepening the internalization of ideology in social life.

The development of digital media has brought significant changes to the dynamics of ideology and the production of meaning. Digital platforms enable the production and distribution of meaning by a wider variety of actors, including individuals and communities. On the one hand, this opens up opportunities for the emergence of alternative discourses that challenge dominant ideologies. On the other hand, the logic of algorithms and the platform economy create new forms of control over meaning. Ideology operates through mechanisms of visibility, virality, and content monetization. Digital media expands the ideological arena, while also introducing new complexities in the production of meaning ([Prayogi et al., 2022](#)).

The analysis of ideology in the media is also closely related to the issue of social representation. Certain groups, such as minorities, women, or the working class, are often represented through a particular ideological lens. This representation influences how these groups are understood and treated in society. Media can reinforce stigma or open up spaces for recognition, depending on the

ideological logic employed. The production of meaning becomes a crucial arena for symbolic struggles over identity and recognition, making it a political space for meaning ([Ismoyo, 2024](#)).

The discussion of the meaning of ideology and production, within the framework of the sociology of media communication, emphasizes that media communication is always connected to symbolic power. Media not only convey reality, but also help shape how that reality is understood and experienced. Ideology operates through a complex process of meaning production, involving language, symbols, institutions, and audiences. This understanding can encourage society to view media critically, beyond the surface of the message. This sub-discussion provides an important foundation for understanding the relationship between ideology, power, and communication practices in contemporary society. With this approach, media can be positioned as a strategic space in the formation of social consciousness.

### **Media, Discourse, and Social Discipline**

Media plays a central role in the formation and management of social discourse, which directly influences how individuals think, act, and position themselves in society. Discourse is understood not simply as a series of languages or narratives, but as a social practice embedded in power relations. Media is the primary medium through which discourse is produced, disseminated, and legitimized. Through discourse, certain values, norms, and knowledge are constructed as collectively accepted truths ([Suryadi, 2011](#)). This process demonstrates that the media are not neutral, but rather actively involved in shaping social order. (Contemporary) media are experiencing a significant shift from ideological control to discursive control, which in turn is changing the way power operates in modern society.

Ideological control in the media is generally understood as an attempt to instill a particular value system to maintain social dominance. In the classical approach, the media is seen as an ideological tool that reproduces the interests of powerful groups. Ideology operates by simplifying reality, naturalizing inequality, and obscuring power relations. The media convey messages that appear objective, but are in fact fraught with vested interests. This control is often one-way, with the audience positioned as passive recipients ([Mahdi, 2015](#)). This model is relevant for understanding media practices in the context of industrial society and mainstream media, although further developments, especially due to social and technological dynamics, have encouraged the emergence of more complex forms of control.

The development of discourse theory, particularly influenced by the thinking of Michel Foucault, broadened our understanding of the relationship between media and power. Foucault viewed power as operating not only through ideology or repression, but also through the production of knowledge and discourse. Discourse determines what can be said, thought, and considered true within a social context. The media acts as the primary institution producing and regulating this discourse. Social control no longer relies on direct coercion, but rather on regulating meanings and categories of thought ([Mudhoffir, 2013](#)). Within this framework, social discipline is constructed through the internalization of norms disseminated by the media. Media becomes an important tool in the discursive formation of obedient subjects.

Social discipline through media operates in a more subtle way than classical ideological control. Media do not always explicitly command or prohibit, but rather frame the choices and possibilities of action. Through the repetition of certain discourses, media establish the boundaries of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate. Media serve as a social learning space about what is considered appropriate and inappropriate. Individuals learn to conform to the standards presented without feeling controlled. Rather than being external, this process creates a more internal oversight mechanism. This type of discipline is more effective because it is accepted as part of everyday life, as it allows power to operate through symbolic persuasion.

Media discourse also plays a role in constructing social categories and individual identities. Labels such as "productive," "achieving," "at-risk," or "problematic" are produced and disseminated through the media. These categories influence how individuals view themselves and others. The media helps establish ideal standards that serve as benchmarks for social behavior. Individuals are then compelled to conform to them in order to gain social recognition. As a result, social discipline

is inextricably linked to the production of meaning and identity. The media also becomes an arena where identities are negotiated within the framework of dominant discourses ([Nigsih et al., 2025](#)).

In the context of digital media, discursive control has undergone a significant transformation. Digital platforms enable the production of discourse by various actors, no longer monopolized by large media institutions. However, this freedom is accompanied by new mechanisms such as algorithms, content moderation, and the attention economy. Algorithms determine which discourses are visible and which are suppressed. Discursive control does not always appear as censorship, but rather as the regulation of visibility. Digital media creates social discipline based on data and user preferences. Individuals actively participate in this process, often without realizing its discursive impact ([Utami et al., 2026](#)).

Media discourse also serves as a means of normalizing certain social practices. Issues of health, education, security, and morality are often framed through narratives that guide public behavior. The media establishes a framework for thinking about what is considered responsible or deviant. Through this discourse, individuals are encouraged to regulate themselves according to prevailing standards. Social discipline becomes part of personal routines and choices. The media acts as a mediator between policy, expert knowledge, and everyday practices. This process demonstrates that discursive control operates through collaboration between various social institutions, with the media becoming a crucial node in this network of power ([Maylinda & Agyansa, 2025](#)).

Despite the apparent dominance of discursive control, spaces for resistance remain within media communication practices. Alternative discourses can emerge through independent media, online communities, and critical communication practices. This resistance often takes the form of reinterpreting meaning or rejecting dominant narratives. Media becomes a dynamic and often closed arena for discursive contestation. Social discipline is not always fully accepted but rather negotiated within specific social contexts ([Muhammad & Muhamad, 2025](#)). This perspective emphasizes that power is relational and not absolute.

Within the framework of the sociology of media communication, the discussion of media, discourse, and social discipline emphasizes the changing ways in which power operates in contemporary society. From direct ideological control, media are moving toward more subtle and diffuse discursive control. Media not only convey ideas but also shape ways of thinking and acting through the management of discourse. Social discipline is constructed through symbolic processes internalized in everyday life. This understanding encourages readers to view media as a complex space for the production of power. This sub-discussion enriches the analysis of the relationship between media, knowledge, and social order. With this approach, media can be understood as a key actor in the formation of modern society.

### **Contemporary Media and the Reproduction of Power**

Contemporary media marks a new phase in the relationship between communication, technology, and social power. The development of digital platforms has transformed the way information is produced, distributed, and consumed in everyday life. Media no longer merely serves as a channel for conveying messages, but has become the primary infrastructure of modern social life. In this context, power operates through more complex and less visible mechanisms. Digital capitalism presents a new form of political-economic relations that makes data, attention, and user participation the primary sources of value. Media has become a space for capital accumulation that relies heavily on the symbolic activities of society, positioning contemporary media as a crucial arena for the reproduction of power in digital society ([Anamofa et al., 2025](#)).

Digital capitalism refers to an economic system based on information and communication technology as the primary basis for the production and distribution of value. Digital media companies not only sell content but also sell user data to various economic and political interests. Everyday activities such as clicking, liking, and sharing content are part of the value production process. Social media encourages active user engagement, but this engagement is often monetized without our awareness ([Purwati & Widaningsih, 2025](#)). This relationship demonstrates the audience's shift from passive consumers to producers of symbolic value. This process reinforces the inequality between platform owners and users, where economic power operates through the management of social participation in digital media spaces.

Contemporary (digital) media places algorithms at the center of information flow. Algorithms determine what content appears, how long it remains visible, and to whom. Algorithmic decisions are often perceived as neutral and technical, but are in fact fraught with economic and ideological interests. Algorithmic logic is designed to maximize user engagement for the benefit of the platform. Algorithms become new tools of power that operate automatically and opaquely. As a result, sensational or emotional discourse tends to be prioritized. This mechanism shapes a fragmented and polarized social reality.

Within the sociology of media communication, algorithms can be understood as a form of rationalization of power. Power is no longer exercised directly by human actors, but rather through technological systems that regulate social choices. Individuals are directed to view the world through predetermined algorithmic curation. This process limits the diversity of perspectives without resorting to overt censorship. Contemporary media creates the illusion of freedom of choice, even though those choices are pre-framed. Power operates through the regulation of probabilities, not explicit prohibitions. This pattern demonstrates a shift from ideological control to data-driven and predictive control ([Faturahman et al., 2024](#); [Syam, 2025](#)).

(New) ideologies in contemporary media don't always manifest in explicit doctrines. They operate through narratives of efficiency, innovation, personalization, and freedom of expression. Digital platforms often promote the idea that technology is a solution and neutral to social problems. This narrative masks the unequal power relations behind digital media operations ([Cheng, 2012](#)). The ideology of individualism is reinforced through an emphasis on personal preferences and individual achievement. The media encourages subjects to take responsibility for their own visibility and success ([Azizah et al., 2025](#)).

The reproduction of power in contemporary media also occurs through the attention economy. Users' attention becomes a primary commodity fought over by various platforms. Media is designed to maintain attention for as long as possible through interface design and continuous notifications. This practice fosters habits of rapid and shallow information consumption. Individuals are compelled to remain connected to maintain their social existence. Power operates through psychological and social dependence on digital media.

Contemporary media also plays a role in shaping new social hierarchies based on digital visibility. Popularity, number of followers, and level of interaction have become widely recognized indicators of social status ([Mafaza et al., 2025](#)). Media creates symbolic selection mechanisms that determine who is heard and who is ignored. This symbolic power is often linked to specific economic and cultural capital. Individuals and groups with greater resources tend to gain greater visibility. Media reproduces social inequalities in more subtle, decentralized forms, demonstrating that digitalization does not automatically bring equality ([Sholistiyawati, 2026](#)).

In a political context, contemporary media is a crucial tool in shaping public opinion. Political campaigns, policy issues, and identity discourse are disseminated through digital platforms with measurable strategies. Algorithms allow political messages to be specifically targeted to specific groups. This practice opens up opportunities for information manipulation and social polarization. Political power exploits the logic of digital capitalism to expand its influence. Media becomes a space for intense and unequal discursive competition.

Although contemporary media is imbued with the reproduction of power, spaces for resistance remain open. Users can utilize digital media to build alternative discourses and social solidarity. The practices of citizen journalism, digital activism, and independent content production demonstrate the media's emancipatory potential. However, this resistance remains within the boundaries of existing platform structures. Media enables critique, but simultaneously commodifies it ([Shidqi & Kn, 2022](#)). This relationship demonstrates the ambiguity of the media's role in digital society. Power and resistance intertwine within the same space ([Prayogi & Nasrullah, 2025](#)).

The study of contemporary media and the reproduction of power demonstrates that technology never stands outside of social relations. Contemporary media both mirrors and drives social change in the digital era. Digital capitalism, algorithms, and new ideologies shape complex and dynamic configurations of power. Media become key institutions in regulating meaning, behavior, and social structures. A sociological analysis of media communication is therefore necessary to uncover the mechanisms often hidden behind technological convenience. This sub-discussion emphasizes the

importance of understanding media not merely as a means of communication, but as part of the power structure itself.

#### 4. Conclusion

This article addresses the research objectives by clarifying how communication practices within contemporary media environments are not merely acts of information delivery, but ongoing processes of meaning-making shaped by platform logics, interactional norms, and actors' strategic choices. The findings indicate that media use functions as a space where identities, credibility, and shared interpretations are negotiated through recurring communicative mechanisms such as framing, selective visibility, and participatory interaction. In doing so, the study demonstrates that the outcomes observed in the studied context are produced by the interplay between message construction, audience engagement, and the socio-technical conditions of the medium showing why certain narratives gain legitimacy, how responses are organized, and how communicative power circulates in everyday media practice.

The implications of these findings suggest that stakeholders such as content producers, institutions, community managers, and platform-facing communicators should treat media communication as a relational and accountable practice by strengthening clarity of intent, transparency of sources, ethical moderation, and dialogic engagement to reduce distortion and improve trust. Theoretically, this article supports and extends communication and media scholarship by foregrounding the need to integrate platform governance and visibility dynamics into established frameworks of meaning production and mediated interaction, particularly in contexts where attention economies and algorithmic infrastructures influence interpretation. Future studies can build on this work by expanding comparative settings across platforms and communities, combining qualitative depth with mixed-method approaches (digital ethnography, networked discourse analysis), and examining longer-term consequences for public understanding, civic participation, and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in mediated publics.

This study is a conceptual article based on a systematic review and theoretical synthesis; therefore, its conclusions depend on the scope and availability of the selected literature. Although it applied thematic classification and source triangulation, there remains the possibility of selection bias (relevant works outside the databases, keywords, language, or time window may be excluded) and interpretive bias inherent in qualitative synthesis. In addition, the framework proposed here has not been tested through primary empirical data, so the article does not claim causal generalizations about specific media cases. Future research may validate and extend this framework by applying it to comparative case studies across legacy media and digital platforms, including algorithmic visibility, moderation practices, and discourse dynamics in particular sociopolitical contexts.

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