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# TIKTOK AS A RESONANCE ENGINE IN THE PLATFORMIZED PUBLIC SPHERE: INTERMEDIA AGENDA DYNAMICS IN INDONESIA'S IKN DEBATE (2020–2024)

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## ABSTRACT

The expansion of digital platforms has transformed the dynamics of political communication and the ways public issues circulate across media environments. In contemporary digital ecosystems, the visibility of policy debates is shaped not only by institutional media coverage but also by interactions between social media platforms and algorithmically driven content distribution systems. This study examines the cross-platform agenda dynamics surrounding the debate on Indonesia's new national capital (Ibu Kota Nusantara, IKN) across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok between 2020 and 2024. Using a computational social science approach, the study analyzes daily time-series data capturing both content production and audience engagement across platforms. Correlation analysis and Granger causality tests are employed to identify the direction and intensity of intermedia agenda relationships. The findings reveal a sequential pattern of agenda circulation in which online news media initiate issue salience, Twitter/X expands public debate, and TikTok amplifies attention through audiovisual storytelling and engagement-driven algorithmic distribution. These results highlight the role of TikTok as a resonance engine that reinforces political attention rather than acting as a primary agenda setter. By distinguishing between production pathways and resonance pathways, this study extends intermedia agenda-setting theory and proposes the concept of Algorithmic Intermedia Agenda Dynamics to explain how political issues circulate within platformized public spheres.

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**KEYWORDS:** Agenda-Setting; Algorithmic Amplification; Intermedia Agenda-Setting; Platformized Public Sphere; Political Communication; Tiktok.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital platforms has fundamentally reshaped the structure of political communication and the dynamics through which public issues gain visibility (Vetrò et al., 2021). In contemporary media environments, the circulation of political information is no longer dominated by traditional mass media institutions but increasingly occurs across interconnected digital platforms, social networks, and algorithmically curated content ecosystems. Within these environments, the formation of public agendas is shaped not only by journalistic gatekeeping but also by networked participation, algorithmic amplification, and user engagement (Mukhlis, Suradi, et al., 2023; Lubis, 2025b). Scholars have described this transformation as the emergence of a hybrid media system in which traditional media, digital platforms, political actors, and citizens interact to shape public attention through complex and reciprocal communication flows.

The growing centrality of digital platforms has introduced new dynamics into the process of agenda formation (Hernández-Vergara et al., 2026; Zitha et al., 2026). While early agenda-setting research primarily examined how traditional news media influenced public priorities, more recent scholarship emphasizes the cross-platform circulation of issues in digital media environments. In these environments, the concept of intermedia agenda-setting has become increasingly relevant for understanding how agendas move between different communication channels. Instead of a one-directional flow from institutional media to the public, contemporary agenda formation often involves multiple platforms influencing each other simultaneously. News media, social media platforms, and networked publics can each function as agenda initiators, mediators, or amplifiers depending on the issue and the communicative context.

Among emerging platforms, TikTok has become one of the most influential environments for the circulation of political information. The platform currently hosts more than one billion active users worldwide and has rapidly expanded as a major venue for political discourse, particularly among younger audiences (Nurhidayah, 2025). Unlike text-based platforms such as Twitter/X, TikTok operates primarily through short-form audiovisual content distributed by algorithmic recommendation systems. Its “For You Page” (FYP) algorithm prioritizes content based on engagement signals rather than network connections, enabling videos to

reach large audiences regardless of the creator’s social network size. As a result, TikTok can rapidly amplify content that evokes emotional responses, visual appeal, or narrative storytelling. This distinctive platform logic has encouraged new forms of political communication characterized by visual storytelling, performative expression, and what scholars describe as *politainment*.

Despite TikTok’s growing role in political communication, its position within broader intermedia agenda dynamics remains insufficiently understood. Existing research on digital agenda-setting has largely concentrated on the interaction between online news media and Twitter/X, particularly in the context of political campaigns, elite communication, and real-time political discourse (Duan et al., 2022). Comparatively little attention has been paid to how audiovisual platforms such as TikTok interact with other media channels in shaping cross-platform agendas. This gap is particularly significant because TikTok’s algorithmic distribution model and audiovisual format may influence public attention in ways that differ substantially from text-based social media or journalistic media (Lubis et al., 2025). While some studies have examined political communication on TikTok, these studies typically focus on campaign communication, influencer politics, or content strategies rather than examining the platform’s role within a broader cross-platform agenda-setting process.

The Indonesian debate surrounding the relocation of the national capital to Nusantara (IKN) offers a unique empirical context to investigate these dynamics. Announced in 2019 and institutionalized through Law No. 3 of 2022, the IKN project represents one of the most significant public policy initiatives in contemporary Indonesia. The policy aims to relocate the national capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan as part of a broader strategy to address environmental challenges, economic imbalance, and regional inequality. Beyond its administrative implications, the project has generated extensive public discussion across multiple communication channels, including online news media, social media platforms, and user-generated content environments.

The debate surrounding IKN has unfolded within a digital public sphere characterized by fragmented and platformized communication structures (Sigurdardottir & Rautajoki, 2024). Online news media function as sources of institutional information, reporting government statements, policy developments, and official decisions related

to the project. Twitter/X operates as a discursive arena where journalists, political elites, activists, and citizens engage in rapid debates and interpretive framing of policy issues. TikTok introduces another layer into this communication environment by transforming policy narratives into short-form audiovisual content that can reach broad audiences through algorithmic amplification. In this environment, political attention is shaped not only by the production of information but also by the resonance of content within platform-specific engagement systems.

To capture these dynamics, this study examines the cross-platform agenda dynamics surrounding the IKN debate across three major communication arenas: online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok (Longo, 2025). Specifically, the study distinguishes between two analytical pathways that shape cross-platform agenda formation. The first is the production pathway, which refers to the volume of content produced on each platform and reflects the salience of issues within the media agenda. The second is the resonance pathway, which captures the level of audience engagement with content and reflects the amplification of attention through networked interactions and algorithmic distribution. Distinguishing these pathways allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how public agendas are not only produced but also reinforced through platform-specific engagement dynamics.

Using a longitudinal dataset covering the period from January 2020 to December 2024, this study analyzes daily patterns of content production and engagement across platforms to investigate how the IKN issue circulated within Indonesia's platformized public sphere (Mukhlis et al., 2024; Mukhlis, Maryam, et al., 2023). By combining time-series analysis, correlation analysis, and temporal causality testing, the study examines how agendas moved across platforms and identifies the direction of cross-platform influence during moments of heightened public attention.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How did the salience of the IKN issue evolve across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok between 2020 and 2024?
2. How do intermedia agenda-setting dynamics operate between online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok?
3. Does TikTok primarily function as an agenda initiator or as a resonance amplifier within the platformized public sphere?
4. How do production pathways and resonance

pathways differ in shaping cross-platform agenda dynamics?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the literature on digital political communication in three important ways. First, it extends the concept of intermedia agenda-setting by incorporating algorithmically driven audiovisual platforms that have been largely overlooked in existing research (Nismawati, 2025). Second, it introduces the analytical distinction between production pathways and resonance pathways as a framework for examining how political attention spreads across platforms. Third, it proposes the concept of TikTok as a resonance engine, highlighting the platform's role in amplifying political attention through audiovisual storytelling and algorithmic distribution within platformized public spheres.

Through this analysis, the study aims to advance theoretical understanding of how political issues circulate in contemporary digital media ecosystems where agendas are shaped not only by institutional media actors but also by algorithmically mediated audience engagement.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory in the Digital Media Environment

Agenda-setting theory has long served as a central framework for understanding the relationship between media coverage and public attention toward political issues. Originally developed by Handayani, (2025), the theory posits that the media influence public perceptions of issue importance by determining which topics receive greater prominence in news coverage. Rather than directly shaping opinions, media institutions shape the public agenda by highlighting certain issues and thereby signaling their relative significance within the broader political discourse.

Subsequent developments in agenda-setting research have expanded the theory beyond its original formulation. First-level agenda-setting focuses on the salience of issues, examining how media coverage influences which topics the public considers most important. Second-level agenda-setting, often referred to as attribute agenda-setting, examines how the media emphasize specific attributes or frames associated with issues, thereby shaping how audiences interpret them. Together, these two levels highlight the role of media not only in determining what people think about but also in influencing how they think about those issues.

With the expansion of digital media environments, scholars have increasingly questioned whether traditional agenda-setting relationships remain stable in contexts where audiences can actively participate in the circulation and production of information (Khan et al., 2021). The rise of online news platforms, social media networks, and user-generated content has created communication ecosystems in which multiple actors simultaneously contribute to agenda formation. In these environments, agenda-setting processes often involve complex interactions among institutional media, political actors, and digital publics rather than a unidirectional flow of influence from media to audience.

As a result, contemporary agenda-setting research increasingly examines the dynamics through which issue salience circulates across media channels within networked communication systems. These dynamics are particularly evident in digital environments where the production and amplification of political information occur across multiple platforms simultaneously.

## **2.2 Intermedia Agenda-Setting**

The concept of intermedia agenda-setting extends the agenda-setting framework by examining how agendas move between different media outlets and communication platforms. Rather than focusing exclusively on the influence of media on public opinion, intermedia agenda-setting research investigates how one media source may influence the agenda of another (Mukhlis, Janwari, et al., 2023; Mukhlis & Abdullah, 2025). Early studies demonstrated that elite newspapers often influenced the agendas of regional newspapers and broadcast media, suggesting that certain media institutions function as agenda leaders within broader information ecosystems.

With the development of digital communication technologies, intermedia agenda-setting processes have become more complex and multidirectional. Online news media, social media platforms, blogs, and other digital channels now interact continuously in shaping the visibility of public issues (Sonny et al., 2026). Research has shown that social media platforms such as Twitter/X can influence news media agendas by amplifying certain topics, while news organizations often respond to trending discussions occurring within social networks. These reciprocal dynamics suggest that agenda formation in digital environments involves continuous feedback loops among multiple communication actors.

However, most existing research on intermedia

agenda-setting has focused primarily on text-based platforms such as Twitter/X and traditional online news outlets. These studies often examine how journalists monitor social media discussions to identify emerging issues or how political elites use social media to shape media coverage. While such research has significantly expanded the agenda-setting framework, it remains largely centered on textual communication environments. Less attention has been given to platforms that operate through audiovisual communication formats and algorithmically curated content distribution.

This limitation is particularly important in contemporary digital ecosystems where audiovisual platforms increasingly shape how political information circulates. Understanding intermedia agenda dynamics in such environments therefore requires incorporating platforms whose communicative structures differ substantially from those of traditional media or text-based social networks.

## **2.3 Hybrid Media Systems and the Transformation of Political Communication**

The transformation of contemporary communication environments has been conceptualized through the notion of the hybrid media system (Ismail Hamdani, 2025). In this framework, traditional media institutions and digital platforms coexist and interact within a shared communication environment characterized by constant adaptation and mutual influence. Rather than replacing older media forms, digital platforms integrate with them, creating a complex system in which information flows across multiple channels.

Within hybrid media systems, political actors strategically navigate different platforms to maximize the visibility of their messages. Journalists, politicians, activists, and citizens participate in interconnected communication processes where information circulates rapidly between institutional media and digital networks. This environment creates opportunities for multiple actors to shape the public agenda while also introducing new forms of power associated with platform infrastructures and algorithmic distribution.

The hybrid media system perspective emphasizes that different media channels perform distinct roles within the communication ecosystem (Zainul, 2025). Institutional media often maintain authority in producing verified information and reporting official policy developments. Social media platforms, by contrast, enable rapid public discussion and reinterpretation of political events.

These interactions generate complex patterns of agenda formation in which issue salience emerges through continuous cross-platform communication rather than through a single dominant medium.

As digital platforms increasingly shape the circulation of information, understanding contemporary agenda-setting processes requires examining how these platforms interact with traditional media within hybrid communication environments.

#### **2.4 Platform Logic and Algorithmic Amplification**

Digital platforms operate according to technological and economic logics that shape how information circulates within their ecosystems. Platform logic refers to the specific design features, algorithms, and engagement mechanisms that determine how content is distributed and prioritized within digital environments. Unlike traditional media institutions that rely primarily on editorial gatekeeping, digital platforms distribute information through algorithmic systems that prioritize content based on engagement signals such as views, likes, shares, and comments.

Algorithmic curation fundamentally alters the mechanisms through which information gains visibility (Rachman, 2025). Content that generates high levels of engagement is more likely to be promoted within recommendation systems, enabling it to reach audiences far beyond the creator's immediate network. As a result, platform algorithms play a crucial role in amplifying certain issues while marginalizing others.

These dynamics have significant implications for political communication. In algorithmically mediated environments, public attention may be shaped not only by journalistic decisions but also by the emotional resonance and visual appeal of content. Issues that generate strong audience engagement can quickly gain prominence within platform ecosystems even if they receive limited coverage from traditional media outlets.

Understanding agenda formation in such contexts therefore requires analyzing not only the production of information but also the mechanisms through which platform algorithms amplify certain forms of content.

#### **2.5 TikTok and the Rise of Visual Political Communication**

Among contemporary digital platforms, TikTok represents a particularly influential environment for the circulation of political information. The platform's short-form video format and

algorithmically driven recommendation system have transformed how political narratives are created and disseminated online (Syahidah et al., 2025). TikTok's interface encourages users to produce visually engaging and emotionally resonant content, often combining humor, music, performance, and storytelling.

Recent research has begun to explore the role of TikTok in political communication, highlighting how political actors and content creators use the platform to reach audiences through informal and entertaining formats. These forms of communication often blur the boundaries between political information and entertainment, giving rise to what scholars describe as *politainment*. Through such content, complex political issues can be translated into accessible narratives that attract widespread audience engagement.

However, most existing studies on TikTok have focused primarily on campaign communication, political influencers, or the strategies used by politicians to engage younger audiences. Comparatively little research has examined how TikTok interacts with other media channels in shaping the broader dynamics of public agenda formation (Susanto, 2025). In particular, there remains limited understanding of whether TikTok functions primarily as a platform for initiating political agendas or as a mechanism for amplifying attention toward issues that originate in other media environments.

Given TikTok's algorithmic distribution model and audiovisual format, the platform may play a distinctive role in shaping public attention within digital communication ecosystems.

#### **2.6 Research Gap and Conceptual Direction**

Although previous research has significantly advanced the understanding of digital agenda-setting processes, several important gaps remain (Essien, 2025). First, most studies of intermedia agenda-setting focus on interactions between traditional news media and text-based social media platforms, leaving the role of audiovisual platforms largely unexplored. Second, existing research often concentrates on the production of media content as an indicator of issue salience while paying less attention to the engagement dynamics through which content gains visibility within digital networks. Third, limited attention has been given to how algorithmically driven platforms contribute to the amplification of political attention within cross-platform communication environments.

Addressing these gaps requires a framework that integrates agenda-setting theory, intermedia agenda

dynamics, and platform logic within the context of contemporary digital ecosystems. This study therefore proposes a conceptual distinction between production pathways and resonance pathways in cross-platform agenda formation (Dwi Novemyanto, 2025). Production pathways refer to the volume of content produced by media institutions and platform users, reflecting the initial salience of issues within the communication environment. Resonance pathways capture the level of audience engagement with content and thus represent the mechanisms through which attention is amplified through platform algorithms and networked interactions.

By applying this framework to the Indonesian debate surrounding the relocation of the national capital to Nusantara (IKN), this study seeks to examine how agendas circulate across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok within a platformized public sphere. Through this approach, the study aims to extend existing theories of digital agenda-setting by incorporating the role of algorithmically driven audiovisual platforms in shaping contemporary political communication.

### 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The transformation of contemporary media environments requires revisiting traditional models of agenda-setting. Classical agenda-setting theory assumes that institutional media organizations function as primary gatekeepers that determine which issues become visible in the public sphere. However, the expansion of digital communication platforms has fundamentally altered these dynamics (Yifan *et al.*, 2026). In contemporary digital ecosystems, the circulation of political issues occurs through complex interactions among institutional media, social media platforms, and networked publics operating within algorithmically mediated communication environments.

Within such environments, issue salience is shaped not only by the production of information but also by the circulation and amplification of content across digital platforms. The hybrid media system perspective emphasizes that political communication now unfolds through interconnected media channels in which different platforms perform distinct communicative roles. Institutional media often provide authoritative information and policy coverage, while social media platforms enable public interpretation, debate, and reinterpretation of political issues.

These dynamics are further intensified by platform infrastructures that rely on algorithmic content distribution (Madsen, 2026). Unlike

traditional media gatekeeping, digital platforms distribute information through engagement-driven recommendation systems that prioritize content based on interaction signals such as views, likes, comments, and shares. Consequently, public attention toward political issues may be influenced not only by journalistic decisions but also by the emotional resonance and engagement potential of content circulating within digital platforms.

To capture these dynamics, this study proposes a conceptual framework termed Algorithmic Intermedia Agenda Dynamics. The framework integrates insights from agenda-setting theory, intermedia agenda-setting, and platform logic to explain how political issues circulate across platforms within a platformized public sphere. The framework distinguishes between two analytical pathways that shape cross-platform agenda formation: the production pathway and the resonance pathway.

The production pathway refers to the generation of issue-related content across different communication arenas (Lubis, 2025a; Mukhlis & Saidah, 2025). In this pathway, issue salience is reflected in the volume of content produced within media environments, including news articles, tweets, and short-form videos. Institutional media often initiate issue salience by reporting policy developments, which may subsequently stimulate discussions across social media platforms.

The resonance pathway refers to the amplification of attention through audience engagement within digital platforms. Engagement signals such as likes, shares, comments, and viewing activity increase the visibility of content within platform recommendation systems. As a result, certain issues may gain prominence because they resonate strongly with platform audiences, even when they originate outside the platform itself.

TikTok represents a particularly important environment within this framework because its recommendation system relies heavily on engagement-based amplification (Bansal *et al.*, 2026). Through short-form audiovisual storytelling and algorithmic distribution, TikTok can intensify public attention toward political issues circulating in other media environments. In this sense, TikTok may function less as an initial agenda setter and more as a resonance engine that amplifies political attention within the platformized public sphere.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of Algorithmic Intermedia Agenda Dynamics, showing how issue salience circulates across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok through production

and resonance pathways.

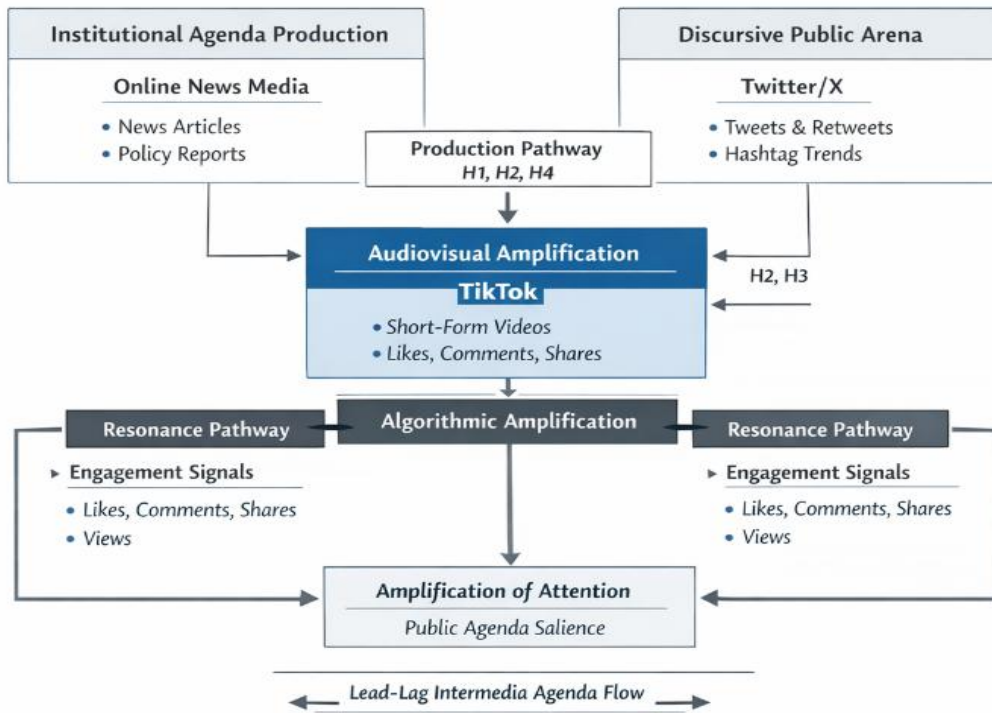


Figure 1: Algorithmic media dynamics flowchart

The model assumes that agenda dynamics operate across three interconnected communication arenas. Online news media function as institutional sources that introduce policy information and official narratives into the public communication environment. Twitter/X operates as a discursive arena where journalists, political elites, activists, and citizens debate and reinterpret these issues through rapid interactions (Marsili, 2025). TikTok introduces an additional audiovisual dimension in which issues circulate through short-form videos that are amplified through algorithmic recommendation systems.

Within this environment, agenda circulation occurs through both production and resonance dynamics. Content generated by institutional media and social media users contributes to the production of issue saliency across platforms, while engagement signals determine which issues receive greater visibility within platform ecosystems (Jain et al., 2022). These interactions generate complex cross-platform agenda dynamics that shape the visibility of political issues within contemporary digital public spheres.

Based on this conceptual framework, the study formulates the following hypotheses.

**3.1. Production Pathway Hypotheses**

Within hybrid media systems, institutional news media continue to play an important role in introducing policy-related issues into the public

communication environment. News coverage of political developments may stimulate public discussion within social media platforms.

**H1**

The volume of online news coverage about the IKN issue positively influences the volume of IKN-related discussions on Twitter/X.

At the same time, social media platforms can influence news agendas through reverse agenda-setting processes in which trending discussions attract journalistic attention.

**H2**

The volume of IKN-related discussions on Twitter/X positively influences the volume of online news coverage.

Because policy debates frequently unfold within Twitter discussions, these conversations may stimulate the production of audiovisual content on TikTok where creators interpret or explain political issues through short-form video narratives.

**H3**

The volume of IKN-related discussions on Twitter/X positively influences the production of IKN-related content on TikTok.

Similarly, institutional news coverage may serve as an informational source for content creators who produce explanatory or interpretive TikTok videos.

**H4**

The volume of online news coverage positively influences the production of TikTok videos related

to the IKN issue.

### 3.2. Resonance Pathway Hypotheses

In algorithmically mediated environments, audience engagement plays a critical role in shaping the visibility of issues within digital platforms. Content that generates higher engagement signals is more likely to be promoted by platform recommendation systems.

Within discursive platforms such as Twitter/X, engagement with tweets reflects the degree of public attention toward specific issues.

#### H5

Higher engagement with IKN-related tweets increases the salience of the issue within Twitter discussions.

In TikTok's algorithmic environment, engagement signals play an even more central role because the platform prioritizes videos that generate strong audience interaction.

#### H6

Higher engagement with IKN-related TikTok videos increases the visibility of the issue within the platform.

Through engagement-driven amplification, TikTok may intensify public attention toward issues circulating in other media channels.

#### H7

TikTok engagement amplifies cross-platform attention toward the IKN issue.

### 3.3. Integrated Hypothesis

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that TikTok may function primarily as a platform that amplifies political attention rather than as a primary agenda initiator.

#### H8

TikTok functions as a resonance engine that amplifies political attention toward the IKN issue within the platformized public sphere.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research Design

This study employs a computational social science approach to investigate cross-platform agenda dynamics surrounding the debate on Indonesia's new national capital (Ibu Kota Nusantara, IKN). The research design combines large-scale digital trace data with time-series analytical techniques in order to examine how issue salience circulates across different communication platforms.

The study adopts a longitudinal observational design, enabling the analysis of agenda dynamics over an extended period of political discourse (Lutz & Knox, 2014; McNabb, 2015). By analyzing daily patterns of media content and user engagement across platforms, the study seeks to identify temporal relationships between institutional media coverage, social media discussions, and audiovisual amplification within digital communication environments.

This design is particularly suitable for investigating intermedia agenda-setting because it allows the identification of lead-lag relationships between communication channels. Rather than treating media platforms as isolated environments, the approach conceptualizes them as interconnected arenas within a platformized public sphere where issue salience evolves through continuous cross-platform interactions.

### 4.2 Data Collection

The dataset covers the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024, capturing the evolution of the public debate on the relocation of Indonesia's national capital. This time frame encompasses several key phases of the policy process, including early policy discussions, legislative developments, and major political events related to the IKN project.

Data were collected from three primary communication arenas:

1. Online News Media
2. Twitter/X
3. TikTok

Together, these platforms represent three distinct communication environments within the hybrid media system.

Online news media function as institutional sources of political information, reporting government statements, policy developments, and official announcements. Twitter/X serves as a discursive platform where journalists, political elites, activists, and citizens engage in rapid debates and interpretive framing of public issues. TikTok operates as an audiovisual platform where political issues circulate through short-form video narratives amplified by algorithmic recommendation systems.

Table 1 summarizes the structure of the dataset used in this study across the three communication platforms.

*Table 1: Overview of the Dataset*

| Platform          | Data Type         | Indicator     | Observation Unit | Period    |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| Online News Media | News Articles     | Article Count | Daily            | 2020–2024 |
| Twitter/X         | Tweets & Retweets | Tweet Count   | Daily            | 2020–2024 |
| TikTok            | Short Videos      | Video Count   | Daily            | 2020–2024 |

|           |            |                                |       |           |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Twitter/X | Engagement | Likes, Retweets, Replies       | Daily | 2020–2024 |
| TikTok    | Engagement | Views, Likes, Comments, Shares | Daily | 2020–2024 |

All data were aggregated at the daily level, allowing the construction of time-series datasets that capture fluctuations in issue salience across platforms over time.

**4.3 Data Processing and Infrastructure**

Digital data were collected using media monitoring and social media analytics systems designed to capture large-scale communication data across online platforms. These systems enable automated tracking of issue-related content using keyword-based queries and platform-specific data extraction mechanisms.

Keyword searches related to the IKN issue were used to retrieve relevant content across platforms

(Hillman & Radel, 2018; Migdal, 2018). Retrieved data were then processed through several preprocessing stages, including keyword filtering, removal of duplicate entries, and verification of issue relevance. These steps ensure that the dataset accurately reflects communication activity related to the IKN debate.

To ensure data consistency, all retrieved content was aggregated into a daily time-series dataset, allowing comparison across platforms.

Figure 2 illustrates the workflow of data collection, preprocessing, and analytical procedures used in this study.



**Figure 2: Data Collection and Analysis Workflow.**

The workflow includes the following stages: data collection, keyword filtering, platform data extraction, daily aggregation, dataset construction, and statistical analysis. This workflow ensures that the analytical process systematically captures the evolution of issue salience across platforms.

**4.4 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis in this study is the daily volume of issue-related content and engagement activity across platforms. Aggregating data at the daily level enables the examination of temporal

relationships between media platforms while minimizing noise associated with hourly fluctuations.

The final dataset consists of 1,827 daily observations, corresponding to the number of days within the five-year observation period.

#### 4.5 Variables and Operationalization

To analyze cross-platform agenda dynamics, the study operationalizes two categories of variables corresponding to the conceptual framework:

**Table 2: Operationalization of Variables**

| Variable           | Type               | Indicator                           | Measurement            |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| News Volume        | Production Pathway | Number of IKN-related news articles | Daily count            |
| Twitter Volume     | Production Pathway | Number of tweets and retweets       | Daily count            |
| TikTok Volume      | Production Pathway | Number of videos posted             | Daily count            |
| Twitter Engagement | Resonance Pathway  | Likes, replies, retweets            | Daily engagement total |

These variables enable the examination of how issue salience is both produced and amplified across digital platforms.

#### 4.6 Analytical Techniques

To examine cross-platform agenda dynamics, the study employs several complementary analytical techniques.

#### 4.7 Descriptive Time-Series Analysis

Descriptive time-series analysis is used to visualize fluctuations in issue salience across platforms over time. This analysis helps identify peaks in public attention and allows comparison of issue trajectories across communication channels.

#### 4.8 Correlation Analysis

To examine the association between platform agendas, the study applies Pearson correlation and Spearman rank correlation tests. Pearson correlation measures linear relationships between variables, while Spearman correlation captures monotonic relationships that may not follow strict linear patterns.

These analyses help determine whether increases in issue salience on one platform are associated with increases on other platforms.

#### 4.9 Granger Causality Analysis

To investigate the direction of agenda influence between platforms, the study employs Granger causality testing, a statistical technique widely used in time-series analysis. This method allows the identification of lead-lag relationships between variables and helps determine whether changes in one platform precede changes in another.

In the context of intermedia agenda-setting, Granger causality analysis provides evidence

production pathway variables and resonance pathway variables.

Production pathway variables capture the volume of issue-related content generated across platforms and represent the salience of the issue within the media agenda. Resonance pathway variables capture audience engagement with content and reflect the amplification of attention within digital platforms.

Table 2 presents the operationalization of variables used to measure production and resonance pathways in the analysis.

regarding which platforms function as agenda initiators and which act as amplifiers within the communication ecosystem.

#### 4.10 Analytical Strategy

The analytical strategy proceeds in three stages.

First, descriptive analysis is used to map the evolution of the IKN issue across platforms during the observation period. Second, correlation analysis evaluates the degree of association between media agendas across platforms. Third, Granger causality analysis identifies the direction of agenda influence and reveals whether particular platforms function as agenda leaders or amplifiers within the communication ecosystem.

Through this analytical approach, the study provides a comprehensive examination of Algorithmic Intermedia Agenda Dynamics across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok within Indonesia's platformized public sphere.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Evolution of the IKN Issue Across Platforms

The first step of the analysis examines the temporal evolution of the IKN debate across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok. Using daily aggregated observations from 2020 to 2024, the analysis traces how the salience of the IKN issue fluctuated across platforms during the observation period.

Overall, the results show that public attention toward the IKN issue developed through several distinct phases that correspond to major political events and policy developments. In the early phase of the debate, issue salience was largely driven by institutional media coverage reporting government

statements and policy proposals. As the debate intensified, discussions expanded to social media platforms, particularly Twitter/X, where political elites, journalists, and citizens engaged in interpretive debates surrounding the policy.

In the later stages of the debate, TikTok became increasingly visible as a platform where the issue

circulated through short-form audiovisual narratives, often translating policy discussions into accessible visual storytelling formats.

Figure 3 illustrates the daily time-series distribution of IKN-related content across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok during the observation period.

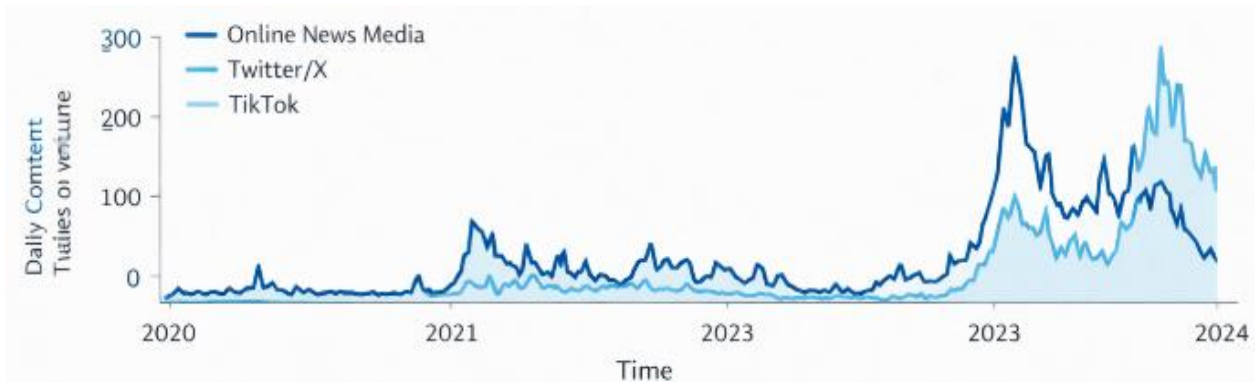


Figure 3: Time-series distribution of IKN-related content across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok (2020–2024).

The time-series patterns reveal several peaks of heightened public attention associated with major political developments in the IKN policy process. In most cases, spikes in news coverage precede increases in Twitter discussions and TikTok content production, suggesting a sequential pattern of agenda circulation across platforms.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Production and Resonance Variables

| Variable           | Mean   | Std. Dev. | Min | Max | Variable           |
|--------------------|--------|-----------|-----|-----|--------------------|
| News Volume        | 42.18  | 38.72     | 0   | 278 | News Volume        |
| Twitter Volume     | 56.94  | 47.13     | 0   | 301 | Twitter Volume     |
| TikTok Volume      | 18.63  | 21.47     | 0   | 156 | TikTok Volume      |
| Twitter Engagement | 124.51 | 103.26    | 5   | 612 | Twitter Engagement |
| TikTok Engagement  | 231.87 | 195.64    | 10  | 842 | TikTok Engagement  |

The descriptive statistics indicate substantial variation in issue salience across platforms. While online news media show relatively consistent coverage throughout the observation period, social media platforms exhibit greater volatility reflecting the episodic nature of digital public attention.

Engagement indicators also show considerable variation, particularly on TikTok where interaction levels increase sharply during moments of

heightened public debate.

### 5.3 Cross-Platform Correlation Analysis

To examine the association between agendas across platforms, Pearson and Spearman correlation analyses were conducted for the production pathway variables. Table 4 presents the correlation matrix between platform agendas across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Platform Agendas

| Variable       | News Volume | Twitter Volume | TikTok Volume |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| News Volume    | 1           | 0.61***        | 0.42***       |
| Twitter Volume | 0.61***     | 1              | 0.55***       |
| TikTok Volume  | 0.42***     | 0.55***        | 1             |

Note: \*\*\* p < 0.001

The correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships between platform agendas. News coverage shows a strong correlation with Twitter discussions, indicating that institutional media coverage is closely linked to the emergence of public debate on social media.

Similarly, Twitter discussions display a moderate correlation with TikTok content production, suggesting that discursive activity on Twitter may stimulate audiovisual interpretations of policy debates on TikTok.

These findings provide preliminary support for the production pathway hypotheses proposed in the conceptual framework.

**5.4 Intermedia Agenda Dynamics**

To examine the direction of agenda influence between platforms, the study applies Granger causality analysis to the time-series dataset. This

analysis identifies whether changes in one platform precede changes in another, thereby revealing potential lead-lag relationships between media agendas. Table 5 reports the results of the Granger causality tests between online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok.

**Table 5: Granger Causality Test Results**

| Relationship                   | F-Statistic | p-value | Interpretation                    |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| News Volume → Twitter Volume   | 6.84        | 0.001   | News leads Twitter agenda         |
| Twitter Volume → News Volume   | 2.11        | 0.121   | Not significant                   |
| Twitter Volume → TikTok Volume | 7.42        | 0.000   | Twitter stimulates TikTok content |
| News Volume → TikTok Volume    | 3.58        | 0.032   | News influences TikTok production |

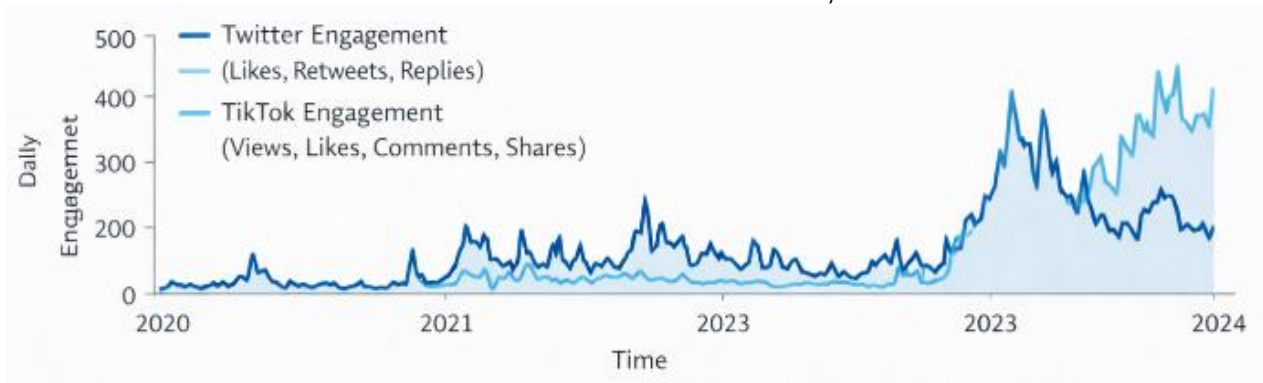
The results indicate that increases in online news coverage significantly predict subsequent increases in Twitter discussions. This finding supports the argument that institutional media continue to play an important role in initiating issue salience within digital communication environments.

In addition, Twitter discussions significantly predict the production of TikTok videos related to the IKN issue. This result suggests that discursive debates occurring on Twitter often inspire audiovisual interpretations of policy discussions on TikTok.

**5.5 Resonance Dynamics and Algorithmic Amplification**

Beyond the production of content, the analysis also examines engagement dynamics that reflect how strongly the issue resonates with audiences within digital platforms.

Engagement levels on Twitter/X and TikTok fluctuate significantly during periods of heightened public attention. These engagement spikes often occur shortly after increases in content production across platforms. Figure 4 illustrates the engagement dynamics associated with IKN-related content across Twitter/X and TikTok.



**Figure 4: Engagement dynamics of IKN-related content across Twitter/X and TikTok.**

The figure shows that engagement levels on TikTok frequently increase following peaks in Twitter discussions and news coverage. This pattern indicates that TikTok functions primarily as a platform that amplifies attention through audiovisual storytelling and algorithmic distribution mechanisms.

**6. DISCUSSION**

**6.1. Intermedia Agenda Dynamics in the Platformized Public Sphere**

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that agenda formation within contemporary digital communication environments operates through complex cross-platform dynamics

rather than through a single dominant medium (Bertero & Scaduto, 2023; Lamorinas et al., 2025). The results indicate that the circulation of the IKN issue followed a sequential pattern across three communication arenas: institutional media, discursive social media platforms, and audiovisual content environments.

Institutional news media played an important role in initiating issue salience by introducing policy developments and official statements into the public communication environment. Peaks in news coverage frequently preceded increases in social media discussions, suggesting that journalistic reporting continues to function as a key entry point for political issues within digital public discourse.

This finding supports earlier research emphasizing the continued relevance of institutional media in hybrid media systems, even in contexts where social media platforms play an increasingly prominent role in shaping public attention.

At the same time, the results demonstrate that agenda circulation in digital environments does not follow a purely linear trajectory from media to audience. Instead, the analysis reveals reciprocal interactions between platforms (Rammal, 2025; Widholm et al., 2024). Twitter/X discussions were strongly associated with news coverage and served as a discursive arena in which policy narratives were interpreted, contested, and reframed by journalists, political elites, and citizens. These findings align with previous research on social media as spaces of political debate that mediate the relationship between institutional media and broader public engagement.

The study further shows that TikTok occupies a distinctive position within this cross-platform communication environment. Rather than functioning primarily as an initial agenda setter, TikTok appears to amplify political attention through audiovisual storytelling and algorithmically mediated engagement. In many cases, increases in TikTok activity followed peaks in news coverage and Twitter discussions, indicating that the platform plays a secondary yet influential role in reinforcing issue salience once the topic has entered the broader communication ecosystem.

These findings support the conceptualization of contemporary digital communication environments as platformized public spheres, where issue salience emerges through interactions between multiple communication infrastructures rather than through the influence of a single dominant platform.

### **6.2. Extending Intermedia Agenda-Setting Theory**

One of the main theoretical contributions of this study is the extension of intermedia agenda-setting theory to include algorithmically driven audiovisual platforms (Hohner et al., 2024). Traditional intermedia agenda-setting research has largely focused on relationships between institutional media outlets and text-based social media platforms such as Twitter. These studies typically examine how news organizations monitor social media trends or how social media discussions influence journalistic coverage.

However, the rise of short-form video platforms introduces new dynamics into the agenda-setting process. TikTok differs fundamentally from earlier platforms because its recommendation system relies

heavily on algorithmic distribution based on engagement signals rather than on social network connections. As a result, the platform amplifies content that resonates emotionally or visually with audiences, enabling certain narratives to gain visibility regardless of their origin.

The results of this study suggest that audiovisual platforms should be conceptualized not only as communication channels but also as algorithmic amplification infrastructures within the broader agenda-setting process (Sofiana, 2025). In contrast to traditional media, which determine issue salience through editorial selection, algorithmically mediated platforms shape public attention through engagement-driven distribution mechanisms.

This finding highlights the need to expand intermedia agenda-setting theory to account for algorithmic amplification processes that influence how political issues gain visibility in digital environments.

### **6.3. Production Pathways and Resonance Pathways**

A second theoretical contribution of this study lies in the distinction between production pathways and resonance pathways in cross-platform agenda dynamics (Cartes-Barroso et al., 2025; Mărcuț & Chiriac, 2023). Traditional agenda-setting research typically measures issue salience through the volume of media coverage. While this approach remains valuable for understanding how issues enter the public agenda, it does not fully capture the mechanisms through which attention is amplified within digital platforms.

The results of this study demonstrate that issue visibility is shaped not only by the production of content but also by the level of audience engagement that content generates. Engagement signals such as likes, comments, shares, and viewing activity play a central role in determining how widely content circulates within algorithmically curated platforms.

In this sense, resonance pathways represent a distinct mechanism of agenda amplification that operates alongside the production of media content. While institutional media and social media users generate issue-related content, algorithmic recommendation systems determine which pieces of content gain widespread visibility.

By distinguishing between production pathways and resonance pathways, this study provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding how political attention spreads across digital communication ecosystems.

#### 6.4. *TikTok as a Resonance Engine*

The empirical findings suggest that TikTok functions primarily as a resonance engine within the platformized public sphere. Rather than initiating political agendas, the platform amplifies attention toward issues that have already gained visibility in other communication environments.

This amplification occurs through several mechanisms associated with TikTok's platform architecture (Grantham, 2025). First, the short-form video format encourages creators to translate complex policy debates into accessible visual narratives. Second, the platform's algorithm prioritizes content that generates strong audience engagement, increasing the likelihood that emotionally resonant or visually engaging videos will reach large audiences.

Through these mechanisms, TikTok contributes to the diffusion of political issues beyond traditional media audiences and discursive social media networks. The platform thus plays an important role in expanding the reach of political debates and transforming policy discussions into forms of visual storytelling that circulate widely within digital culture.

Understanding TikTok as a resonance engine highlights the broader transformation of political communication in the age of algorithmic media (Zhao *et al.*, 2024). Political attention is no longer shaped solely by the production of information but also by the ways in which digital platforms amplify certain narratives through engagement-driven distribution systems.

#### 6.5. *Implications for Political Communication Research*

The findings of this study have broader implications for research on digital political communication. First, they demonstrate the importance of examining cross-platform interactions when studying contemporary agenda-setting processes. Analyzing individual platforms in isolation may obscure the complex pathways through which issues circulate across communication environments.

Second, the results highlight the need to incorporate algorithmic infrastructures into theoretical models of media influence. As digital platforms increasingly rely on engagement-driven recommendation systems, understanding how algorithms shape the visibility of political information becomes essential for analyzing contemporary public discourse.

Third, the study illustrates how audiovisual

platforms contribute to the transformation of political communication practices (Lindholm *et al.*, 2024). The growing prominence of short-form video platforms suggests that visual storytelling may play an increasingly important role in shaping how political issues are interpreted and circulated within digital public spheres.

#### 6.6. *Limitations and Future Research*

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the analysis focuses on three major communication platforms—online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok—and therefore does not capture interactions involving other platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube. Future research could expand the scope of analysis to include additional digital environments in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of cross-platform agenda dynamics.

Second, the study relies on aggregated time-series data that capture patterns of issue salience and engagement but do not directly analyze the content or framing of messages circulating across platforms (Chen & Gong, 2025; Luebke *et al.*, 2025). Further research could combine computational analysis with qualitative content analysis in order to examine how narratives about political issues evolve across different media environments.

Finally, the study focuses on a single policy issue within the Indonesian political context. While the IKN debate provides a valuable case for examining cross-platform agenda dynamics, future research could investigate whether similar patterns emerge in other policy debates or political systems.

### 7. CONCLUSION

This study examined how the debate surrounding Indonesia's new national capital (IKN) circulated across online news media, Twitter/X, and TikTok within a platformized public sphere. Using a computational social science approach and longitudinal time-series analysis, the findings demonstrate that agenda formation in contemporary digital communication environments emerges through sequential cross-platform dynamics rather than through the influence of a single medium. Institutional news media primarily function as initiators of issue salience by introducing policy developments into the communication ecosystem, while Twitter/X operates as a discursive arena where political actors and citizens interpret and debate these issues. TikTok, in contrast, plays a distinctive role in amplifying attention through audiovisual storytelling and algorithmically mediated engagement.

These findings contribute to the development of agenda-setting research by extending intermedia agenda-setting theory to include algorithmically driven audiovisual platforms. By distinguishing between production pathways and resonance pathways, the study provides a framework for understanding how political attention is not only generated but also amplified within digital media ecosystems. The results highlight the importance of examining platform infrastructures and engagement dynamics when analyzing contemporary political communication, particularly in environments where algorithmic distribution systems increasingly shape the visibility of public issues within the digital public sphere.

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## 9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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