

Framing Transformation in Digital Political Communication: An Analysis of the Role of Political Influencer Denny Siregar on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the framing transformation carried out by Denny Siregar as a political influencer on Indonesian social media during the period of 2014–2024. Using a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm and Robert Entman's framing analysis model, this research explores how Denny Siregar went through three significant transformation phases: the Ahok supporter phase (2014–2017), the Jokowi supporter phase (2014–2022), and the Jokowi critic phase (2022–2024). Data were collected through social media content analysis on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as secondary document analysis. The findings show that the framing transformation was influenced by political, economic, social media technology factors, and audience dynamics. In the Ahok supporter phase, the framing focused on bureaucratic reform and anti-corruption narratives using good personification strategies and moral polarization. The Jokowi supporter phase featured narratives of infrastructure development and counter-framing against opposition using selective data. The Jokowi critic phase employed betrayal narratives and historical reframing with value consistency positioning. This transformation impacted follower composition changes of up to 30% and a decline in engagement of up to 40%, while increasing discussion polarization. This research contributes to the development of framing theory by adding temporal and dynamic dimensions in social media

contexts and offers practical insights into digital political communication strategies and their implications for Indonesian democracy.

Keywords: Framing Transformation; Political Influencer; Digital Political Communication

INTRODUCTION

Advancements in digital technology have significantly changed how media operates and interacts with the public. Traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers, which typically deliver one-way communication, have been compelled to transform into interactive, collaborative, and digital-based platforms to stay relevant and reach broader audiences (Kuncoro, 2019). In today's digital era, news is increasingly distributed through online portals, streaming platforms, and social media, gradually replacing the dominant role of traditional media. This shift has pushed conventional media to integrate interactive technologies, enabling them to survive in a converging media environment that has redefined the handling, delivery, and processing of all forms of information—whether visual, audio, or data-based (Kristian Suryo, 2020).

Besides technological developments, three major forces also drive this transformation. First is content moderation control, where social media platforms curate content in ways that affect communication processes and public opinion, sometimes lacking transparency (Aytac, 2024). Second is the role of algorithms that determine what appears in users' feeds, thus shaping the diversity of information and issue framing that users are exposed to. Third is the use of big data, which allows for in-depth analysis of user behavior and preferences, enabling political actors and influencers to tailor their messages more effectively (Kasali, 2018).

These forces collectively influence how communication is shaped, how public opinion is formed, and how political dynamics evolve. Social media platforms now serve not only as spaces for rapid and real-time communication but also as instruments that deeply shape human identity, attitudes, and behavior. As Marshall McLuhan famously argued, media fundamentally influences human experience by shaping feelings, thoughts, and actions (Marissan, 2010). In the political realm, social media offers wider access to political news and viewpoints, facilitating rapid exposure to multiple perspectives (Dwiyanti, 2023). Political actors and influencers have seized on this opportunity, using social media as a key tool to build public opinion, encourage political participation, and win public support.

Influencers such as Denny Siregar have become pivotal in strategically leveraging digital media's power. As a content creator, Denny builds personal and authentic relationships with his audience, making his messages more relatable and trustworthy than those from official institutions or political parties. He actively uses platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to share motivational messages, educational content, and socially relevant political commentary, thereby shaping public opinion (Dwiyanti, 2023). His approach encourages civic engagement, raises

social awareness, and promotes critical thinking toward government policies and social injustice. Through these efforts, social media has become an effective channel to reach younger audiences who are often disinterested in formal political discourse.

Since 2014, Denny Siregar has actively shaped political narratives and issue framing, undergoing several key transformations in response to Indonesia's shifting political landscape. In the first phase (2014–2017), he supported former Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), framing issues around social justice and bureaucratic reform. The second phase (2014–2022) saw Denny's full support for President Joko Widodo, focusing on defending the government and countering misinformation. In the third phase (2022–2024), Denny shifted toward a more critical stance, scrutinizing government performance and promoting themes of transparency and anti-corruption. Through his framing, Denny not only disseminated information but also shaped public perception, interpretation, and evaluation of political events. He emphasized social justice, anti-corruption, and equal rights, tying these issues to moral values and empathy, which helped construct positive narratives for those deemed just and criticism for perceived injustice.

As these transformations unfolded, Denny Siregar's role as a political influencer became increasingly strategic in shaping opinion and mobilizing support. Beyond simply conveying messages, he built a strong personal brand capable of influencing public perception more effectively than conventional political campaigns. Influencers like Denny often serve as intermediaries between politicians and the public, helping shape candidates' public images and mobilizing direct support through engaging and relatable content.

This study aims to address three main research questions. First, it explores how Denny Siregar has transformed his framing as a political influencer on social media over time. Second, it examines the various factors that influence the changes in framing within the content he produces. Lastly, the study investigates the implications of this framing transformation for the broader ecosystem of digital political communication in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research applies Framing Theory developed by Erving Goffman (1974) and later elaborated by Robert Entman (1993) to explain how the media frames certain issues through a process of selection. Framing Theory helps uncover how messages are constructed by emphasizing particular elements while downplaying others, thereby shaping how the audience interprets events or issues. In the context of this study, it is used to analyze how Denny Siregar, as a political influencer, constructs narratives and influences public perception through social media.

In addition to Framing Theory, this study also uses the Agenda-Setting 2.0 Model, introduced by McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (2014), to understand how social

media has shifted the way public agendas are formed. Unlike traditional media, where editorial decisions dominate agenda-setting, social media platforms allow for a more decentralized and participatory process. In this environment, individuals like influencers can play a significant role in determining which issues gain public attention.

Robert Entman's framing model, which guides the analysis in this research, defines framing as the process of selecting and emphasizing specific aspects of reality to promote a particular interpretation. The model consists of four key elements: defining problems (how an issue is described), diagnosing causes (identifying what or who is responsible), making moral judgments (evaluating issues based on certain values), and suggesting treatments or solutions. These elements are crucial in understanding how media messages—especially in political contexts—are crafted to shape audience perspectives.

By combining Framing Theory and Agenda-Setting 2.0, this study provides a comprehensive analytical lens to explore how political communication functions in digital media. The framework allows for an in-depth understanding of the interplay between content, influencers, audiences, and the broader political environment, especially in the era of social media where narratives evolve rapidly and influence public discourse in real time.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This research uses a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm to analyze the framing transformation carried out by Denny Siregar. A qualitative approach is chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the complexity of social phenomena and uncover the meaning embedded in social media texts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The constructivist paradigm is based on the assumption that social reality including political communication is socially constructed and influenced by specific historical, social, and cultural contexts (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The research sample consists of social media content created by Denny Siregar across four platforms: Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and YouTube, collected between 2014 and 2024. The sample includes posts from three major framing phases: support for Ahok (2014–2017), support for Jokowi (2014–2022), and criticism of Jokowi (2022–2024).

Instrument and Procedures

Data collection was conducted using two primary methods. First, content analysis was performed on Denny Siregar's social media posts, including textual posts, images, and videos that reflect political narratives. These posts were selected purposively based on their relevance to the three framing phases and the engagement level they generated (likes, comments, shares). Second, secondary

document analysis was carried out using news articles, interviews, and other publications that provide additional context regarding Denny Siregar's role and reputation as a political influencer. These documents help enrich the interpretation of his framing strategy by offering insight into external reactions and sociopolitical developments.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Robert Entman's framing analysis model (1993). This model identifies four key elements in framing: (1) defining the problem, (2) diagnosing causes, (3) making moral judgments, and (4) proposing treatments or solutions. Each selected post was examined to determine how Denny Siregar framed issues during each phase of political transformation. The analysis aimed to reveal patterns in how the narratives evolved over time and how they corresponded with shifts in political dynamics, audience engagement, and media trends. By focusing on these framing elements, the study provides a deeper understanding of how a political influencer constructs and adjusts public narratives to maintain relevance and influence in Indonesia's digital political communication space.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Denny Siregar began his public career as a journalist, activist, and author of books such as *Para Pemimpi* and *Sang Filsuf Jalanan*. Over time, he became a prominent political influencer in Indonesia, particularly through his consistent presence and content production on platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and YouTube. As of May 2025, he had accumulated over 1.5 million followers on Twitter and nearly 2 million on Facebook. His online popularity was bolstered by his close alignment with key political figures, especially Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) and President Joko Widodo (Jokowi). These relationships served as social capital, which Denny successfully converted into symbolic and economic capital, enabling him to become a key player in Indonesia's digital political communication arena. An analysis of his online content from 2014 to 2024 reveals a clear transformation in his political framing, which is categorized into three major phases.

Ahok Supporter Phase (2014–2017)

In this initial phase, Denny Siregar openly declared his support for Ahok, the then-Governor of Jakarta. His social media content during this time strongly emphasized themes of bureaucratic reform and anti-corruption. He framed Ahok as a symbol of honesty, transparency, and efficiency in government. The core problems identified in his posts centered on systemic corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency, which were seen as rooted in a corrupt political structure and the self-serving interests of the political elite. Through moral judgment, Denny consistently portrayed Ahok as a brave and morally upright reformer, someone who represented the values of

justice, integrity, and professionalism. The solutions presented in his content urged the public to fully support Ahok's policies and leadership style. This narrative was strengthened through storytelling, personal anecdotes, and data such as increased regional revenue and the implementation of e-budgeting. Public engagement was very high during this period, with individual posts receiving 15,000–25,000 likes and thousands of shares. Comment sections were filled with support, with sentiment analysis indicating that about 85% of responses were positive.

Jokowi Supporter Phase (2014–2022)

After Ahok's blasphemy conviction and the subsequent political shift, Denny realigned his support toward President Joko Widodo. In this second phase, his framing evolved from local-level reforms to national development issues. His content supported Jokowi's leadership, especially in the area of infrastructure development, and actively defended the president against criticism. Denny framed resistance to Jokowi's administration as coming from backward-thinking opposition groups and misinformation campaigns that aimed to undermine national progress. He diagnosed the source of the problem as political actors with vested interests, often portraying them as elite groups threatened by Jokowi's reforms. Moral values such as nationalism, inclusivity, and support for the working class were heavily emphasized. Solutions proposed involved unwavering public support for Jokowi's programs and vigilance against hoaxes and opposition attacks. Denny employed a strategic mix of data presentation, emotionally charged statements, and digital storytelling to mobilize support. He actively used hashtags like #JokowiKerjaUntukRakyat and published viral videos, one of which, titled "Jokowi Memang Tidak Ada Matinya," surpassed 2 million views. During this phase, Denny's content reached peak engagement levels. Posts averaged 30,000–50,000 likes and over 10,000 shares. His reputation as a pro-government influencer became stronger, although it also led to criticism from opposition circles who labeled him as a "paid buzzer."

Jokowi Critic Phase (2022–2024)

A significant change in framing occurred in the years 2022–2024 when Denny Siregar began to criticize the very leadership he once praised. This transformation was triggered by political developments such as proposals to delay the 2024 election, discussions around constitutional amendments to extend the presidential term, and increasing evidence of oligarchic influence in Jokowi's circle. In this phase, Denny framed the government as having strayed from its original reformist values and portrayed the administration as betraying public trust. The problems he highlighted focused on threats to democratic principles and the consolidation of power. He attributed the root causes to individuals in Jokowi's inner circle and to a broader ambition to maintain power. In his moral judgment, Denny positioned himself as consistent with the values he had always upheld—transparency, democracy, and people-first leadership—while suggesting that Jokowi had changed. His solution-focused narratives called for a return to the ideals of

Reformasi, urging the public to demand accountability and resist authoritarian tendencies. He began to create a dichotomy between “the old Jokowi” who represented hope, and “the new Jokowi” who had become disconnected from the people. Framing techniques during this phase included betrayal narratives, historical comparisons, and pessimistic projections about Indonesia’s political future. While likes and shares on his posts declined by approximately 40%, comment volume surged by around 60%, reflecting a shift toward more controversial and debate-inducing content. Sentiment became polarized—only 40% of comments were positive, compared to 80% in the previous phase.

Audience and Engagement Changes

As Denny’s framing evolved, so did the composition and behavior of his audience. During the Ahok and Jokowi supporter phases, his followers were primarily composed of urban, educated, middle-class individuals who identified with moderate to progressive political views. However, when he began criticizing Jokowi, many of his long-time supporters unfollowed or expressed disappointment in his perceived inconsistency. At the same time, Denny attracted new followers who were previously critical of him but now resonated with his critical stance. Data analysis suggests that about 500,000 old followers unfollowed him during the transition, while roughly 350,000 new followers joined, particularly on Twitter/X. His engagement metrics shifted in interesting ways—although likes and shares declined, his content became more viral due to the controversy it generated. One notable example is his Facebook post titled “Jokowi Bukan Lagi Milik Rakyat,” which received only 12,000 likes (compared to previous averages of 30,000–50,000), but was shared over 8,000 times and generated more than 15,000 comments, with highly polarized reactions. This indicates that while he lost uniform support, he gained relevance as a figure who provoked public debate.

Comparison with Other Political Influencers

To understand Denny’s framing transformation more deeply, comparisons were made with other Indonesian political influencers. Rocky Gerung, for instance, experienced a similar evolution—he began as a moderate supporter but became one of Jokowi’s fiercest critics. However, unlike Denny, Rocky relied on philosophical and academic arguments rather than emotional storytelling. In contrast, Fadli Zon underwent a sudden shift from government critic to supporter after his party joined the ruling coalition. This abrupt change damaged his credibility and led to widespread criticism. Ferdinand Hutahaean exemplified an even more extreme transformation, flipping from a harsh opposition figure to a staunch government backer, a move that was widely seen as transactional and inauthentic. On the other hand, Pandji Pragiwaksono exhibited a more nuanced and gradual evolution. While he started as a supporter of Ahok and Jokowi, he eventually positioned himself as an independent thinker. His criticisms were balanced and grounded in democratic values, earning him respect across the political spectrum. Compared to these

figures, Denny's shift was significant but implemented in a more strategic and staged manner.

Denny's Adaptation Strategies

To navigate the backlash and shifting audience dynamics, Denny employed several adaptation strategies. He began producing meta-framing content, directly addressing his transformation through videos such as "Mengapa Saya Berubah Sikap" ("Why I Changed My Stance"), which received over 750,000 views. He also became more selective in interacting with followers, choosing to engage only with supportive or neutral comments and avoiding hostile debates. Recognizing the need to broaden his appeal, he diversified his content by including non-political topics like culinary reviews and travel experiences. Additionally, he created a private Facebook group called "Warung Denny", which now hosts over 50,000 members. This closed community allows for deeper and more loyal engagement, helping him sustain a core audience despite losing many followers. These strategies enabled Denny to remain influential in the digital political space, even amid shifting loyalties and public perceptions.

The transformation of Denny Siregar's framing practices over the decade from 2014 to 2024 reflects a dynamic adaptation to Indonesia's shifting political, social, and digital landscape. His transition from an Ahok supporter to a Jokowi loyalist and eventually to a Jokowi critic exemplifies how political influencers continuously negotiate their narratives in response to changing contexts. This finding reinforces the idea that framing is not a static process, but rather a fluid and strategic act shaped by a combination of personal beliefs, political alignment, audience expectations, and platform algorithms. Through the lens of Entman's (1993) framing model, it becomes evident that Denny modified not only his issue emphasis but also the moral judgments and proposed solutions he offered to his followers, suggesting a deliberate recalibration of his public persona in each phase.

In the Ahok phase, Denny employed strong moral polarization, presenting Ahok as a heroic reformer while framing the political establishment as corrupt and regressive. His messaging was simple, emotionally engaging, and aligned with the broader urban reform movement. As he transitioned into the Jokowi supporter phase, the framing shifted toward national development and progress, with selective data used to strengthen pro-government narratives. This aligns with the Agenda-Setting 2.0 theory, where social media influencers are not merely passive transmitters of elite agendas, but active agenda-builders who select which issues become visible, legitimate, or marginalized. Denny played this role by emphasizing state-led development while framing opposition voices as disruptive or anti-progress. The construction of common enemies, such as radical groups or political elites, became an effective framing device to rally and unify his audience.

The shift in the final phase, where Denny began criticizing Jokowi, represents not only a narrative reversal but also a complex form of reframing and value repositioning. Despite altering his stance, Denny continuously portrayed himself as

consistent—anchoring his identity not to specific political figures but to enduring democratic values such as transparency, justice, and accountability. This strategy is in line with Goffman's (1974) theory that individuals use framing as a way to “organize experience” and maintain social credibility, even amid changing messages. Denny's use of historical comparisons and contrast framing—highlighting how “Jokowi then” differed from “Jokowi now”—enabled him to criticize the current administration while justifying his past support.

Audience responses throughout this transformation reveal the volatility of online political engagement. Denny's significant loss of followers during his critical phase, coupled with the influx of new ones, indicates that framing does not occur in a vacuum but is closely tied to audience identity and emotional investment. His experience illustrates how digital influencers must constantly balance between maintaining ideological consistency and adapting to new realities. In line with Foucault's (1980) concept of power-knowledge, Denny's role as a framing agent allowed him not only to reflect dominant discourses but also to shape what is considered politically acceptable or “truthful” at different times. This construction of a “regime of truth” positions influencers like Denny as powerful intermediaries between political events and public perception.

Moreover, the findings highlight the economic and algorithmic incentives that drive influencer behavior. The increase in polarizing content during the critical phase, despite lower overall likes, resulted in higher comment volume and virality. This suggests that controversy rather than consensus is more likely to sustain visibility within algorithm-driven platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Denny's adaptation strategies, such as diversifying content and building loyal communities (e.g., Warung Denny), reflect a pragmatic response to this environment. They also align with the media economics theory proposed by Mosco (2009), which argues that digital media content is shaped not only by ideology but also by economic sustainability and platform pressures.

In comparing Denny's transformation to other influencers such as Rocky Gerung, Fadli Zon, and Pandji, the study shows that public reception to framing changes depends heavily on how such changes are narrated. Gradual, reflective shifts are more accepted than abrupt or seemingly opportunistic reversals. Denny's success in maintaining relevance despite losing a large segment of his original audience—demonstrates the importance of narrative control, strategic self-positioning, and the ability to frame one's own transformation as a moral evolution rather than political inconsistency.

In sum, the discussion underscores that political framing on social media is deeply contextual, emotionally driven, and strategically negotiated. Influencers like Denny Siregar do not merely comment on political events—they help define them, interpret them, and influence how the public remembers them. In the digital age, where content visibility is driven by emotional engagement and algorithmic

amplification, framing becomes not only a communication strategy but a tool of power.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that political influencers on social media are not merely channels for information dissemination, but key actors in constructing political narratives that are dynamic, personal, and direct. Their presence changes formal and institutional communication patterns into more interactive and emotional interactions. The main findings of this research reveal that Denny Siregar's framing strategy involved manipulating language, selecting specific visuals and imagery, using emotional appeal, and capitalizing on trends and current issues to reinforce political messages. His framing tends to be personal and direct, establishing emotional closeness with the audience and enhancing the persuasive power of the message.

The transformation of framing in digital political communication, as analyzed through Goffman and Entman's theories, shows how political messages are constructed, delivered, and received through Denny Siregar's content. His role as a narrative builder has the power to mobilize opinions and significantly influence public perception. The implications of these findings indicate the importance of understanding how influencers strategically construct political communication in the digital era and the impact of their messaging on democracy, public opinion, and national political stability.

This research has analyzed the transformation of framing carried out by Denny Siregar as a political influencer on Indonesian social media. Using Robert Entman's framing analysis model, it was found that Denny has undergone significant shifts in how he frames political content—from supporting Ahok, then Jokowi, to later criticizing Jokowi. These transformations were influenced by multiple factors, including changes in political dynamics, economic interests, social media platform developments, and audience behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, framing should no longer be viewed as a static process but as a dynamic one that adapts to socio-political contexts and individual interests. From a practical standpoint, Denny's transformation included personification, contrast, polarization, and betrayal narratives, all strategically used to reposition himself in a changing political landscape. For society at large, it is crucial to cultivate critical awareness of how political influencers frame messages on social media, especially in relation to digital media literacy. This awareness includes understanding that framing is not just a reflection of reality, but a construction of reality shaped by various interests.

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