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## **Public Policy Changes Due to Media Framing of News on Plans to Eliminate LPG Tube**

Emilya Setyaningtyas<sup>1</sup>, Aprida Mardelina Sihombing<sup>2</sup>, Anita Yunia<sup>3</sup>, Della Melianie Herry<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Fakultas Komunikasi, LSPR Institute of Communication and Business

E-mail: emilya.s@lspr.edu

### **Abstract**

*The 3-kilogram (kg) LPG cylinder is a primary energy source for low-income households and micro-enterprises in Indonesia. In February 2025, the government implemented a policy restricting the sale of subsidized 3 kg LPG exclusively through registered distribution bases, eliminating informal retailers. This policy immediately triggered widespread public reactions and intense national media coverage. This study aims to analyze how national online media framed the LPG distribution policy and how such framing contributed to public pressure that led to policy reconsideration. Using a qualitative approach and Entman's framing analysis model, this study examines four framing elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Data were collected from news articles published by four major Indonesian online media outlets [detik.com](http://detik.com), [kompas.com](http://kompas.com), [republika.com](http://republika.com), and [liputan6.com](http://liputan6.com) during January–March 2025. The findings indicate that dominant media framing emphasized social injustice, limited accessibility, and weak policy communication, which amplified public dissatisfaction and accelerated government policy adjustment. This study contributes to media framing literature by demonstrating how media framing operates not only as a meaning-construction mechanism but also as a catalyst for short-term public policy change. The findings also highlight the strategic role of Government Public Relations (GPR) in managing policy communication for sensitive public issues.*

**Keyword:** media framing; public policy; government public relations; LPG subsidy; policy change; public relations





## Abstrak

Gas elpiji 3 kilogram (kg) merupakan sumber energi utama bagi rumah tangga berpenghasilan rendah dan pelaku usaha mikro di Indonesia. Pada Februari 2025, pemerintah menerapkan kebijakan pembatasan distribusi elpiji 3 kg dengan melarang penjualan melalui pengecer dan membatasi pembelian hanya melalui pangkalan resmi. Kebijakan ini memicu respons publik yang luas serta pemberitaan intensif di media nasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis framing media nasional terhadap kebijakan distribusi elpiji 3 kg serta peran framing tersebut dalam mendorong perubahan kebijakan publik. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis framing model Entman yang mencakup empat elemen: definisi masalah, interpretasi kausal, evaluasi moral, dan rekomendasi penanganan. Data diperoleh dari pemberitaan empat media daring nasional, yaitu detik.com, kompas.com, republika.com, dan liputan6.com, pada periode Januari–Maret 2025. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa framing media menekankan isu ketidakadilan sosial, keterbatasan akses, dan lemahnya komunikasi kebijakan, yang berkontribusi pada tekanan opini publik dan percepatan evaluasi kebijakan oleh pemerintah. Penelitian ini memperkaya kajian framing media dengan menunjukkan peran media sebagai aktor strategis dalam dinamika perubahan kebijakan publik serta menegaskan pentingnya Government Public Relations (GPR) dalam pengelolaan komunikasi kebijakan yang sensitif.

**Kata kunci:** *framing media; kebijakan publik; humas pemerintah; subsidi elpiji; perubahan kebijakan; hubungan masyarakat*

## Introduction

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is one of the primary energy sources with a strategic role in Indonesian society, particularly for low-income households and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Since the implementation of the kerosene-to-LPG conversion program, consumption of subsidized 3-kilogram (kg) LPG has increased significantly due to its relatively affordable price and ease of use. Consequently, 3 kg LPG has been designated as a state-subsidized commodity aimed at ensuring equitable, inclusive, and sustainable access to energy for vulnerable groups (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, 2020).

Nevertheless, in practice, the 3 kg LPG subsidy policy has faced various structural challenges. Several studies and policy reports indicate the existence of distribution irregularities, mistargeted usage, and price disparities at the consumer level resulting from lengthy distribution chains (Siregar & Handayani, 2019). Subsidized LPG is frequently used by higher-income households and medium-





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scale businesses, thereby undermining the objectives of the subsidy and placing an additional burden on the state budget (Yuliana, 2022). These conditions have prompted the government to restructure the distribution system as part of broader energy subsidy policy reforms.

In response to these issues, the government, through PT Pertamina and relevant ministries, implemented a policy restricting the distribution of 3 kg LPG, including a ban on sales through retailers and a shift to purchases exclusively via official distribution outlets (pangkalan) starting on 1 February 2025. This policy was intended to shorten distribution channels, improve targeting accuracy of subsidy recipients, and strengthen oversight of energy distribution (Pertamina, 2025). Normatively, the policy represents a state effort to improve subsidy governance and promote social justice.

However, the implementation of this policy has generated controversy and public resistance. Numerous complaints have emerged, particularly from communities in areas with limited access to official outlets and from micro-entrepreneurs who heavily rely on 3 kg LPG for business continuity. Long queues, supply shortages, and price increases in informal markets have become prominent issues reported by national media outlets. This situation indicates that the success of public policy is determined not only by its substantive design but also by how the policy is communicated and perceived by the public (Howlett & Ramesh, 2018).

In this context, mass media play a central role as a discursive arena that mediates between government policy and public experience. Media do not merely disseminate information; they also frame reality through processes of selection, emphasis, and interpretation of specific aspects of events (Entman, 1993). The way media frame the 3 kg LPG policy significantly influences public understanding and evaluation, shaping whether the policy is perceived as a rational measure for subsidy control or as a policy that neglects the needs of marginalized communities.

A growing body of research suggests that media framing of public policies often affects public trust in government. Fauziati (2021) found that online media framing of government policy crises tends to portray the state as inconsistent, slow, and unresponsive, potentially weakening policy legitimacy and eroding public trust. In the context of the 3 kg LPG policy, framing that highlights public suffering, conflict, and implementation failures may reinforce negative perceptions and accelerate the escalation of public opinion.

This is where the role of Government Public Relations (GPR) becomes critically important. GPR constitutes a strategic government communication function aimed at building mutual trust between the state and society through transparent, dialogic, and empathetic communication (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). GPR functions not only as an information disseminator but also as a manager of public opinion, an interest mediator, and a facilitator of public participation in the policy





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process. When this function does not operate optimally, the public communication space tends to be dominated by media framing and spontaneous public opinion that may not fully reflect policy objectives (Boyer & McNutt, 2023).

The lack of proactive and anticipatory public communication in the implementation of the 3 kg LPG distribution policy indicates serious challenges in GPR practice. Limited socialization, delayed clarification, and weak empathetic narratives regarding policy impacts have reinforced critical media framing. Research by Rahmanto et al. (2022) emphasizes that effective government communication framing should highlight state responsibility, build policy legitimacy, and guide the public toward inclusive and equitable solutions.

Therefore, analyzing media framing of the 3 kg LPG distribution policy is essential to understanding how policy realities are constructed within the public sphere and how such constructions influence public perceptions and responses. Furthermore, this study is relevant for formulating strategies to strengthen GPR so that governments can more effectively manage communication surrounding sensitive energy policies with broad social impacts that directly affect people's livelihoods.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze national media framing of the 3 kg LPG distribution policy and its influence on public perceptions. In addition, the study examines how the role of Government Public Relations can be optimized to create policy communication that is more responsive, credible, and trusted by the public.

The novelty of this research lies in its integration of media framing analysis with the dynamics of public policy change. Unlike previous framing studies that typically focus on mapping media discourse, this study demonstrates that media framing of the 3 kg LPG distribution policy contributed to the formation of public opinion pressure that prompted the government to evaluate and adjust the policy within a relatively short period. By combining media framing and Government Public Relations perspectives, this research enriches the field of policy communication studies, particularly within the energy sector, which directly affects vulnerable social groups.

## **Literature Review**

### **A. Media Framing and Public Policy**

Media framing plays a crucial role in shaping how the public understands public policies and in determining policy legitimacy within the public sphere. Entman (1993) emphasizes that framing is





not merely the presentation of facts, but a process of selection and salience that influences public judgments of actors and policies. In the context of public policy, media framing can either strengthen or weaken public support for government decisions, particularly for policies that address basic societal needs. Through the framing process, media do not simply convey information but actively select and highlight certain aspects of reality, thereby shaping how the public interprets and evaluates social phenomena (Syaugie & Nurhajati, 2025). Fauziati (2021) demonstrates that online media do not merely report government policies but actively frame governmental performance and image through issue selection, source choice, and specific emphases. Such framing significantly influences public perceptions of policy effectiveness and legitimacy. Similarly, Sofian and Lestarini (2021) find that online media actively frame government policies by highlighting uncertainty, unpreparedness, and inconsistency, which in turn shapes public perceptions of policy legitimacy. Prasty (2016) argues that framing constitutes a process of social reality construction conducted not only by mass media but also by organizations and institutions through their communication messages. Furthermore, Rahmanto et al. (2022) emphasize that in situations of policy crisis, communication framing plays a vital role in fostering shared understanding, reducing public panic, and maintaining public trust in government. Therefore, framing serves as an essential analytical framework for understanding how public policies are interpreted, contested, and negotiated within the public sphere.

### ***B. Media Pressure dan Policy Change***

A number of studies indicate that intense media pressure can drive public policy change, particularly when media framing generates widespread negative perceptions (Boyer & McNutt, 2023). Media function not only as channels of information but also as political arenas that influence how state actors respond to public demands. Unlike Fauziati's (2021) research, which emphasizes the impact of media framing on governmental image, this study demonstrates that media framing affects not only public perception but also contributes to rapid policy change, as evidenced by the evaluation of the 3 kg LPG distribution policy. Findings by Sofian and Lestarini (2021) suggest that media framing emphasizing pessimism and doubt toward government policies can intensify public criticism and weaken trust in the state's capacity to address public issues. While their study focuses on the effects of framing on governmental image and public perception, the present research extends this argument by showing that media framing can also accelerate policy adjustments within a relatively short period. According to Prasty (2016), framing functions to illustrate how actors-including organizations and governments-position themselves in particular situations, such as responsible, defensive, or





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corrective actors. These framing positions have direct implications for the formation of public opinion.

### **C. Government Public Relations dalam Krisis Kebijakan**

In situations of policy crisis, Government Public Relations (GPR) plays a strategic role in bridging communication between the government and the public. Cutlip et al. (2006) emphasize that failures in public communication can create opportunities for uncontrolled media framing to dominate the public sphere. Therefore, media framing analysis becomes essential for evaluating the effectiveness of government GPR strategies in managing controversial policies. Fauziati (2021) shows that when government communication is poorly managed, the media tend to dominate public discourse through critical framing. This underscores the importance of Government Public Relations in managing policy communication, particularly in crisis issues with widespread societal impact. Sofian and Lestarini (2021) further argue that critical media framing emerges when government communication is perceived as inconsistent and poorly coordinated. These findings reinforce the argument that failures in Government Public Relations open space for media framing to shape public opinion toward public policies. Prasty (2016) asserts that framing analysis in Public Relations research is useful for evaluating whether organizational messages are aligned with media agenda setting and public opinion. Misalignment in framing has the potential to trigger public resistance to implemented policies.

#### **Method**

This study employs a qualitative approach using Entman's framing analysis model. The unit of analysis consists of online news articles that discuss the distribution policy of 3 kg LPG. Data were collected from four national online news outlets with the highest website traffic in Indonesia, namely [detik.com](http://detik.com), [kompas.com](http://kompas.com), [republika.com](http://republika.com), and [liputan6.com](http://liputan6.com). These media outlets were selected based on their ranking as top news and media websites in Indonesia according to <https://www.similarweb.com/top-websites/indonesia/news-and-media/>.

Robert N. Entman's framing model is relevant for analyzing policy communication and crisis situations because it enables the identification of how problems are defined, causes are diagnosed, moral evaluations are constructed, and solutions are recommended (Rahmanto et al., 2022). Entman's framing analysis allows researchers to systematically examine how the media define issues, attribute causes, make moral judgments, and propose remedies in their coverage (Syaugie & Nurhajati, 2025).





The analytical procedure using Entman's framing model in this study consists of the following components:

Table 1. The Concept of Entman's Framing Analysis Model

<i>Define Problems</i> (Defining Problems)	How is an event/issue seen? As a what? Or as a matter of what?
<i>Diagnose causes</i> (Estimating the problem or source of the problem)	What was the event seen as caused? What is considered to be the cause of a problem? Who (the actor) is considered the cause of the problem?
<i>Make moral judgment</i> (Making moral decisions)	What moral value is presented to explain the problem? What moral values are used to legitimize or delegitimize an action?
<i>Treatment Recommendation</i> (Emphasizing completion)	What settlement is offered to resolve the problem/issue? What path is offered and must be taken to overcome the problem?

In framing analysis using Entman's model, the analysis focuses on four core elements, namely:

1. *Define problems* refers to describing the issue by outlining how the problem is presented and narrated chronologically.
2. *Diagnose causes* refers to identifying the causes of the issue, explaining why the problem occurs, and determining which actors are portrayed as responsible for the emergence of the problem.
3. *Make moral judgement* refers to explaining the moral values or normative evaluations used to interpret and assess the issue.
4. *Treatment Recommendation* refers to identifying the proposed solutions or policy recommendations offered to address the existing issue.

- *Define Problems*: From January to March 2025, *Liputan6.com* reported several issues related to the distribution of subsidized 3 kg LPG. In March, cases of misuse of subsidized LPG were uncovered by the Indonesian National Police Criminal Investigation Department (Bareskrim Polri). The case involved 616 subsidized LPG cylinders, 900 non-subsidized cylinders, and six vehicles used for illegal transportation. This newly identified mode of misuse further indicated systemic failures in the





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distribution of subsidized LPG. In response to the situation, the Minister of Investment, Bahlil Lahadalia, announced a new plan for the distribution of 3 kg LPG, including the possibility of reviewing the subsidy scheme to improve efficiency.

- *Diagnose Causes:* The issue is attributed to an ineffective monitoring system in the distribution of subsidized 3 kg LPG, which enables unauthorized distributors and ineligible individuals to exploit the subsidy. A key factor contributing to mistargeted subsidy distribution is the absence of an integrated verification system, such as the use of population identification data during the distribution process. In addition, distribution irregularities are exacerbated by the involvement of LPG syndicates and low levels of legal awareness among the public.

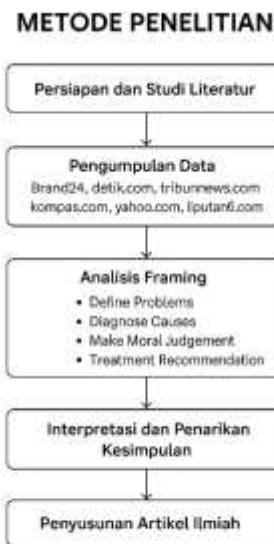
- *Make Moral Judgement:* The issue reflects a violation of the principle of social justice, as certain parties misuse state assistance intended for economically vulnerable communities. Such misuse not only causes economic losses to the state but also constitutes a moral breach by undermining integrity, morality, and social responsibility. The rights of vulnerable groups are effectively deprived when subsidies fail to reach their intended beneficiaries.

- *Treatment Recommendation:* To ensure accurate targeting of subsidies, the government should implement a digitalized distribution system for subsidized 3 kg LPG based on the National Identification Number (NIK). Strict sanctions must be imposed on actors involved in distribution irregularities to strengthen law enforcement. Furthermore, transparency in the LPG distribution chain should be enhanced so that the public can monitor the flow of subsidized LPG. Public education regarding citizens' rights and obligations in using subsidized LPG is also necessary. Ultimately, energy subsidy policy reform should be pursued by shifting from a commodity-based subsidy system toward direct subsidies for individuals who genuinely require assistance.





## Research Flowchart



Source: Data Processed by the Researchers, 2025

## Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected from news coverage published by four national online media outlets: detik.com, kompas.com, republika.com, and liputan6.com. These media outlets were selected based on having the highest website traffic in Indonesia according to Similarweb rankings. The analysis period covered January to March 2025, representing the three-month period before and after the implementation of the policy.

The articles were selected based on the following criteria: (1) explicitly discussing the distribution policy of 3 kg LPG, (2) containing government responses or reporting the societal impacts of the policy, and (3) being published by national media outlets. The analysis was conducted by identifying the four framing elements proposed by Entman: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and treatment recommendations.

## Validity and Reliability

Data triangulation was employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings by using document analysis to verify the consistency and accuracy of the data.





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## Results and Discussion

The unit of analysis in this study consists of online news articles that directly discuss the policy restricting the distribution of 3 kg LPG. A total of seven news articles published by four national online media outlets during the period of 1 January to 31 March 2025 were analyzed. The selection of articles was based on the following criteria: (1) explicitly addressing the 3 kg LPG policy issue, (2) being published by national media outlets with the highest website traffic, and (3) presenting government responses or reporting the societal impacts of the policy.

The study analyzed news articles published between January and March 2025 by four major online media publishers—detik.com, kompas.com, republika.com, and liputan6.com. These outlets were selected based on their status as the most visited news websites in Indonesia according to Similarweb. The analysis period covered the three months before and after the implementation of the government policy on 3 kg LPG distribution.

The discussion section applies Robert N. Entman's framing analysis model, which focuses on four core elements: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and emphasizing treatment recommendations. This approach enables an examination of how media interpret and construct policy-related events. Differences in media orientation resulted in varied framing emphases—ranging from technocratic and social aspects to moral considerations—which ultimately shaped divergent constructions of the issue within the public sphere (Syaugie & Nurhajati, 2025).

Detik.com consistently frames the policy on restricting the distribution of subsidized 3 kg LPG as a technocratic issue that triggered public unrest due to weak implementation readiness. The framing does not emphasize the policy's objectives, but rather highlights its immediate impact on the public, such as long queues and limited access to LPG. Government responses, including the President's public apology, are positioned as corrective measures aimed at easing public pressure and stabilizing the policy situation.

Define Problem the problem is defined as the consequences of a government policy that came into effect on 1 February 2025, which prohibited retailers from selling 3 kg LPG and required distribution to be conducted exclusively through official Pertamina bases holding a Business Identification Number (NIB) and registered in the OSS system. The policy was intended to improve the governance of subsidized LPG distribution to ensure that subsidies reach eligible beneficiaries. However, in practice, several issues emerged, including a lack of awareness among retailers regarding the new regulation and difficulties faced by consumers in accessing LPG. These difficulties included the obligation to purchase directly from official bases, present identification cards, endure long





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queues, and comply with purchase limits. Such conditions generated public panic and disrupted LPG distribution in several regions.

Diagnose Causes the causes of the issue are framed as long-standing irregularities in the 3 kg LPG distribution chain. Many unregistered retailers had been selling LPG above the regulated retail price, resulting in subsidies being misallocated. The government considered it necessary to implement a more integrated and controlled distribution system to ensure that the subsidy, valued at approximately IDR 30,000 per cylinder, is received by eligible households. The actors involved in this issue include the central government as the policymaker, Pertamina as the distribution implementer, informal retailers who previously played a role in reaching communities despite lacking formal legality, and consumers who were directly affected by the abrupt changes in the distribution mechanism.

Make Moral Judgement from a moral perspective, the policy reflects values of social justice and accountability by seeking to ensure that state subsidies are enjoyed by low-income communities rather than being exploited by unauthorized actors. However, the coverage also raises ethical concerns related to social and economic justice. When implemented without a fair transition period and adequate public education, the policy risks marginalizing small-scale retailers and creating additional barriers for economically vulnerable groups, particularly those living far from official distribution bases. A policy that is normatively sound must also consider accessibility, distributive justice, and economic inclusion in its implementation.

Treatment Recommendation the recommended solutions emphasize the need to improve policy implementation. The government is encouraged to intensify socialization efforts down to the neighborhood level to ensure that both retailers and the public fully understand the policy and its procedures. In addition, assistance and incentives should be provided to small retailers wishing to register as official distribution bases, including access to capital and training related to the OSS system. The government is also advised to remap the locations of distribution bases to prevent access barriers, particularly in remote areas. The coverage suggests the introduction of a transition period during which retailers may continue selling LPG under the supervision of official bases to maintain distribution stability. Finally, the establishment of public complaint channels is recommended to enable real-time monitoring of distribution problems and ensure fair enforcement of regulations.

In this article, [detik.com](#) reports that the government implemented a policy effective 1 February 2025 that halted the sale of 3 kg LPG through retailers and restricted distribution exclusively to official Pertamina bases. The policy aimed to ensure that subsidies were accurately targeted and that prices complied with the regulated retail price ceiling. However, the absence of adequate socialization and the lack of a pilot-testing phase resulted in public confusion, long queues, and difficulties in accessing subsidized LPG. These conditions ultimately prompted presidential intervention through the House of Representatives, allowing retailers to temporarily resume sales.





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The problem is defined as the sudden termination of 3 kg LPG sales through retailers starting 1 February 2025, implemented without prior socialization or trial phases. As a result, communities accustomed to purchasing LPG from nearby small shops were forced to queue at official distribution bases, present identification cards, and face limited access. Long queues and concerns over scarcity emerged, leading to public anxiety. In this context, the government was perceived as having failed to adequately educate the public regarding the new purchasing mechanism through official Pertamina bases.

The causes are framed as stemming from abrupt changes to the distribution system without sufficient preparation. The policy was enacted suddenly without comprehensive data on the distribution of official bases, without public outreach, and without localized pilot testing. Key stakeholders—including the government (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources), Pertamina, and retailers—failed to coordinate effectively, resulting in insufficient availability of distribution bases or lack of public awareness regarding their locations. The absence of an integrated system among stakeholders contributed to service disruption.

From a moral standpoint, the government's intention to ensure that subsidies are accurately targeted reflects values of justice and public accountability. Nevertheless, the implementation overlooked principles of inclusivity and protection for vulnerable groups, particularly communities reliant on small-scale retailers. The rushed nature of the policy indicates limited consideration for public service orientation and the capacities of lower-income communities that should have been prioritized and protected.

The recommended response emphasizes the need for immediate policy trials in limited regions prior to nationwide implementation, accompanied by comprehensive socialization efforts, including public education on base locations and purchasing procedures. Assistance and incentives should be provided to retailers to transition into sub-distributors, along with the establishment of a transition period during which retailers are allowed to operate while policy evaluation is ongoing. Additionally, real-time monitoring of distribution and accessible public complaint channels are necessary to allow communities and retailers to report obstacles promptly, alongside firm enforcement against pricing and distribution violations.

This coverage presents social problems that emerged as a consequence of the government's new policy on the distribution of subsidized 3 kg LPG. In defining the problem, the article systematically describes issues arising after the implementation of a closed distribution system beginning 1 February 2025. Under this policy, the public was required to purchase LPG exclusively from official distribution bases using an identity number-based registration system. Informal retailers such as small shops and kiosks, which had long served as the primary access point for low-income communities, were no longer permitted to sell LPG.





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Due to the abrupt implementation of the policy without widespread socialization, many citizens experienced significant difficulties in obtaining LPG. Long queues and public panic occurred in various regions. Liputan6 highlights empirical field conditions, including the death of an elderly resident who collapsed from exhaustion while queuing, framing the situation as a humanitarian crisis triggered by inadequate readiness of the new distribution system.

In diagnosing the causes, the coverage identifies the policy as originating from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources as part of a subsidy reform effort to improve targeting accuracy. The policy was supported by Pertamina and other technical ministries seeking to ensure that distribution was orderly, registered, and digitally monitored. However, the root causes emphasized in the coverage include weak technical preparation and ineffective public communication. Uneven socialization left many citizens unaware of the new distribution flow, unfamiliar with the locations of official bases, and uninformed about the requirement to use national identification numbers for purchases. Inadequate supporting infrastructure, a limited number of distribution bases, and the exclusion of former retailers from the new system further exacerbated the situation. Responsibility for the problem is framed not only as lying with policymakers, but also with poor cross-sector coordination and the absence of grassroots-oriented approaches.

In terms of moral judgment, Liputan6 implicitly portrays a tension between technocratic policy ideals and complex social realities. On one hand, the policy embodies fiscal justice by ensuring that subsidies reach only low-income households. On the other hand, moral values such as social concern, empathy for vulnerable populations, and the importance of a humane approach to public policymaking appear neglected. The article emphasizes that abrupt policy changes without consideration of societal readiness inevitably create new forms of suffering for those most in need of state assistance. The death of an elderly citizen while queuing becomes a symbolic representation of the lack of humanitarian sensitivity in policy implementation. This moral framing underscores that public policy, even when driven by good intentions, must prioritize substantive social justice rather than merely procedural fairness.

Regarding treatment recommendations, Liputan6 not only presents on-the-ground conditions but also conveys various solutions proposed by the government. These include encouraging retailers to register as sub-distributors through the OSS system and obtain Business Identification Numbers, implementing a digital identification-based system via Pertamina's Merchant Apps, and enforcing price controls to maintain subsidy compliance. Nevertheless, the article implicitly stresses the urgent need for comprehensive policy evaluation. Suggested measures include establishing a more humane transition period, increasing the number of distribution bases to ensure equitable access, expanding the scope and intensity of public socialization efforts, and enhancing the involvement of local governments in assisting distribution processes. Strengthening participatory approaches-particularly

108





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by integrating local retailers as official distribution partners-is identified as essential to ensuring effective policy implementation without triggering social unrest.

Overall, through Entman's framing approach, the coverage constructs public perception that the subsidized 3 kg LPG distribution policy was intended to discipline and improve the subsidy system. However, insufficient system readiness and the lack of participatory approaches generated serious social consequences, particularly for low-income communities. The reporting functions not merely as a transmission of facts, but as a mechanism of meaning construction that highlights the importance of balancing policy rationality with empathy toward social realities. An ideal public policy is not only technically sound, but also fair and humane in its implementation.

Since 1 February 2025, the government, through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM), has required retailers of 3 kg LPG to register as official distribution bases as an initial step toward the complete elimination of non-official retailers by March 2025. In defining the problem, the coverage highlights that the presence of informal retailers adds additional layers to the distribution chain, potentially disrupting price stability in relation to the regulated retail price ceiling and weakening distribution control. Regions with limited access to official distribution bases are framed as being at higher risk of experiencing shortages or uncontrolled price increases.

In diagnosing the causes, the policy is positioned as part of the government's effort to shorten the distribution chain, reduce price markups, and establish a more transparent and efficient distribution system. The use of the Online Single Submission (OSS) system for Business Identification Number registration and the conversion of retailers into official bases is presented as the primary structural instrument. However, the underlying cause emphasized in the coverage is the existence of unmonitored subsidized LPG distribution and the potential for misuse within informal distribution layers.

From the perspective of moral judgment, the article frames the policy as an attempt to uphold fiscal justice and subsidy accountability, ensuring that 3 kg LPG is received only by eligible beneficiaries rather than being freely commercialized by non-official retailers. At the same time, implicit concerns emerge regarding public welfare, particularly in areas with limited numbers of official bases. The moral values emphasized include the importance of fair distribution and affordable pricing as core policy objectives, which must be balanced with social accessibility for communities in remote or underserved locations.

Regarding treatment recommendations, the coverage suggests accelerating the registration of retailers as official bases through the OSS system, strengthening formal distribution channels, and enforcing price controls in accordance with the regulated retail price ceiling. Although not stated





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explicitly, the article implies the need for a smooth transition period to prevent supply gaps, the strengthening of distribution data through identity number-based recording if integrated, and periodic policy evaluations to ensure the effectiveness of the transformation of the subsidized LPG distribution system.

The article frames the policy to eliminate 3 kg LPG retailers as a strategic government initiative oriented toward improving subsidy efficiency, while simultaneously highlighting its potential social and structural implications. The coverage positions the state as the dominant actor with a strong fiscal and regulatory agenda aimed at tightening control over subsidized energy distribution. At the same time, the public is portrayed as the party most directly affected by the policy shift, particularly in relation to changes in access, distribution mechanisms, and daily energy consumption. This framing emphasizes the tension between technocratic policy objectives and the lived realities of communities that rely heavily on informal retail channels for affordable LPG access.

### *1. Define Problems*

The main problem framed in the coverage is the government's plan to eliminate the role of 3 kg LPG retailers starting in March 2025, resulting in distribution being conducted exclusively through official distribution bases. This policy is positioned as a major shift in the governance of energy subsidies, which has long relied heavily on informal retail networks.

The article highlights that the removal of retailers has the potential to disrupt public access to subsidized LPG, particularly for low-income households and micro-enterprises that have traditionally depended on nearby retailers. Consequently, the issue is framed not only as a matter of distribution restructuring, but also as a problem of accessibility and the sustainability of household energy needs.

### *2. Diagnose Causes*

The primary cause of the policy is framed as the increasing fiscal burden of the 3 kg LPG subsidy, which is considered poorly targeted. The government is portrayed as attempting to curb subsidized LPG consumption by ineligible groups, as a significant portion of the subsidy has been enjoyed by middle- and upper-income households.

Beyond fiscal considerations, the article presents the need to regulate a distribution chain that has been perceived as overly loose and difficult to supervise. However, Republika.com implicitly emphasizes that the policy is formulated from an administrative and macroeconomic perspective, without being accompanied by adequate readiness of official distribution infrastructure or a sufficient transition process for small retailers.





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### *3. Make Moral Judgement*

From a moral perspective, the policy is framed as an effort by the state to uphold subsidy justice, while simultaneously raising ethical concerns regarding its impact on vulnerable populations. Although the government's objective is considered legitimate and rational in terms of protecting public finances and ensuring subsidies reach their intended recipients, the approach taken is perceived as risking the marginalization of disadvantaged groups.

The dominant moral narrative reflects a tension between policy compliance and social justice. The elimination of retailers is feared to impose additional social burdens, such as increased travel distance, time, and costs for low-income communities. Thus, the moral value emphasized is the necessity for public policies to be not only fiscally efficient, but also socially just and human-centered.

### *4. Treatment Recommendation*

In terms of solutions, the article reports that the government is preparing a transition scheme, including encouraging retailers to transform into official sub-distributors. This scheme is positioned as a middle-ground solution that maintains orderly distribution without completely cutting off public access to subsidized LPG. Additionally, the coverage stresses the importance of improving subsidy recipient data to ensure accurate targeting.

The government is encouraged to ensure the readiness of distribution infrastructure, conduct extensive public socialization, and adopt a gradual implementation approach so that the policy does not trigger social unrest or public resistance.

The article frames the controversy surrounding the 3 kg LPG distribution policy as a public policy crisis that prompted corrective responses from the government. Unlike *Republika.com*, which emphasizes policy complexity and structural impacts, *Kompas.com* highlights narratives of clarification, apology, and governmental responsibility as efforts to ease public anxiety and restore trust.

#### *1. Define Problems*

The main issue is framed as public unrest and controversy resulting from the policy to regulate the distribution of 3 kg LPG, particularly the plan to eliminate retailers. The policy is positioned as a trigger for public concern due to its potential to restrict access to subsidized gas.





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*Kompas.com* frames the problem not merely as a technical policy issue, but as a social impact and communication failure. Insufficient policy communication and an underprepared transition process are portrayed as key factors that generated negative public reactions and political pressure. Thus, the core problem is defined as a policy transition failure that caused widespread public discomfort.

## 2. Diagnose Causes

The causes of the controversy are framed as inadequate implementation readiness and weak public socialization. The government is depicted as having good intentions to ensure that subsidies are better targeted; however, the execution of the policy lacked sufficient distribution system readiness and public understanding.

The article also emphasizes that the policy emerged amid the high sensitivity of household energy needs, where even minor changes can create significant ripple effects. As a result, the source of the problem is not attributed to the policy's objectives, but rather to the manner and timing of its implementation.

## 3. Make Moral Judgement

From a moral perspective, *Kompas.com* portrays the government as an actor willing to acknowledge mistakes and issue a public apology. The apology is framed as an ethical and responsible action within the principles of good governance.

The moral narrative constructed is moderate and conciliatory. The government is not positioned as entirely at fault, but is expected to demonstrate greater sensitivity toward public conditions. The moral values emphasized include accountability, transparency, and state empathy toward citizens, particularly vulnerable groups directly affected by the policy.

## 4. Treatment Recommendation

The article underscores the corrective measures taken by the government as the primary solution. The government is reported to be evaluating the policy, improving distribution mechanisms, and ensuring continued access to 3 kg LPG for eligible communities.





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In addition, *Kompas.com* stresses the importance of strengthening public communication and policy socialization to prevent misinterpretation and public panic. These recommendations point toward a more cautious, gradual, and dialogue-based policy approach that prioritizes public engagement.

The article “*Njelimet’ LPG 3 Kg Policy*” published by *Republika.com* frames the policy to eliminate LPG 3 kg retailers as a complex, problematic public issue with the potential to generate broad social impacts. The narrative positions the government policy not merely as a technical matter of energy distribution, but as a “njelimet” (complicated and convoluted) policy that is overly complex and insufficiently attentive to grassroots social realities.

### 1. Define Problems

The coverage defines the main problem as the complexity of the LPG 3 kg distribution policy, which restricts sales exclusively to official distribution bases and requires consumer identity verification using a national ID card (KTP) or family card (KK). This policy is portrayed as a sudden change that creates confusion among the public and complicates access to subsidized gas.

The problem is further emphasized through a quantitative comparison between the limited number of official bases (approximately 260,000 units) and the millions of informal retailers previously relied upon by communities. This imbalance generates access barriers, particularly for low-income households, the elderly, and micro-entrepreneurs who depend on nearby retailers. Thus, the problem is framed not only as a distribution issue, but also as one of access and social justice.

### 2. Diagnose Causes (Diagnosa Penyebab)

The primary cause highlighted in the article is the government’s orientation toward fiscal efficiency and subsidy control. The government is depicted as seeking to reduce misuse of LPG 3 kg subsidies, which data suggest have disproportionately benefited middle- and upper-income groups.

In addition, the article underscores structural unpreparedness as a crucial cause. Administrative requirements to become an official base—such as capital, licensing, and record-keeping systems—are considered excessively burdensome for small-scale retailers. In this sense, the issue lies not in the intent of the policy, but in an implementation design that is unrealistic given the socio-economic conditions of the affected communities.





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### 3. Make Moral Judgement (Penilaian Moral)

In moral terms, Republika.com frames the policy as a dilemma between administrative precision and social justice. Although the policy's objectives are considered morally legitimate—namely ensuring that subsidies are accurately targeted and safeguarding state finances—the article argues that the approach adopted is overly technocratic and lacks empathy.

The moral narrative emphasizes that public policy should not impose additional burdens on vulnerable groups. The prohibition of informal retailers is perceived as potentially generating exclusion errors, whereby eligible beneficiaries are marginalized due to rigid procedures. The moral values highlighted include humanitarian concern, alignment with the interests of lower-income communities, and distributive justice, rather than mere procedural compliance.

### 4. Treatment Recommendation (Rekomendasi Penanganan)

The article proposes a number of corrective and adaptive solutions. One of the main recommendations highlighted is the reinstatement of retailers as official sub-distributors, allowing them to continue serving the community while operating under government supervision.

In addition, the coverage encourages improvements to subsidy recipient databases, such as DTKS or P3KE, to ensure greater policy precision and to prevent mistargeting. The government is also expected to adopt a gradual and dialogical approach, so that the policy is not only administratively effective but also fair and accessible to all segments of society.

Cross-media comparison reveals differences in framing emphasis. Detik.com and Kompas.com tend to portray the policy as a technocratic issue requiring refinement, whereas Republika.com and Liputan6.com place greater emphasis on social justice and humanitarian impacts. These differences illustrate how media orientation influences the construction of public policy meanings within the public sphere.

Consistent with Prastyo (2016) and diverging from Rahmanto et al. (2022), these findings extend media framing scholarship by demonstrating that framing not only shapes public perception and opinion but also contributes to the dynamics of public policy change within a relatively short period. The intensity and repetition of media framing strengthen public perceptions of an issue, thereby potentially generating public opinion pressure on policy actors (Syaugie & Nurhajati, 2025). Overall, media framing contributes to the formation of significant public opinion pressure, which encourages governments to evaluate and adjust policies promptly, indicating that media framing functions as a catalyst for public policy change.





## Conclusion

Based on the framing analysis of news coverage from four of Indonesia's most popular online media outlets, it was found that

### 1. Define Problems

All media outlets agree that the policy restricting LPG 3 kg distribution has created access problems for lower-income communities. Detik.com and Kompas.com emphasize the immediate impacts, such as difficulties in purchasing LPG and long queues. Republika.com highlights structural inequalities caused by the limited number of official agents compared to informal retailers, which increases costs and access barriers. Meanwhile, Liputan6.com underscores the potential risks of supply shortages and price increases in areas with limited official distribution points.

### 2. Diagnose Causes

All articles identify the same policy background: the government's intention to regulate LPG subsidies to ensure accurate targeting and reduce fiscal burdens. However, Detik.com and Kompas.com highlight the lack of adequate socialization and the rushed implementation of the policy; Republika.com emphasizes the fiscal motives and the gap between technocratic objectives and social realities; while Liputan6.com focuses more on distribution restructuring and the prevention of subsidy misuse

### 3. Make Moral Judgement

All four media outlets position social justice as a central value. Detik.com and Kompas.com portray President Prabowo as a responsive, 'pro-people' figure, emphasizing the importance of state presence in protecting lower-income communities. Republika.com adopts a more critical stance by highlighting the tension between administrative accuracy and humanitarian considerations. Meanwhile, Liputan6.com frames the policy as fiscally legitimate, but stresses the need to balance justice with accessibility.

### 4. Treatment Recommendation

Detik.com, Kompas.com, and Republika.com emphasize the need for price supervision and improvements in the accuracy of subsidy recipient data, whether through official agents or distribution bases. Kompas.com specifically highlights the importance of policy socialization to the public. Liputan6.com adds recommendations for a smooth transition process, accelerated registration of retailers, and strengthened price control mechanisms.

Media framing reveals a dominant narrative: the policy to regulate LPG 3 kg distribution is driven by good intentions to improve subsidy targeting and reduce the fiscal burden; however, its





implementation has generated negative social impacts, including limited access, potential price increases, and public unrest. Extensive media coverage prompted the government to re-evaluate the implemented policy within a short period. Detik.com and Kompas.com emphasize the government's swift response and portray President Prabowo as a key actor in stabilizing the policy, while Republika.com and Liputan6.com adopt a more critical stance, highlighting technical unpreparedness and the need to balance administrative efficiency with social justice.

This study demonstrates that national media framing of the LPG 3 kg distribution policy predominantly emphasizes issues of social justice, limited access, and weak policy communication. Such framing contributes to the formation of public opinion pressure that encourages the government to evaluate and adjust public policy within a relatively short timeframe.

From a theoretical perspective, this research reinforces the argument that media framing not only shapes public perception but also plays a role in the dynamics of public policy change. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of strengthening Government Public Relations that are proactive, responsive, and grounded in systematic media monitoring. The limitation of this study lies in its focus on national online media and a specific time period. Future research may expand the analysis to social media platforms or compare framing between national and local media.

Overall, the findings indicate that the intensity of media framing contributes to the acceleration of public policy evaluation processes

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