



Digital *Ibuism* and the Algorithmic Panopticon: Identity Negotiation and Privacy Management Among Indonesian Military Wives

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Abstract. As modern societies transition into algorithmic environments, the control mechanisms of total institutions have extended beyond physical boundaries into the digital public sphere. In Indonesia, the military operates as a total institution where the domestic and social lives of spouses are strictly governed by the legacy of *State Ibuism* and *ex-officio* hierarchies. This conceptual paper explores how this institutional control is reproduced digitally, transforming social media and networked platforms into an algorithmic panopticon that heavily surveils the digital footprints of military wives. Drawing upon Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) and Goffman's dramaturgical framework, this study investigates the acute identity gaps these women experience when their personal autonomy clashes with the communal demands of institutional facework on algorithmic platforms. To survive this digital surveillance, military wives cultivate a specialized Digital Adaptive Communication Competence, this competence is operationalized through strict spatial segregation: performing highly scripted, compliant identities on algorithmic public frontstages (e.g., Instagram, Facebook) to protect institutional honor, while utilizing encrypted backstage networks (e.g., private WhatsApp groups) to express authentic personal identities and build peer resilience. By examining the intersection of gender, identity, and media surveillance, this paper offers a novel Global South perspective on how women in highly regimented organizations negotiate privacy, power, and algorithmic visibility.

Keywords: Algorithmic Surveillance, Military Wives, Digital Facework, Identity Gaps, State Ibuism.

1 Introduction

As modern societies transition into algorithmic environments, the control mechanisms of total institutions have extended beyond physical boundaries into the digital public sphere. This transition marks a profound epistemological and structural shift in how human communication, social interaction, and institutional power are organized and executed. The contemporary era is characterized by the pervasive phenomenon of datafication, a process defined by van Dijck [36] as the transformation of social action into online quantified data, thereby allowing for real-time tracking, predictive analysis, and behavioral modification called algorithms. These algorithms dictate visibility, prioritize specific forms of interaction, and systematically reward content that aligns with dominant institutional or commercial logics according to Zuboff [39]. Therefore, everyday life of domestic routines to formal professional

engagements is increasingly mediated by networked platforms. This mediation creates a reality where the digital and physical spheres are no longer separate domains but are intertwined. For individuals embedded within highly regulated organizational structures, this algorithmic mediation alters the nature of personal autonomy. The algorithmic society demands constant connectivity and visibility, transforming the social media profile from a personal archive into a public ledger.

To comprehend the magnitude of this shift, it is necessary to trace the evolution of surveillance from its classical, physical forms to its contemporary digital manifestations. The foundational framework for understanding institutional surveillance is rooted in Michel Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" in 1777. The classical panopticon was an architectural design for a prison consisting of a central watchtower surrounded by a ring of cells. The design's disciplinary power lay not in the continuous observation of the inmates, but in the *possibility* of continuous observation. Because the inmates could never be certain whether they were being watched at any given moment, they were forced to internalize the gaze of the guard, ultimately becoming their own overseers. Foucault argued that this panoptic mechanism extended far beyond the prison, becoming the dominant model of disciplinary power in modern institutions, including schools, hospitals, and military organizations.

However, the physical panopticon was inherently constrained by geography and temporality as its power was localized to the physical boundaries of the institution. As society migrated into the digital age, surveillance evolved into what Lyon [20] describes as the culture of surveillance, a liquid, pervasive phenomenon where monitoring is no longer exclusively a top-down imposition by the state or the institution, but a normalized, everyday practice embedded in social technologies. The digital era dismantled the physical walls of the panopticon, replacing the central watchtower with decentralized networks of algorithmic tracking, data mining, and social media observation. Surveillance is no longer confined to the barracks, the office, or the organizational headquarters, it permeates the domestic sphere, the private conversation, and the individual's psychological space.

This evolution has birthed the algorithmic panopticon, a conceptual framework that explains how digital platforms function as omnipresent mechanisms of institutional control. Unlike the physical panopticon, which relied on the vertical gaze of an authority figure, the algorithmic panopticon operates through multidirectional visibility. It is characterized by the convergence of vertical surveillance such as institutional authorities monitoring subordinates and lateral surveillance as peers monitoring one another. Andrejevic [2] notes that this form of peer-to-peer surveillance, or called lateral surveillance, fundamentally reorganizes social relations, turning colleagues, friends, and community members into active participants in the policing of institutional norms. Within the algorithmic panopticon, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp function as digital enclosures, thus for individuals within totalizing organizations, this creates matrix of observation. The algorithm itself acts as a non-human overseer, continuously archiving digital footprints, analyzing metadata, and making past behaviors permanently searchable.

In the analog world, individuals naturally perform different identities depending on their physical location and the specific audience present, a person behaves differently when they are at the office, at home, or socializing with friends. However, on social

media, these distinct audiences all occupy the same digital environment. In the algorithmic society, this spatial sanctuary is eliminated because the institutional hierarchy follows the individual onto their social media feeds, the control mechanisms of total institutions have successfully colonized the digital public sphere. The institution demands that the individual maintain their organizational identity and perform their institutional loyalty at all times, regardless of whether they are physically on-duty or in the privacy of their own homes.

Faced with the gaze of the algorithmic panopticon, individuals do not merely submit, they engage in complex, strategic negotiations of identity to survive. Expanding upon Goffman's [9] dramaturgical theory, digital facework involves the highly conscious curation of one's digital profile to project an image that aligns with the ideological demands of the institution, thereby avoiding punitive measures or social ostracization. In this environment, compliance is no longer just a physical act, it is a digital performance.

To understand the contemporary digital surveillance of Indonesian military wives, it is first necessary to critically examine the historical and socio-political conditions that constructed their institutional identities. Gender discourse in Indonesia has historically been shaped by shifting political regimes, which heavily influence how female participation in the public sphere is framed and operationalized. In the pre-independence era (prior to 1945), the Indonesian women's movement was remarkably vibrant and autonomous, playing a crucial role in the anti-colonial struggle, developing early ideas of nationalism, and actively fighting for women's rights in both domestic and public arenas. During the early post-independence era, these autonomous movements continued to gain momentum, advocating for women's political and socioeconomic empowerment outside the confines of the traditional household.

However, the rise of the authoritarian New Order regime (1966–1998) marked a turning point for women's autonomy in Indonesia. The New Order government recognized that an independent, politically active female populace posed a structural threat to its centralized national stability. Therefore, in place of autonomous political organizing, the regime engineered a massive ideological shift aimed at the reproduction of a masculine, binary, and hetero-patriarchal gender ideology. This regime systematically transformed gender relations by absorbing all female organizing into state-sponsored, bureaucratic vehicles designed not for emancipation, but for the mobilization of women as instruments of state power and social control. At the ideological of the New Order's gender governance was the doctrine of *State Ibuism* (State Motherhood). Initially conceptualized by prominent Indonesian sociologist Julia Suryakusuma, State Ibuism functioned as an institutional apparatus that strictly defined and mobilized women primarily in their capacities as wives and mothers.

State Ibuism was ideological tool because it modernized and bureaucratized informal patriarchal norms into a unified, national, and legally codified system. It operated synergistically through institutionalization, legalization, and ideologization. Rather than explicitly banning women from public life, conceptualized as a form of modern state patriarchy, State Ibuism incorporated women into the public sphere but strictly on the condition that their participation reinforced their domestic subordination. This created a profound paradox for Indonesian women: it produced mass mobilization without any accompanying socio-political emancipation. Women were mobilized solely to support the state's developmental authoritarianism, aiding in population

control, maintaining social stability, and providing unpaid labor to support the bureaucratic infrastructure. To enact the ideological mandate of State Ibuism, the government established mandatory, state-controlled women's organizations. Among the most powerful of these are *Dharma Wanita* and *Dharma Pertiwi*. These organizations were systematically designed with a parallel hierarchical structure that directly mirrors the military hierarchy of their husbands.

Within the Indonesian Army, the specific organizational branch is known as *Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana*, *Jalasenastri* and *PIA Ardhya Garini*. The organization operates as an extra-structural entity that is nonetheless deeply embedded within the military's command logic by mandating membership for all wives of active-duty personnel as they are no longer a private citizen, but an institutionalized asset whose primary duty is to safeguard the moral and social stability of the military apparatus. The most defining structural feature of the organizations is the *ex-officio* leadership system. In this framework, the formal position, authority, and status of a female member within the organization are not determined by her individual merit, educational background, or civilian professional achievements, but follow entirely and exclusively from her husband's rank in the armed forces. This structural reality creates psychological and communicative tensions for modern military wives. A woman who possesses a postgraduate degree and holds a senior executive position in her civilian life may find herself structurally subordinated to a much younger, less experienced woman simply because the latter's husband holds a higher military rank. This *ex-officio* system serves as a continuous, structural reminder that a woman's identity is entirely derivative of her husband's status. It erases personal autonomy and enforces a rigid communal identity. The wife is required to view herself not as an independent agent, but as *Pendamping*, a complementary figure whose sole organizational purpose is to reflect and amplify her husband's authority and institutional standing.

Historically, the performative compliance demanded by State Ibuism and the total institution was localized to physical spaces, which is the military base, the formal organizational gathering, and the official ceremony. However, as Indonesian society digitizes, the institutional gaze has expanded outward into the digital sphere as extensions of the military compound.

To systematically understand the psychological and communicative friction experienced by Indonesian military wives in algorithmic environments, it is essential to anchor the analysis in a robust theoretical framework of identity. Michael Hecht's [12] Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) provides a lens for this inquiry. Identity is not something an individual *has*; rather, it is something an individual *does* through communication. CTI conceptualizes identity as operating simultaneously across four interpenetrating and mutually influential layers, they are the personal, the enacted, the relational, and the communal.

- a. **The Personal Frame:** This refers to an individual's self-concept and self-cognition on how a person views themselves at their core, including their self-worth, aspirations, and personal values. For many modern Indonesian military wives, this frame encompasses their identities as educated millennials, independent professionals, or egalitarian partners.
- b. **The Enacted Frame:** This layer represents how identity is performed or expressed through communication. It is the visible manifestation of identity in

everyday behavior, language, and, crucially in the modern context, digital footprints.

- c. **The Relational Frame:** Identity is co-constructed through relationships with others. This includes how individuals see themselves through the eyes of others, their identification with relational partners (e.g., as a spouse), and the identity of the relationship itself.
- d. **The Communal Frame:** This macro-level frame encompasses the collective identity held by a group, organization, or society. It consists of the shared memories, collective narratives, and ideological norms of a specific community. In this study, the communal frame is strictly defined by the totalizing institution of the military and the overarching ideology of *State Ibuism*.

According to Hecht [12], these four frames are not isolated silos, they constantly interact and overlap. In an ideal communicative scenario, these frames are aligned and harmonious. Identity gaps are defined as profound discrepancies or contradictions between two or more frames of identity [17]. They represent a state of communicative dissonance where how an individual views themselves (personal) do not match how they are required to act (enacted), how others treat them (relational), or what their group demands of them (communal). Jung and Hecht [17] identified that the most common and distressing identity gaps usually occur between the personal-enacted frames and the personal-relational frames. For individuals embedded within total institutions, the negotiation of these gaps is not merely a matter of psychological comfort, but a critical mechanism for institutional survival. The inability to successfully bridge or mask an identity gap can lead to social ostracization and structural disciplinary measures from the institution. In physical realm, the identity gaps experienced by Indonesian military wives are acute and structural. This conceptual paper investigates these specific dissonances, particularly when a woman's personal autonomy clashes with the communal demands of the institution. The primary identity gap for these women emerges in the profound contradiction between the *Personal Frame* and the *Communal Frame*. The contemporary Indonesian military wife often enters the institution with a well-developed, modern personal frame. She may be a university lecturer, a corporate executive, a medical professional, or an entrepreneur. Her personal identity is grounded in intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism, and professional competence. However, upon marrying an active-duty soldier, she is forcibly assimilated into the communal frame of organizations where this frame is dictated by the historical legacy of State Ibuism, which demands total subordination, domestication, and strict adherence to the *ex-officio* hierarchy. In this environment, her personal achievements are systematically marginalized, and when her egalitarian personal frame collides with this patriarchal, hierarchical communal frame, a Personal-Communal identity gap is generated. She is forced to constantly negotiate between her authentic self-concept and the demands of the organization.

While these physical identity gaps have long been a feature of military life, the transition into algorithmic environments has amplified their intensity and visibility. Social media platforms do not merely reflect offline social dynamics, they actively reshape them through specific technological affordances. Drawing upon boyd's [4]

conceptualization of networked publics, digital platforms are characterized by four key affordances: persistence, visibility, spread-ability, and searchability. These affordances create a unique communicative crisis for military wives. In the analog era, the Enacted Frame could be spatially contained, a woman could perform her institutional duties at a formal organizational gathering and then return to her private residence or civilian workplace to express her autonomous Personal Frame. The boundaries between these spaces allowed for the temporary relaxation of identity gaps. However, the digital era introduces context collapse [21], wherein these spatial boundaries are entirely eliminated. On platforms like Instagram and Facebook, the audiences of military superiors, organizational peers, civilian friends, and family members are collapsed into a single, unified algorithmic public. To navigate this context collapse, military wives must engage in calculated digital facework. Goffman's [9] concept of facework refers to the actions taken by individuals to make their behavior consistent with the image they want to project and the face they want to maintain. In the algorithmic panopticon, maintaining face is not just about personal pride, it is about protecting institutional honor and safeguarding the husband's military career. Digital facework for the military wife involves a process of self-censorship and image curation. She must brush her digital footprint of any content that might contradict the communal frame, including suppressing posts that highlight her, political opinions, or lifestyle choices. The digital public frontstage (e.g., Instagram, Facebook) is thus transformed into a scripted performance arena designed solely to protect institutional honor.

Requirement to perform this digital facework has psychological and communicative consequences. The algorithmic panopticon ensures that the enacted frame on social media is entirely subsumed by the communal frame, leaving no room for the authentic personal frame. The suppression of personal autonomy to meet communal demands leads to emotional exhaustion and digital burnout. Military wives experience fear of institutional retribution or peer surveillance could paralyze their ability to communicate authentically online. The digital environment, rather than serving as a tool for connection and self-expression, functions as a mechanism of surveillance and control. Thus, to survive this surveillance they must cultivate a specialized "Digital Adaptive Communication Competence". This competence requires them to recognize the impossibility of authentic expression on algorithmic frontstages and to strategically redirect their personal frames into hidden, encrypted digital sanctuaries. By examining the intersection of gender, identity, and media surveillance, this paper offers a novel Global South perspective on how women in highly regimented organizations negotiate privacy, power, and algorithmic visibility.

2 Methods

Although initially positioned as a conceptual exploration of the algorithmic panopticon and digital identity negotiation, transitioning this inquiry into an empirical study demands a rigorous and philosophically grounded methodological framework. This research is situated within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism posits that reality is socially constructed, fluid, and highly dependent on context, therefore, human behavior cannot be understood apart from the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences [19]. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), developed by

Jonathan A. Smith [29] provides ideal psychological and philosophical toolkit for this research. IPA is built upon three foundational philosophical pillars: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography [31]. To complement the psychological depth of IPA, this study integrates Digital Ethnography which also related to Kozinets' [18] concept of Netnography. Digital ethnography provides the methodological tools required to observe, document, and analyze the cultural and structural realities of networked spaces. It allows researchers to move beyond what participants *say* they do, to observe what they *actually* do within digital enclosures [15].

This synthesis mirrors Erving Goffman's [9] dramaturgical framework, which structures the theoretical basis of the study. To understand how military wives cultivate Digital Adaptive Communication Competence, the methodology must simultaneously capture both the public performance and the private reality. The research design is executed sequentially. First, the Digital Ethnography is deployed to observe the participant's algorithmic frontstage by collecting and analyzing samples of the participant's public social media posts. This phase documents the highly scripted, compliant identities performed to protect institutional honor. It captures the rigid adherence to the communal frame. Second, the researcher transitions into the IPA phase, which serves as the backstage inquiry to conduct in-depth, semi-structured, phenomenological interviews. These interviews take place in highly secure, encrypted environments. The synthesis of these two methods allows the researcher to bridge the macro-level sociology of the digital panopticon with the micro-level psychology of identity negotiation. Given the focus on algorithmic surveillance and privacy management, ethical compliance was paramount. The research protocol ensured absolute anonymity. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and specific military units or geographic locations were obfuscated.

3 Results & Discussion

The empirical findings of this study reveal a transformation in how disciplinary power is exercised within highly regimented post-colonial organizations. As modern societies transition into algorithmic environments, the control mechanisms of total institutions have extended beyond physical boundaries into the digital public sphere. Historically, the Indonesian military's totalizing control over its personnel and their families was confined to the barracks, the official residential complexes, and the formal gatherings of state-sponsored organizations. However, the adoption of social media has merged these physical gates, bringing its *ex-officio* hierarchies and ideological into the seemingly boundless space of the internet. Participants in this study consistently described a lived reality where the digital realm is lacking of genuine spatial sanctuaries. For these women, platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are not experienced as personalized networks for social connection. The digital footprints of military wives are heavily surveilled, transforming their social media profiles into an algorithmic panopticon. Foucault's classical interpretation of the panopticon emphasized vertical surveillance, it was the gaze of the central watchtower looking down upon the inmates. In the context of the Indonesian military wives' organizations, this vertical surveillance remains a powerful force. The digital feeds of junior wives are routinely monitored by the wives of commanding officers. Because a wife's position in

the organization is entirely tethered to her husband's military rank, the senior wives act as the digital watchtower, possessing the structural authority to reprimand, correct, or implicitly punish junior members whose online behavior deviates from the conservative ethos of the institution.

The findings indicate that the most pervasive form of monitoring comes not from the top down, but from peer-to-peer interactions. Wives surveil one another. The affordances of social media such likes, comments, read receipts, and the algorithmic promotion of specific content facilitate a culture of mutual policing. A participant's digital footprint is inspected by her peers to ensure she is adequately demonstrating her loyalty to the organization. If a military wife fails to post a congratulatory message for an institutional anniversary, or if she neglects to share photographs of her participation in a mandatory social activity, her peers quickly notice this digital absence. In the algorithmic panopticon, invisibility is highly suspicious. The platform's logic demands constant, visible participation, turning every member of the organization into both a prisoner and a guard, collectively enforcing the boundaries of acceptable digital behavior.

Faced with this inescapable multidirectional gaze, military wives cultivate specific performative strategies to survive. The data reveals that participants engage in thorough Digital Facework. Adapting Erving Goffman's [9] dramaturgical theory to the digital age, facework refers to the communicative strategies individuals use to manage their self-presentation and maintain social harmony. For the Indonesian military wife, the public-facing platforms such Instagram or Facebook function strictly as algorithmic public frontstages. On these frontstages, the performance is highly scripted, demanding the projection of a compliant, domesticated identity that perfectly aligns with the ideals of State *Ibuism*. This digital facework is operationalized through intense visual and textual curation. Visually, the most prominent tool of digital facework is the organizational uniform. Participants noted that their Instagram feeds are strategically populated with images of themselves wearing certain uniform during official duties. The uniform functions as a profound visual signifier of submission to the total institution, it erases individuality and replaces it with corporate homogeneity. Even when not in uniform, participants reported strictly policing their physical appearance in photos to ensure their clothing is perceived as modest, conservative, and appropriate for the wife of a state defender. Textually, digital facework requires the deployment of highly formalized linguistic codes. When posting on the algorithmic frontstage, military wives frequently abandon their everyday, egalitarian language in favor of deferential speech codes. Captions are often saturated with formal praise for the military unit, expressions of unwavering support for their husbands' deployments, and religious invocations for the safety of the state. This textual performance is a deliberate tactic to signal obedience. By speaking the language of the institution on their personal social media accounts, these women preemptively neutralize the threat of the panoptic gaze, ensuring that their digital footprints cannot be weaponized against them.

The authoritative to perform this digital facework is driven by the awareness that a military wife's digital identity is never solely her own as within the logic of the total institution, her online presence is linked to the military's public relations apparatus. The findings demonstrate that participants bear a burden of representation. They are expected to serve as the digital embodiment of military honor, marital fidelity, and national stability. This burden is characterized by a lack of boundaries between the

wife's personal digital behavior and the husband's professional trajectory. Participants expressed concern that a single misstep on the algorithmic frontstage such as a controversial tweet, an overly glamorous Instagram photo, or a politically opinionated Facebook status could result in professional repercussions for their husbands. The military hierarchy holds the soldier responsible for the public behavior of his wife and family. Thus, the digital facework performed by these women is not motivated by personal vanity, it is a defensive, communicative maneuver designed to protect institutional honor and secure their family's socio-economic survival within the military ecosystem.

The phenomenological analysis of this algorithmic surveillance reveals that behind the smiling photographs in wife's uniforms lies a concern and fear occurs, in which Penney [25] describe as chilling effect when individuals self-censor their legitimate expression due to the fear of surveillance and punitive consequences. For the military wives in this study, the algorithmic panopticon has induced a state of digital anxiety. Participants described an internal calculus before posting any content online. They are aware that they must suppress their spontaneous thoughts, hide their civilian professional achievements, and mute their personal political beliefs. The frontstage is experienced not as a space of expression, but to sustain the total institution's hegemonic image. The algorithmic visibility intensifies as digital footprints are persistent and searchable boyd [4] an old photo posted years ago can be disclosed today and used as evidence, therefore, the military wife must continuously audit her past, present, and future digital self. This state fundamentally alters her relationship with technology, transforming the smartphone from a tool of liberation into a mechanism of continuous institutional tethering.

To systematically unpack the psychological distress and communicative friction experienced by Indonesian military wives within the algorithmic panopticon, it is essential to anchor the analysis in a theoretical framework of identity. Michael Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) provides lens for this inquiry. CTI posits that identity is inherently communicative as it is formed, maintained, negotiated, and modified through social interaction. Identity is not merely a product of communication but an integral element of it. CTI conceptualizes identity as operating simultaneously across four interpenetrating and mutually influential layers of the personal, the enacted, the relational, and the communal. According to CTI, these four frames are not isolated, they constantly interact, overlap, and interpenetrate. In an ideal communicative scenario, these frames are aligned and harmonious. However, when these frames contradict one another, individuals experience what CTI terms called as identity gaps. Identity gaps are defined as contradictions between two or more frames of identity, resulting from dissonant beliefs and practices. For instance, a personal-enacted identity gap occurs when individuals behave in ways that are inconsistent with their authentic self-concept. Similarly, a personal-relational gap occurs when there is a discrepancy between one's self-concept and the identities ascribed to them by others or their social units. When these gaps widen, they act as significant communicative stressors that can lead to adverse psychological outcomes, decreased relationship satisfaction, and profound emotional exhaustion. The contemporary Indonesian military wife often enters the institution with a well-developed, modern personal frame. She may be a university lecturer, a corporate executive, a medical professional, or an entrepreneur. Her personal identity is grounded in intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism, and

professional competence. However, upon marrying an active-duty soldier, she is forcibly assimilated into the communal frame of military wives' organizations. This communal frame, rooted in bureaucratic patriarchy, demands total subordination, domestication, and strict adherence to the *ex-officio* hierarchy, effectively reducing women to secondary identities that merely mirror male power. Within this organizational structure, a woman's personal agency is absorbed by the institution's image. Her personal achievements are marginalized as a highly educated woman married to a junior officer finds herself structurally subordinated to a senior officer's wife who may have lower educational credentials or professional experience. The communal frame demands that she enact a highly specific, utilizing deferential speech codes and adhering to rigorous organizational protocols. When her egalitarian personal frame collides with this communal frame, an identity gap is generated. She is forced into a continuous state of negotiation, struggling to balance her authentic self-concept with the totalizing demands of the military organization. While these physical identity gaps have been a feature of military life, the transition into algorithmic environments has amplified their intensity and visibility. In the analog era, the Enacted Frame could be spatially contained. A woman could perform her institutional duties at a formal organizational gathering and then return to her private residence or civilian workplace to express her autonomous Personal Frame. The physical boundaries between these spaces allowed for the temporary relaxation of identity gaps. However, the digital era introduces the phenomenon of context collapse, on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, into a single public-facing performance turning profiles and posts into strategic broadcasts rather than sites of authentic relational disclosure.

Participants expressed psychological distress when their personal autonomy clashed with these communal demands. For instance, participants who are civilian professionals felt algorithmic and peer pressure to actively minimize their personal career achievements on public platforms. The fear is that promoting their own success might overshadow the *ex-officio* hierarchy or contradict the idealized image of the compliant military spouse. This continuous suppression of personal autonomy leads to emotional and digital burnout. The expectations of this environment, combined with the fear of the consequences of failing these expectations, makes peer support crucial yet highly complicated. They live with the anxiety that a single misconstrued post could trigger disciplinary action against their husbands. Recent literature emphasizes that social media users, particularly those embedded in restrictive or norm-heavy environments, do not simply surrender to algorithmic visibility, rather, they develop sophisticated, platform-specific strategies to manage impressions and protect their core sense of self. For military spouses the ability to navigate these demands is vital for psychological survival. They must balance the necessity of visibility of loyalty with the human need for authentic expression.

Digital Adaptive Communication Competence (DACC) is conceptualized in this paper as the socio-technical and communicative ability to successfully navigate the contradictions between personal autonomy and communal institutional demands within an algorithmic society. It is an adaptation of Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), specifically tailored for the digital era. DACC is not merely about digital literacy, it is knowing how to use an app or adjust a basic privacy setting, but rather an advanced form of dramaturgical agility. It involves the cognitive recognition of algorithmic surveillance, the affective regulation of the resulting identity gaps, and the behavioral

of spatial segregation. A core component of DACC is the mastery of contextual compartmentalization. For the military wife, DACC is operationalized through a strict, deliberate spatial segregation of her digital life. This segregation mimics Erving Goffman's dramaturgical framework, mapping the frontstage and backstage onto specific technological architectures. By doing so, she consciously divided her identity, feeding the algorithm with the compliant institutional image as demanded by the public platforms, while protecting her authentic personal frame within encrypted, hidden networks.

The first operational step of DACC involves what this study terms as the Frontstage Concession. Participants in this research demonstrate a profound awareness of context collapse on highly visible platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. They understand that on these platforms, their audiences are inextricably merged into a single, observing public and because algorithms favor hyper-visibility and lateral surveillance encourages peer policing, these women make calculated, rational decision to accept these platforms entirely to the total institution. On the algorithmic frontstage, the military wife performs a highly scripted, compliant identity designed explicitly to protect institutional honor and adhere to the doctrine of *State Ibuism*. For military wives, this means their Instagram feeds are curated to reflect the idealized, domesticated *pendamping* (companion) with the visual aesthetics predominantly feature the official organizational uniform, and captions utilize highly formalized, deferential language. By choosing to perform this frontstage role, the military wife is not demonstrating ideological brainwashing, she is demonstrating tactical communicative competence. She understands that the frontstage is a panoptic space where any deviation from the norm could result in severe real-world consequences for her family's livelihood. Therefore, she utilizes platforms like Instagram not as tools for self-expression, but as necessary public relations instruments.

DACC also requires the cultivation of a secure digital backstage, as Goffman posited that the backstage is a vital region where the performer can drop their facade, step out of character, and momentarily escape the demands of the audience. In the contemporary digital ecosystem, this backstage cannot exist on public algorithmic feeds, it must be shielded. The data reveals that military wives utilize encrypted messaging applications such private WhatsApp that is unlike the algorithmic feeds of Facebook or Instagram, WhatsApp allows for micro-segmentation where users have total control over their conversation ensuring that the audience is restricted solely to trusted peers which are typically formed among wives of the same age demographic, shared civilian professional backgrounds, or matched husband's ranks where artificial hierarchy is dismantled. Participants report that the language used in these private groups is different from their public digital facework. Deferential speech codes and formal organizational praise are entirely abandoned. Instead, the women utilize egalitarian language, local slang, and informal communication styles by suspending the communal frame mandated by the military, they create the space to express their authentic Personal Frames.

This study provides a Global South perspective on the strength and communicative agency of women navigating the totalizing demands of modern institutional life, the cultivation of Digital Adaptive Communication Competence highlights the profound dualism of the modern military wife's digital existence. To survive the algorithmic panopticon, she must master the art of living a divided digital

life. This strategic spatial segregation demonstrates that digital compliance on public platforms should never be conflated with ideological submission as the military wives in this study are not passive subjects of *State Ibuism*, they are sophisticated, tactical communicators.

4 Conclusion

In the analog era, the totalizing of the Indonesian military over its personnel and their families was primarily maintained within physical demarcations. However, the findings of this study establish that these physical gates have been rendered by social media. This digital migration has resulted in the creation of an algorithmic panopticon for Indonesian military wives. Within this algorithmic panopticon, the historical legacy of *State Ibuism* is reproduced and technologically enforced. *State Ibuism*, constructed during the authoritarian New Order regime, is an ideology and institutional apparatus that defines and mobilizes women primarily in their capacities as loyal wives, dutiful mothers, and apolitical servants to the state. Utilizing Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), this study identified the identity gaps on military wives in the digital era. CTI posits that identity is complex, fluid, and layered, constructed in talk and social interaction. The primary identity gap for these women manifests as a contradiction between their *Personal Frame* and the *Communal Frame*. Because algorithms flatten multiple distinct audiences into a single digital space military wives are disadvantaged of a safe environment to enact their personal frames. The digital realm forces the communal frame to entirely incorporate the enacted frame; thus, they must engage in Digital Facework with the extending of Goffman's dramaturgical perspective. Despite the overwhelming pressure of this algorithmic surveillance, this study concludes that military wives are not passive victims of technological determinism. To survive the panopticon and manage their identity gaps, they cultivate a tactical skillset termed Digital Adaptive Communication Competence (DACC). DACC represents the socio-technical agility required to navigate the contradictions between personal autonomy and totalitarian institutional demands.

The findings of this research offer a contribution to communication study from a Global South's perspective like Indonesia. This study demonstrates that in Indonesia, the algorithm merges with cultural dogmas, in this case, the *State Ibuism*, while Western's perspective was driven by moral policing and social hierarchy preservation. In Western liberal democracies, privacy is frequently framed in individualistic, as a fundamental human right pertaining to data protection, user consent, and the right to be let alone. However, for Indonesian military wives, privacy is an active, vital communicative strategy for identity survival. For the military wife, managing privacy means successfully hiding her egalitarian, modern self from a system that demands her total domestication. Privacy, therefore, is reimagined as the space necessary to breathe, to dissent quietly, and to maintain psychological equilibrium within a total institution.

Moving forward, this conceptual framework and methodological approach should be expanded to investigate other totalizing institutions in the Global South such as civil service organizations, conservative religious institutions, and traditional bureaucratic corporations to fully understand how individuals cultivate communication competence to survive the algorithmic panopticon.

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