

# The Counter-Issues of Tanah Datar Government Regarding the Coverage News of Terrorism

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## Abstract

Tanah Datar, known for its rich Minangkabau cultural heritage and dedication to the philosophy of Kitabullah, is facing a disturbing trend. Despite its deep-rooted religious values, Densus88 has reported that the city has the second-highest number of NII terrorist personnel in West Sumatra. This revelation exposes a stark contrast between Tanah Datar's cultural identity and terrorism reports. The government must act to prevent further misconceptions. This research aimed to evaluate the distribution and focus of content related to terrorism on internal and external media sources and the government's approach to countering these issues. The study employed content analysis to examine the news by the Tanah Datar Regency government. This study applied a content analysis approach by Krippendorff, which involved three stages: crawling, coding, and abstracting. In the first phase of analysis, the study found 50 units of data from internal sources and 229 from external sources. The research findings indicated that news related to terrorism in Tanah Datar is only found in external media sources. The top three counter-issues pursued by the government include government branding with 158 posts (69%), and tourism impressions with 16 posts (7%). and health literacy with 11 posts (4.8%). The government has adopted an unconventional approach to address terrorism issues. Rather than reporting such issues on official channels, they opt to utilize media partners, offering an alternative strategy to tackle terrorism.

**Keywords:** counter-issue; government branding; local government; news; terrorism

## Abstrak

*Tanah Datar, yang terkenal dengan warisan budaya Minangkabau yang kaya dan prinsipnya terhadap filsafat Kitabullah, menghadapi tren yang mengkhawatirkan. Meskipun memiliki nilai-nilai keagamaan yang dalam, Densus88 melaporkan bahwa kota ini memiliki jumlah personel teroris NII kedua tertinggi di Sumatera Barat. Hal ini kontras dengan identitas budaya Tanah Datar akan laporan tentang terorisme. Pemerintah tentu harus bertindak untuk mencegah miskonsepsi lebih lanjut. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengevaluasi distribusi dan fokus konten terkait terorisme pada sumber media internal dan eksternal serta pendekatan pemerintah dalam menangani isu-isu tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis konten untuk memeriksa berbagai postingan dari pemerintah Kabupaten Tanah Datar. Studi ini menerapkan pendekatan analisis konten yang diadaptasi dari Krippendorff, yang terdiri dari tiga tahap: crawling, coding, dan abstracting. Dalam fase analisis pertama, studi menemukan 50 unit data dari sumber internal dan 229 unit data dari sumber eksternal. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa berita terkait terorisme di Tanah Datar hanya ditemukan di media eksternal. Counter-Issue (Isu Tandingan) yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah Tanah Datar mencakup tiga isu teratas; (1) Branding Pemerintah dengan 69% (158 postingan), (2) Impresi Pariwisata dengan 7% (16 postingan), dan (3) Literasi Kesehatan dengan 4,8% (11 postingan). Menariknya, pemerintah Kabupaten Tanah Datar telah mengadopsi pendekatan yang tidak konvensional dalam menangani isu-isu terorisme. Alih-alih melaporkan isu-isu tersebut di saluran resmi, mereka memilih untuk menggunakan media partner dan menawarkan strategi alternatif untuk menangani terorisme.*

**Kata kunci:** berita; branding pemerintahan; isu tandingan; pemerintah lokal; terorisme

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## INTRODUCTION

The rise in acts of terrorism in Indonesia, like in many other countries, is indeed a cause for concern (Zakiyah, 2016, p. 19). Certainly, West Sumatra, a predominantly Muslim province known for its homogeneity, is not immune to the challenges of terrorism. The Governor of West Sumatra, Mahyeldi, in a press conference on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with journalists, stated that radicalism was never born in West Sumatra (Putra, 2022). However, data collected on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, from Karo Penmas, National Police Public Relations Division, Brigadier General Ahmad Ramadhan, said that there were 1,125 NII members spread across two districts in West Sumatra. NII stands for “Negara Islam Indonesia” (Islamic State of Indonesia), a separatist group in Indonesia that aims to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. A total of 833 people are in Dharmasraya Regency, while 292 other members are in Tanah Datar Regency (Ibrahim, 2022). This terrorism data is a manifestation of the counterterrorism handling program initiated by the Indonesian National Police (Amar et al., 2019).

This data is surprising for the residents of West Sumatra, who are predominantly Muslims. This fact was revealed after investigators from the Densus88 investigated 16 members of the NII terrorist group who were apprehended in West Sumatra on Friday, March 25, 2022 (Ibrahim, 2022). What is also interesting to note is that Tanah Datar Regency is the second-highest contributor suspected of producing terrorists based on the press release that the Densus88 has held. However, Tanah Datar is known as a cultural hub for the Minangkabau people and strongly upholds the principle of “Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah” (Anggun, 2016). The Minangkabau cultural philosophy in “Adat Basandi Sarak, Sarak Basandi Kitabullah” is a way of life upheld in Minangkabau society, which makes Islam the main foundation in the patterns of behavior and values of life.

Tanah Datar Regency government held a press conference in April 2022 to counter the issues related to this news. They emphasized to the media that the government considerably doubts the data released by Densus88 regarding the spread and exposure to radicalism in the Tanah Datar Regency. Examining how the Tanah Datar government responds to the issues of terrorism in the region is novel (Akbar, 2022).

Research on terrorism has been conducted extensively, both domestically and internationally. One insightful study related to counter-terrorism efforts was conducted by Ali et al. (2013) that examined the coverage of Pakistan-US relations regarding the issue of counterterrorism by prominent US news magazines, “Newsweek” and “Time.” Essentially, this study sought to present perspectives on Pakistan and the US as portrayed by the US press. The results of this research indicated pro-US coverage in leading US news magazines regarding the issue of counterterrorism (Ali et al., 2013). From a governmental perspective, Aminah (2016) described the factors contributing to radicalism and formulated steps taken by the government to combat terrorism in Indonesia.

From a counter-issue perspective, Muhibbin et al. (2019) examined the power of mass media in constructing the reality of radicalism-terrorism issues concerning Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) in Indonesia. They revealed that the resistance form of media in Islamic Boarding Schools against radicalism-terrorism issues involves redirecting negative issues to positive news and opinions about the role of Pesantren in society. Besides, Hanafiyah (2023) studied how the online media Kompas.com perceives the issue of terrorism. The research indicated that Kompas.com tends to support the government through the perspective conveyed in the news. Additionally, there are efforts to build a negative image of terrorism through the use of the word ‘attack’ in every news article about actions carried out by suspected terrorists.

The efforts made by the Tanah Datar Regency government regarding the exposure to

radical ideologies in West Sumatra are undoubtedly key to conducting deradicalization efforts in the region. A multi-faceted strategy, including partnerships with media, can enhance the government's efforts to counteract terrorism narratives (Gunaratna & Aslam, 2021). Therefore, the author is eager to see how the government responds to this issue by countering it through various media channels, whether on government official websites, social media platforms, or in collaboration with local and national online media outlets. Social media giants like Facebook, Google, and Twitter have become key players in counterterrorism by establishing and enforcing a global governance regime on terrorist communications, often exceeding legal requirements due to reputational pressure and the threat of legislation (Borelli, 2023). The government should be portrayed as an active participant in counter-terrorism efforts, contributing to the normalization of surveillance and pre-emptive security measures (Rodrigo Jusué, 2022). The emerging issues on the internet have the potential to escalate into a cyber war and can exert significant impacts on security, especially for a country or government (Radulescu, 2015).

Therefore, the author believes that this study is of utmost importance because the issues of terrorism are highly sensitive and can potentially divide the unity of the Indonesian nation. There are concerns that this could evolve into an Islamophobia phenomenon, especially on the international stage, which has recently grown into a prominent global political issue (Safei et al., 2022). Hence, compared with offline information settings, online news users can access news asynchronously by pausing and delaying news exposure or by clicking on entertainment news on the same page or next screen (Powell et al., 2021). Furthermore, Tanah Datar Regency, as an area that highly values Minangkabau culture and philosophy, is perceived to require prompt clarification or confirmation on the accuracy of this data. This research is expected to contribute significantly to Tanah Datar Regency, particularly in the context of deradicalization and to the broader context of West Sumatra. The government of Tanah Datar has been grappling with counter-issues surrounding the coverage of terrorism in the news (Adianto et al., 2020).

Robert H. Knapp identified rumors or gossip as propositions regarding beliefs about references that are of a public discourse nature, disseminated without official verification. According to Knapp, rumors have three basic characteristics: (1) they have a clear dissemination pattern, typically spread through word of mouth, which makes them prone to variable distortion; (2) the information disseminated is about specific individuals, specific events, under certain conditions; (3) they fulfill the need for information that can induce anxiety if the rumors are fear-inducing, but they become humor if the individuals or subjects of the rumors become the target (Knapp, 1944, p. 25).

Counter-issue, in this context, refers to socio-economic and political issues that the regime seeks to prevent from further disturbing the public. It can be understood as an attempt to delegitimize the regime and to be "not placed on the agenda (media) by established elites but by counter-elite groups" (Mathes & Pfetsch, 1991, p. 34). Counter-Issue triggers conflicting interests and sparks a struggle between challenging parties and the government regarding the significance and interpretation of these issues. Therefore, it is a method or effort to minimize unsettling matters for the public by introducing alternative 'counter-issue' topics, especially in sensitive societal areas. It also deals with how media framing impacts public perception (Rinjani & Wahidar, 2023).

Within counter-issue, there is a phenomenon known as "spill-over" of issues. The spill-over process refers to the transfer of issues from one agenda to another. For instance, when marginalized opposition groups clearly place their counter-issues on the media agenda, there is a process of shifting from the opposition's agenda to the media agenda (Badr, 2021). In this context, for example, if the existing issue is terrorism, there is a process of diverting attention

away from it to avoid causing distress in society. The redirection of the issue can take diverse forms, and the issue that serves as this diversion is what we refer to as a counter-issue.

The term “counter-issue” in the academic world is derived from the study of agenda-building popularized by Roger W. Cobb and Charles D. Elder in 1971. They concluded that mainstream media agendas perpetuate the existing status quo. Political stability is driven by rhetoric that favors the political elites. Since they are not included in the official system, marginalized actors find it more difficult to influence the scope and nature of media coverage (Cobb & Elder, 1971). Counter-discourses are created and disseminated in response to dominant narratives (Wang & Ouyang, 2023). Similarly, it employs counter-issue strategies to address and manage terrorism reporting and how alternative narratives are produced and maintained to counter dominant or problematic narratives.

As a result, opposing parties often use different methods to gain media attention for their counter-issues. They frequently insert themselves into the agenda-building process by employing dramatic events or protests as entry points into the media agenda (Walgrave & Vliegthart, 2012). When opposition to the status quo seriously challenges existing norms, they “legitimately raise political controversy” and increase pressure on the government by making their issues more widely known (Cobb & Elder, 1971). According to Mathes and Pfetsch (1991), the opposition plays the role of issue sponsors and “suppliers of new issues and perspectives.”

The capacity of opposition groups to voice their counter-issues within the mainstream media agenda is referred to as their ability to develop an agenda (Badr, 2021). Building an agenda means bringing up a topic considered taboo and expressing a specific perspective on that topic. Agenda-setters aggressively try to influence the media agenda to advance their interests while existing agendas compete with each other. Opposition groups adapt to the media’s logic by creating actions intended to capture attention and generate news value through public opinion or behavior different from what is found in the mainstream media because they rely on media attention (Rucht, 2022). To prevent the media from ignoring their issues, protest movements must be creative in using performative actions such as dissent, political slogans, or organized blog communities. This way, counter-issues can be implemented to redirect sensitive issues as desired by the agenda-setters.

Journalistic independence remains unassailable despite mechanisms that shift the opposition’s agenda to the media’s. Media and journalists intentionally select their sources and topics based on newsworthiness and expert opinions. The background conditions of the media system, such as ownership, bias, and financial limitations, also influence the agenda. Understanding the constellation around it is crucial for comprehending the spillover effects and the evolution of issue cycles in specific political and media contexts because the agenda-setting process is “context-sensitive” (Pfetsch et al., 2013, p. 10).

Research on agenda-building regarding counter-issues in Western democracies shows that both the state and opposing parties influence the media agenda in many ways. For example, advocacy groups have proven effective in influencing media coverage on topics such as food safety and environmental issues (Neil et al., 2018; Pfetsch et al., 2013). Studies on critical issues undermining the moral fabric of democratic political systems indicate that security agencies wield greater influence over the media agenda. For instance, Bakir’s research (2015) on torture issues in the U.S. context reveals that intelligence agencies leverage the press and other agenda-building institutions for their benefit. The media tends to prefer the government’s agenda over acting as a watchdog, according to Marchionni’s study (2012) on international human trafficking. These studies demonstrate that the influence of challenging parties and the



state on the media agenda depends on the nature of the counter-issue.

The nature of the spill-over process has evolved with the increasing presence of online technologies as part of the “hybrid media system” (Chadwick, 2017). Currently, authors observe a growing strength in the spread of social media agendas into traditional media agendas as a result of agenda-setting processes diversified by the internet and user-generated content. Conventional media no longer have the exclusive ability to determine the relevance of an issue, thus reducing the influence of long-established conventional media (McCombs et al., 2014). However, social media focuses more on the mass dissemination of issues rather than the transfer of their significance and causes. As a result, new media significantly contribute to agenda-setting in countries with limited media freedom and restricted civil liberties; however, it has relatively high internet penetration (Rauchfleisch & Kovic, 2016). Social media adds pressure on autocratic political regimes to act quickly because social media is highly unrestricted in terms of time and space, which can lead to bottom-up liberalization. In high-choice media environments, visuals can contribute to the selective avoidance of political news and cross-cutting political news (Powell et al., 2021). Therefore, with the presence of social media, disregarding counter issues becomes progressively more challenging.

Terrorism poses a threat to a nation’s stability and peace. Radicalism is an attitude or spirit aimed at weakening and changing established orders and replacing them with new ideas or understandings. Movements for change are sometimes accompanied by violent actions (Hafid, 2020). Radicalism can also be interpreted as an ideology created by a group of people who desire drastic changes or reforms in social and political structures and tend to use violent means (Ariwidodo, 2017, p. 251). Thus, radicalism is often also referred to as extremist ideology and has been extensively studied, encompassing community engagement, development, education, strategic communications, and public-private partnerships.

Several studies on terrorism, particularly in Indonesia, have been conducted, including research by Amiruddin (2014) on the extent of radical thought prevailing among the younger generation in Aceh. The research findings indicated that the model of terrorism as a form of struggle is not accepted by young activists in the city of Banda Aceh. Another study was conducted by Muallifah and Maula (2022) on the involvement of women in radicalism-terrorism. The research revealed how the online media platform Harakatuna employs strategies to educate the public through its content related to women and radicalism. Additionally, Zamzamy (2019) suggested that radicalism is also promoted through internet media, eventually entering people’s lives. Further, Khoirurrijal (2017) regarding Islam Nusantara as a counter-hegemony against Religious Radicalism in Indonesia, indicated that the discourse of Islam Nusantara draws significantly from the ideas introduced by Gus Dur, particularly through the localization of Islam since the 1980s to the current concept of Islam Nusantara promoted by the Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU).

Certainly, terrorism is not at all desired by the Indonesian people because they have arbitrary goals without regard for the rights of others. In the international context, terrorism is typically associated with Islam (Thompson & Shuker, 2023). Therefore, Indonesia, as a country with a majority Muslim population, must pay attention to this matter. Implementing an independent review system and adhering to legal and proportionality principles in counterterrorism can enhance human rights protection and democratic practices (Isman et al., 2024). Terrorism is a common enemy of all the inhabitants of the earth, as their movements and acts of terror create fear among communities. Nevertheless, everyone is urged to remain vigilant about the possible spread of this unsettling ideology because any complaints should be carefully considered. Considering the current era, left-leaning elements are widespread

everywhere. In fact, their movements are considered to pose a significant threat to community life and disrupt the social order and other systems.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed text data analysis, specifically qualitative content analysis, to examine the counter-issues undertaken by the Tanah Datar Regency Government regarding the reporting on Terrorism. Content analysis in research is used to unveil the content of research instruments that depict their situation in a specific context. Additionally, the content analysis method is utilized to gain a deeper understanding of the related research (Güneş et al., 2017), which is based on critical thinking about the content of a study to be investigated (Elo et al., 2014). In this study, the author employed content analysis to address the research question concerning how the Tanah Datar Regency Government counters the news on Terrorism. To gather data, a comprehensive search was conducted using the Google search engine with the keywords “*pemberitaan terorisme di Tanah Datar*” (terrorism news in Tanah Datar).

There are several fundamental steps in conducting content analysis. First, the author selects texts relevant to the research objectives (Stausberg & Engler, 2021, p. 182). In this stage, the author collected data by crawling social media accounts, official websites, and other news channels, such as online and print media. The issues addressed were related to the reporting on terrorism in Tanah Datar Regency, which had been released since April 2022.

Secondly, the author coded the messages embedded in the text according to the similarities and differences in the posts on each social media account, official website, and other news channels such as government online and print media in Tanah Datar Regency. In this stage, the author consolidated or identified suitable message units to create codes (Stausberg & Engler, 2021, p. 514). In identifying units, the author employed techniques proposed by Krippendorff (2004), which involved identifying the number of words, phrases, or sentences (syntax) and units of statement or argument (propositional) (Stausberg & Engler, 2021, p. 514). In this research, the author identified the number of likes, comments, shares, views (syntax), and statements (propositional) from the social media and official websites of the Tanah Datar Regency Government.

Thirdly, after consolidating and identifying relevant analysis units (similarities and differences), the author employed two types of categories to classify these analysis units: substance (message content) and form (how it is conveyed) (Stausberg & Engler, 2021, p. 515). By following these content analysis steps, the author can analyze how the Tanah Datar Regency Government counters the reporting on Terrorism.

An extensive search was conducted on the Google search engine using the keywords “*pemberitaan terorisme di Tanah Datar*” (terrorism news in Tanah Datar) to gather data. The texts were determined based on the following criteria: (a) concerning the issue of terrorism; (b) published within the time frame of the climax of the press conference, from March 2022 to May 2022. A total of 50 news articles were collected by the author and were distributed across various external channels. External channels refer to all news platforms outside the ownership of the Tanah Datar Regency Government that also reported and released news related to terrorism in Tanah Datar (some examples of these external media outlets have been mentioned and analyzed in the discussion section, see Table 5). All articles were released after the press conference and during the climax month following the release, which was between March and May 2022. The validity of the research results was enhanced by performing data triangulation through interviews with the Tanah Datar Regency Government, specifically at the Tanah Datar Regency Communication and Information Office (KOMINFO) and the West

Sumatra Counterterrorism Coordination Forum (Forum Koordinasi Penanggulangan Terorisme - FKPT).

This research employed a data triangulation technique to ensure the authenticity and credibility of the study. Triangulation in qualitative research provides empirical evidence to enhance understanding of the reality or phenomena studied. This study employed to strengthen the author's analysis and provide empirical evidence for the research. Given the reliance on text analysis, empirical evidence is necessary to substantiate the findings. The type of triangulation utilized is data triangulation, which involves accessing a variety of sources to gather data on the same issue. Specifically, the author conducted interviews with Tanah Datar Regency Government officials relevant to the research context as a form of data triangulation.

The data triangulation adopted purposive sampling, selecting sources based on criteria predetermined by the author. The author selected the sources based on the criterion of being part of public communication coordination within the scope of the Tanah Datar Regency Government. In this research, the sources chosen for data triangulation were the Tanah Datar Regency Government, specifically at the Tanah Datar Regency Communication and Information Office (KOMINFO), and the West Sumatra region's Counterterrorism Coordination Forum (Forum Koordinasi Pencegahan Terorisme - FKPT), which represented the National Counterterrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme - BNPT) at the regional level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Distribution of News

In formulating the distribution of news related to terrorism in Tanah Datar Regency, the author conducted the first stage of content analysis. The first stage was carried out by selecting texts relevant to the research objectives. In this stage, the author collected data by crawling social media accounts, official websites, and other news channels such as government online and print media. The issues addressed were related to the reporting on terrorism in Tanah Datar Regency, released since March 2022.

Among the 50 articles that authors crawled, some of them had the highest engagement, as follows: In the YouTube Official iNews video post, March 27, 2022, titled "Densus 88 Arrests 5 Suspected Terrorists in Tanah Datar," it serves as an external source with the highest engagement with a total of 97 likes and 34 comments and 21,000,000 views (data collected on June 5, 2023). The source received various responses in their comment section. One of the responses with the most likes, under the username Topaz Sppiz Siregar SE, states, "*TERRORISTS must be eradicated from their nests. TERRORISTS should not be allowed to live in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which loves peace*".

According to the source, the crackdown executed by Densus88 in Tanah Datar led to the apprehension of five suspected terrorists at the site and an additional sixteen individuals in various locations across Tanah Datar. These suspects were detained following their return from nearby religious study sessions. The Village Head (Wali Jorong), who was involved in the raid, reported the confiscation of several items, including cameras and flash disks.

The next external source with the highest engagement was an article titled "The National Police (Polri) States There Are 1,125 NII Terrorists in West Sumatra, Spread across Two Districts, Here is the Explanation" from [jurnalsumbar.com](http://jurnalsumbar.com). It has received 13 likes with 675 views. This news report provides essential points from a press conference held by the Head of Public Relations Division of the Indonesian National Police, Brigadier General Ahmad Ramadhan. Among the details shared is the breakdown of 1,125 NII members spread across two districts in West Sumatra. A total of 833 individuals are located in the Dharmasraya District,

while the remaining 292 members are in the Tanahdatar District. The article also informs that, up to this point, 16 suspects have been apprehended in West Sumatra, and 77 children under the age of 13 have been recruited and indoctrinated by NII.

Another external channel that also released news on terrorism in Tanah Datar is CNN Indonesia, with nine comments of engagement. The article was posted on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and some comments on this article also provide insight that netizens are surprised by the relatively high figures of terrorism in Tanah Datar. For example, a comment from the user back states: *“West Sumatra? No wonder... it has been tough lately.”* There is also a comment from user Toni-suhardjito: *“Silently overwhelming. PRODUCER...”* Moreover, a comment from user Kus Wadi: *“Deserved, deserved 🍌.”*

Titled “Tanah Datar Regent Doubtful Many Residents Are Members of the NII Terrorist Network,” the next article from Detiksumut contains two comments. The news was released on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Unlike the previous article, the news released by Detiksumut shows a perspective from the Tanah Datar regency government expressing doubts about the existence of the NII network as stated by the Head of Public Relations Division of the Indonesian National Police, Brigadier General Ahmad Ramadhan. This also indicates that the leadership of the Tanah Datar regency needs to be convinced and believe in the widespread presence of NII in the region.

The last news coverage that serves as a unit of data analysis for this research is the report from the prokabar.com channel with the title “4 Suspected Terrorists Arrested by Densus88 in Tanah Datar.” This article was posted on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and has been viewed 1800 times. The news release from prokabar.com contains detailed information about the locations where the suspected terrorists in Tanah Datar were searched. According to preliminary information, three individuals were apprehended in the Tanjung Baru sub-district, and one person was detained in the Salimpaung Sub-district. Regarding the information about the perpetrators, one of them is identified by the initials IEP and works at one of the Rural Banks (BPR) in the Limapuluh Kota regency. The news article notes, based on residents’ statements, that many people watched the crackdown. The community’s interest is undoubtedly fueled by the fact that, as the article mentions, Tanah Datar has been relatively free from suspected terrorists in its area.

### **The Counter-issues of Terrorism**

In this first stage of analysis, the author identified a total of 229 units of data for analysis. Subsequently, the author proceeded with the second stage of analysis by encoding the messages embedded in the text based on the similarities and differences in posts on each social media account and the official website of the Tanah Datar Regency Government. At this stage, the author consolidated or identified suitable message units to create codes (Stausberg & Engler, 2021, p. 514). In identifying units, the author employed techniques presented by Krippendorff (2004), which involved identifying the number of words, phrases, or sentences (syntax) and units of statements or arguments (propositional) (Stausberg & Engler, 2021, p. 514). In this research, the author identified the number of likes, comments, shares, and views (syntax) and identified statements (propositional) from the social media and official websites of the Tanah Datar Regency Government. In this stage, the 229 units of data analysis were subjected to categorization, which is the second stage of content analysis. The results of the second-stage analysis are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the Government Branding category receives the largest portion with a high number of 158 posts (69%). This number is significantly higher compared to other categories. The next position is followed by the Tourism category with 16 posts (7%), and then Health with 11 posts (4.8%). The counter-issue by the Tanah Datar regency government



**Table 1.** Categorization of News

| No | Categorization of News | Number of Posts | Percentage |
|----|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1  | Culture                | 7               | 3.1%       |
| 2  | Economic               | 7               | 3.1%       |
| 3  | Religion               | 5               | 2.2%       |
| 4  | Health                 | 11              | 4.8%       |
| 5  | Sports                 | 2               | 0.9%       |
| 6  | Tourism                | 16              | 7%         |
| 7  | Government Branding    | 158             | 69%        |
| 8  | Education              | 1               | 0.4%       |
| 9  | Agriculture            | 9               | 3.9%       |
| 10 | Livestock Farming      | 3               | 1.3%       |
| 11 | Social                 | 9               | 3.9%       |
| 12 | Technology             | 1               | 0.44%      |

Source: (Processed by author, 2023)

regarding the coverage of terrorism has been made through counter-narratives at an abstract level, including government branding, tourism impression, and health literacy.

Government branding is the most commonly employed approach by the Tanah Datar regency government in responding to the issue of terrorism concerning this region. Branding is carried out by extensively disseminating information related to the Tanah Datar regency government, focusing the data analysis units on the period following the press conference by Densus 88 after March 25, 2022, until the end of the month, specifically on March 31, 2022. Based on the Table 2, 14 data analysis units were identified.

**Table 2.** Government Branding as a Counter-Issue

| No | Title of News  | Release Date    | URL   |
|----|--|-----------------|---|
| 1  | The Tanah Datar Regency Government and UNES Padang Sign an Education Synergy MoU.  | 27th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5694/pemkab-tanah-datar-dan-unes-padang-teken-mou-sinergi-pendidikan.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5694/pemkab-tanah-datar-dan-unes-padang-teken-mou-sinergi-pendidikan.html</a>   |
| 2  | Achieving Excellence Again, Tanah Datar Ranked 2nd in the Regional and Village Mid-Term Development Plan (RKPD and PPD) in West Sumatra. | 28th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5699/kembali-raih-prestasi-tanah-datar-terbaik-ii-rkpd-dan-ppd-tingkat-sumbar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5699/kembali-raih-prestasi-tanah-datar-terbaik-ii-rkpd-dan-ppd-tingkat-sumbar.html</a>   |
| 3  | Deputy Regent Richi Aprian, Unveiling Investment Opportunities for the Region through Incraft.   | 28th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5696/wakil-bupati-richi-aprian-inacraft-peluang-investasi-bagi-daerah.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5696/wakil-bupati-richi-aprian-inacraft-peluang-investasi-bagi-daerah.html</a>   |
| 4  | Regent Eka Putra: We must prepare the younger generation to be able to keep up with technological advancements.                          | 28th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5697/bupati-eka-putra-kita-harus-mempersiapkan-generasi-muda-yang-mampu-mengikuti-perkembangan-teknologi.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5697/bupati-eka-putra-kita-harus-mempersiapkan-generasi-muda-yang-mampu-mengikuti-perkembangan-teknologi.html</a> |

(continued on next page)

**Table 2** (continued)

|    |  |                 |   |
|----|--|-----------------|---|
| 5  | Leading the Combined Morning Gathering, the Regent Extends Congratulations on Entering the Holy Month of Ramadan 1443 Hijriah.               | 28th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5695/pimpin-apel-pagi-gabungan-bupati-sampaikan-selamat-memasuki-bulan-suci-ramadhan-1443-hijriah.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5695/pimpin-apel-pagi-gabungan-bupati-sampaikan-selamat-memasuki-bulan-suci-ramadhan-1443-hijriah.html</a>   |
| 6  | The Tanah Datar Regency Government and UNES Padang Sign an MoU for Educational Synergy.  | 28th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5698/pemkab-tanah-datar-dan-unes-padang-teken-mou-sinergi-pendidikan.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5698/pemkab-tanah-datar-dan-unes-padang-teken-mou-sinergi-pendidikan.html</a>   |
| 7  | Regent Eka Putra Welcomes the Visit of the Australian Ambassador   | 29th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5700/bupati-eka-putra-sambut-kunjungan-dubes-australia.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5700/bupati-eka-putra-sambut-kunjungan-dubes-australia.html</a>   |
| 8  | Regent Eka Putra Delivers an Explanation Note on the 2021 Regional Accountability Report (LKPj).   | 30th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5701/bupati-eka-putra-sampaikan-nota-penjelasan-lkpj-2021.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5701/bupati-eka-putra-sampaikan-nota-penjelasan-lkpj-2021.html</a>   |
| 9  | Improve the Quality of Early Childhood Educators, Deputy Regent Richi Aprian Explores Collaboration with UAI.                                | 30th March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5703/tingkatkan-mutu-tenaga-pendidik-paud-wakil-bupati-richi-aprian-jajaki-kerjasama-dengan-uai.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5703/tingkatkan-mutu-tenaga-pendidik-paud-wakil-bupati-richi-aprian-jajaki-kerjasama-dengan-uai.html</a>   |
| 10 | Inaugurate the New Director of Pemuda Tuah Sepakat, Regent Eka Putra: Give Birth to Innovations and Real Contributions.                      | 31st March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5710/lantik-direktur-baru-perumda-tuah-sepakat-bupati-eka-putra-lahirkan-inovasi-dan-kontribusi-nyata.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5710/lantik-direktur-baru-perumda-tuah-sepakat-bupati-eka-putra-lahirkan-inovasi-dan-kontribusi-nyata.html</a>   |
| 11 | Regent Eka Putra Inaugurates Functional Civil Servants and Occupational Safety and Health Officers in Tanah Datar.                           | 31st March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5708/bupati-eka-putra-lantik-asn-fungsional-dan-p3k-tanah-datar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5708/bupati-eka-putra-lantik-asn-fungsional-dan-p3k-tanah-datar.html</a>   |
| 12 | Officially Inaugurated, Tuah Sepakat Perumda Director Promises to Introduce New Breakthroughs for Tanah Datar.                               | 31st March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5709/resmi-dilantik-direktur-perumda-tuah-sepakat-sebut-bakal-hadirkan-terobosan-baru-untuk-tanah-datar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5709/resmi-dilantik-direktur-perumda-tuah-sepakat-sebut-bakal-hadirkan-terobosan-baru-untuk-tanah-datar.html</a>                                       |
| 13 | UAI Digital Leadership Webinar, Deputy Regent Richi Aprian as the Keynote Speaker.   | 31st March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5707/uai-digital-webinar-leadership-wabup-richi-aprian-keynote-speaker.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5707/uai-digital-webinar-leadership-wabup-richi-aprian-keynote-speaker.html</a>   |
| 14 | Fostering camaraderie with the IKTD of Padang City, Regent Eka Putra opens the door for suggestions, constructive criticism, and investment. | 31st March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5706/bersilaturahmi-bersama-iktd-kota-padang-bupati-eka-putra-membuka-pintu-sumbang-saran-kritik-membangun-serta-investasi.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5706/bersilaturahmi-bersama-iktd-kota-padang-bupati-eka-putra-membuka-pintu-sumbang-saran-kritik-membangun-serta-investasi.html</a> |

Source: (Processed by Author, 2023)

Table 2 shows that the news by the Tanah Datar Regency Government at the time of the terrorism issue was, in fact, news unrelated to terrorism. The released news explains the collaborations undertaken by the Tanah Datar Regency Government. This can be perceived as branding or image-building efforts by the Tanah Datar Regency Government through the news on their official channel.

The Counter-Issue implemented by the Tanah Datar Regency Government in response to the issue of Terrorism on their official channel primarily involves government branding. This is evident through the news release encompassing various collaborative activities between the Tanah Datar Regency Government and other parties. Examining the timeline of news during the peak of the Terrorism issue in March 2022, the Tanah Datar Regency Government, through their official channel, prioritized reporting on the collaborations they engaged in. In this context, it shaped a form of government branding. This approach, government branding, is one of the strategies of the Tanah Datar Regency Government to counter-issue terrorism. During that time, these issues left concern in society and were extensively reported across various media channels, especially online media.

The next Counter-Issue of the government is tourism impressions or massive tourism promotion for Tanah Datar. This issue was reported to support the narrative against terrorism, as identified in the content analysis conducted. The abstraction of tourism impressions comprised 16 posts in total. This abstraction secured the second position in terms of the highest number of posts related to the counter-issue. The posts are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Tourism Impression as a Counter-Issue

| No | Title of News   | Release Date    | URL   |
|----|---|-----------------|---|
| 1  | Deputy Regent Richi Aprian appreciates the TKSCI Sumbar community for promoting tourism.                          | 2nd March 2022  | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5628/wabup-richi-aprian-apresiasi-komunitas-tksci-sumbar-promosikan-pariwisata.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5628/wabup-richi-aprian-apresiasi-komunitas-tksci-sumbar-promosikan-pariwisata.html</a>                           |
| 2  | Enjoying the charm of Lake Singkarak while doing morning exercise, AHY: The peak of Aua Sarumpun is extraordinary | 23rd March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5688/bupati-eka-putra-pencapaian-target-pendapatan-zakat-tergantung-bagaimana-berkoordinasi.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5688/bupati-eka-putra-pencapaian-target-pendapatan-zakat-tergantung-bagaimana-berkoordinasi.html</a> |
| 3  | Visit Tanah Datar, AHY admires the peak of Aua Sarumpun and also gives a public lecture.                          | 23rd March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5686/kunjungi-tanah-datarahy-kagumi-puncak-aua-sarumpun-dan-juga-berikan-kuliah-umum.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5686/kunjungi-tanah-datarahy-kagumi-puncak-aua-sarumpun-dan-juga-berikan-kuliah-umum.html</a>               |
| 4  | Indonesia Overlanding Community camps, hoping Aua Sarumpun's peak becomes more renowned.                          | 23rd March 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5685/komunitas-overlanding-indonesia-berkemah-berharap-puncak-aua-sarumpun-semakin-terkenal.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5685/komunitas-overlanding-indonesia-berkemah-berharap-puncak-aua-sarumpun-semakin-terkenal.html</a> |
| 5  | Three villages in Tanah Datar enter the top 500 nationally in ADWI 2022.  | 21st April 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5762/tiga-nagari-di-tanah-datar-masuk-500-besar-nasional-adwi-2022.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5762/tiga-nagari-di-tanah-datar-masuk-500-besar-nasional-adwi-2022.html</a>   |

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**Table 3** (continued)

|    |  |                 |   |
|----|--|-----------------|---|
| 6  | Pariangan Village represents Tanah Datar in the top 100 of ADWI 2022.  | 26th April 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5786/tanah-datar-targetkan-nagari-tuo-pariangan-tembus-lima-besar-adwi-2022.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5786/tanah-datar-targetkan-nagari-tuo-pariangan-tembus-lima-besar-adwi-2022.html</a>   |
| 7  | Tanah Datar aims for Nagari Tuo Pariangan to break into the top five of ADWI 2022.   | 28th April 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5786/tanah-datar-targetkan-nagari-tuo-pariangan-tembus-lima-besar-adwi-2022.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5786/tanah-datar-targetkan-nagari-tuo-pariangan-tembus-lima-besar-adwi-2022.html</a>   |
| 8  | Pariangan enters the top 50 nominations of ADWI 2022, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy holds a workshop.       | 29th April 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5790/pariangan-masuk-50-besar-nominasi-adwi-2022-kemenparekraf-ri-gelar-bimtek.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5790/pariangan-masuk-50-besar-nominasi-adwi-2022-kemenparekraf-ri-gelar-bimtek.html</a>   |
| 9  | Regent Eka Putra: The speed of Lintau's boat will be turned into a tourist destination.                                    | 4th May 2022    | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5797/bupati-eka-putra-selaju-sampan-lintau-akan-dijadikan-destinasi-wisata.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5797/bupati-eka-putra-selaju-sampan-lintau-akan-dijadikan-destinasi-wisata.html</a>   |
| 10 | Building tourism from the village: Andaleh Perdana implements one village, one event.                                      | 5th May 2022    | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5801/bangun-wisata-dari-nagari-andaleh-perdana-laksanakan-satu-nagari-satu-event.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5801/bangun-wisata-dari-nagari-andaleh-perdana-laksanakan-satu-nagari-satu-event.html</a>   |
| 11 | Istano Basa Pagaruyung is flooded with visitors.   | 5th May 2022    | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5798/istano-basa-pagaruyung-dibanjiri-pengunjung.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5798/istano-basa-pagaruyung-dibanjiri-pengunjung.html</a>   |
| 12 | Tourist destinations in Tanah Datar visited by 131,077 visitors during the Eid holiday.                                    | 9th May 2022    | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5808/destinasi-wisata-di-tanah-datar-dikunjungi-131-077-pengunjung-selama-libur-lebaran.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5808/destinasi-wisata-di-tanah-datar-dikunjungi-131-077-pengunjung-selama-libur-lebaran.html</a>   |
| 13 | The presence of Homestay boosts the tourism industry in Tanah Datar.   | 23rd May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5845/keberadaan-homestay-topang-industri-pariwisata-di-tanah-datar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5845/keberadaan-homestay-topang-industri-pariwisata-di-tanah-datar.html</a>   |
| 14 | Enjoying Istano Basa Pagaruyung with an electric scooter.  | 29th May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5857/menikmati-istano-basa-pagaruyung-dengan-scooter-listrik.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5857/menikmati-istano-basa-pagaruyung-dengan-scooter-listrik.html</a>   |
| 15 | Emulating the study of tourist villages, Regent Eka Putra desires tangible results that can be implemented in Tanah Datar. | 30th May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5858/studi-tiru-desa-wisata-bupati-eka-putra-inginkan-hasil-nyata-yang-bisa-diimplementasikan-di-tanah-datar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5858/studi-tiru-desa-wisata-bupati-eka-putra-inginkan-hasil-nyata-yang-bisa-diimplementasikan-di-tanah-datar.html</a> |
| 16 | The Tanah Datar Regency opens all tourist attractions to welcome the Eid holiday.  | 30th May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5746/pemkab-tanah-datar-buka-seluruh-objek-wisata-sambut-libur-lebaran.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5746/pemkab-tanah-datar-buka-seluruh-objek-wisata-sambut-libur-lebaran.html</a>   |

Source: (Processed by author, 2023)



This data strengthens the notion that the counter-issue by the Tanah Datar Regency Government is also evident in the promotion of tourism in the areas of Tanah Datar. Therefore, the author sees this as an effort or stance taken by the Tanah Datar Regency Government to counter the terrorism issue. One of them is highlighting the tourism issue.

The third counter-issue is related to health literacy, among several health issues, as listed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Health Literacy as a Counter-Issue

| No | Title of News   | Release Date    | URL   |
|----|---|-----------------|---|
| 1  | The Regent and Deputy Regent of Tanah Datar invite the community to receive the Covid-19 booster vaccination.                                   | 5th March 2022  | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5635/bupati-dan-wabup-tanah-datar-ajak-masyarakat-vaksinasi-booster-covid-19.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5635/bupati-dan-wabup-tanah-datar-ajak-masyarakat-vaksinasi-booster-covid-19.html</a>   |
| 2  | Deputy Regent: The Tanah Datar Government, Alongside BPJS Kesehatan, Always Strives to Improve Health Coverage.                                 | 5th April 2022  | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5719/wabup-pemerintah-kabupaten-tanah-datar-bersama-bpjs-kesehatan-selalu-berupaya-meningkatkan-cakupan-kepesertaan.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5719/wabup-pemerintah-kabupaten-tanah-datar-bersama-bpjs-kesehatan-selalu-berupaya-meningkatkan-cakupan-kepesertaan.html</a>             |
| 3  | The Tanah Datar Health Office, Together with BPOM Padang, Conducts Food Material Inspection at the Pabukoan Batusangkar Market.                 | 6th April 2022  | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5727/dinkes-tanah-datar-bersama-bbpom-padang-lakukan-pemeriksaan-bahan-makanan-di-pasa-pabukoan-batusangkar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5727/dinkes-tanah-datar-bersama-bbpom-padang-lakukan-pemeriksaan-bahan-makanan-di-pasa-pabukoan-batusangkar.html</a>                             |
| 4  | Accelerate booster vaccination, the Tanah Datar Health Office writes to all agencies and urges migrants to immediately undergo vaccination.     | 6th April 2022  | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5724/percepat-vaksinasi-booster-dinkes-tanah-datar-surati-seluruh-opd-dan-imbau-perantau-untuk-segera-melakukan-vaksinasi.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5724/percepat-vaksinasi-booster-dinkes-tanah-datar-surati-seluruh-opd-dan-imbau-perantau-untuk-segera-melakukan-vaksinasi.html</a> |
| 5  | KB Village: Efforts to Address Stunting in Tanah Datar.   | 25th April 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5775/kampung-kb-upaya-mengatasi-stunting-di-tanah-datar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5775/kampung-kb-upaya-mengatasi-stunting-di-tanah-datar.html</a>   |
| 6  | Family Support Team: The Spearhead of Accelerating the Reduction of Stunting in Tanah Datar.  | 13th May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5823/tim-pendamping-keluarga-ujung-tombak-percepatan-penurunan-stunting-di-tanah-datar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5823/tim-pendamping-keluarga-ujung-tombak-percepatan-penurunan-stunting-di-tanah-datar.html</a>   |
| 7  | Low Routine Immunization Coverage, Tanah Datar Health Office Intensifies Immunization during the National Children's Immunization Month (BIAN). | 13th May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5822/cakupan-imunisasi-rutin-rendah-dinkes-tanah-datar-gencarkan-imunisasi-di-bulan-imunisasi-anak-nasional-bian.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5822/cakupan-imunisasi-rutin-rendah-dinkes-tanah-datar-gencarkan-imunisasi-di-bulan-imunisasi-anak-nasional-bian.html</a>                   |
| 8  | Health Services for Disabilities, Tanah Datar Regional Government Signs a Memorandum of Understanding with PN Batusangkar.                      | 16th May 2022   | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5827/pelayanan-kesehatan-disabilitas-pemda-tanah-datar-tanda-tangani-nota-kesepakatan-dengan-pn-batusangkar.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5827/pelayanan-kesehatan-disabilitas-pemda-tanah-datar-tanda-tangani-nota-kesepakatan-dengan-pn-batusangkar.html</a>                             |

(continued on next page)

**Table 4** (continued)

|    |   |               |   |
|----|---|---------------|---|
| 9  | Eka Putra: The PMK virus is not harmful to humans; the community must remain calm.          | 18th May 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5834/eka-putra-virus-pmk-tidak-berbahaya-bagi-manusia-masyarakat-harus-tetap-tenang.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5834/eka-putra-virus-pmk-tidak-berbahaya-bagi-manusia-masyarakat-harus-tetap-tenang.html</a>       |
| 10 | Towards a Healthy Tanah Datar, TP PKK Tanah Datar Holds a Stunting Prevention Seminar.      | 20th May 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5842/menuju-tanah-datar-sehat-tp-pkk-tanah-datar-gelar-seminar-pencegahan-stunting.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5842/menuju-tanah-datar-sehat-tp-pkk-tanah-datar-gelar-seminar-pencegahan-stunting.html</a>         |
| 11 | Seriously Addressing Stunting Issues, Tanah Datar Regency Plans to Collaborate with UNICEF. | 27th May 2022 | <a href="https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5854/serius-menanggulangi-masalah-stunting-pemkab-tanah-datar-berencana-gandeng-unicef.html">https://tanahdatar.go.id/berita/5854/serius-menanggulangi-masalah-stunting-pemkab-tanah-datar-berencana-gandeng-unicef.html</a> |

Source: (Processed by author, 2023)

Table 4 shows that the counter-issue by the Tanah Datar Regency Government is regarding the pandemic, such as booster vaccinations to reduce the COVID-19 outbreak, especially in Batusangkar, and immunization to prevent stunting. This indicates that health is also a central issue frequently discussed by the Tanah Datar Regency Government. It becomes a tool for the government to counter the terrorism issue.

After coding and identifying similar patterns, the author proceeded with abstracting and analyzing the counter-issues by the Tanah Datar Regency Government. In this stage, the author consolidated and identified relevant units of analysis (similarities and differences). The author used two types of categories to classify the units of analysis: content and form. By following these steps in content analysis, the author can analyze how the Tanah Datar Regency Government addresses the issues of terrorism in the media.

### **Collaboration with media partners as an alternative channel for delivering government information**

The author confirmed the findings with the Ministry of Communication and Information (KOMINFO) of Tanah Datar Regency, which is the central body responsible for managing media-related matters in Tanah Datar Regency. The author interviewed the Head of the Communication Division along with the Public Communication Staff. The interview took place on August 29, 2023.

Based on the interview results, the Tanah Datar Regency Government acknowledged that they never officially released any news or confirmation related to Terrorism, which became a trending issue in Tanah Datar Regency. However, KOMINFO emphasizes that they have several media partners who also provided up-to-date information regarding the issue of terrorism in Tanah Datar Regency.

The Tanah Datar Regency Government, represented by KOMINFO, stated that they have at least 71 media partners, all of which coordinated closely with KOMINFO. Through these media outlets, KOMINFO collaborated with media partners to report on terrorism. The media partners consisted of 7 daily printed media, 14 weekly printed media, and 50 online media.

The results of the interview with the KOMINFO Tanah Datar indicated that KOMINFO does not have data on media partners related to terrorism issues in printed media. KOMINFO Tanah Datar only possesses digital data that can be tracked and have digital traces, allowing

them to observe how their media partners also contribute to reporting on terrorism issues.

Based on the online media partner data provided by KOMINFO Kabupaten Tanah Datar above, the author found some similarities with the results of the data collected. From these findings, some media outlets that released terrorism issues in Tanah Datar Regency were also online media partners of KOMINFO Tanah Datar. It greatly assisted KOMINFO Tanah Datar in disseminating information about terrorism in Tanah Datar Regency. Table 5 shows the results from the crawling regarding online media partners collaborating with the Government of Tanah Datar Regency in reporting terrorism.

One reason why the government did not report on the issue of terrorism through their official channels was to prevent panic attacks in the Tanah Datar community. The issue of terrorism is undoubtedly a topic with a negative stigma in the community, and it tends to be frightening. Therefore, if it were officially released through government channels, such as tanahdatar.go.id, it would generate an extraordinary level of interest among the community and exacerbate their anxiety. This was similar to what happened during the COVID-19 case. Hence, when the Tanah Datar government officially reported COVID-19 cases in the past, the community became extra cautious because if the government had taken official action, the issue reached a level that required close monitoring.

In terms of countering indications of terrorism, BNPT (National Counterterrorism Agency) certainly plays a leading role in helping to reduce acts of terrorism. At the regional level, BNPT is assisted by FKPT (Coordination Forum for Terrorism Prevention) as an extension of BNPT's efforts. When confirming data with FKPT, specifically with the Chairman of FKPT West Sumatra, Mr. Aidil Mubarak, FKPT has undertaken several programs that

**Table 5.** Online Media Partners of KOMINFO Tanah Datar in Reporting on Terrorism Issues

| No | News Channel     | Title  | URL   |
|----|------------------|--|---|
| 1  | Prokabar.com     | 4 Terduga Teroris Dicokok Densus 88 di Tanah Datar   | <a href="https://prokabar.com/4-terduga-teroris-dicokok-densus-88-di-tanah-datar/">https://prokabar.com/4-terduga-teroris-dicokok-densus-88-di-tanah-datar/</a>   |
| 2  | Haluanpadang.com | Warga Duga Penangkapan Terduga Teroris Di Tanah Datar Dari Kelompok Pengajian Asal Jawa        | <a href="https://padang.harianhaluan.com/reportase/pr-1063036398/warga-duga-penangkapan-terduga-teroris-di-tanah-datar-dari-kelompok-pengajian-asal-jawa">https://padang.harianhaluan.com/reportase/pr-1063036398/warga-duga-penangkapan-terduga-teroris-di-tanah-datar-dari-kelompok-pengajian-asal-jawa</a> |
| 3  | Topsatu.com      | 6th April 2022   | <a href="https://www.topsatu.com/heboh-teroris-di-sumbar-begini-penjelasan-kesbangpol/">https://www.topsatu.com/heboh-teroris-di-sumbar-begini-penjelasan-kesbangpol/</a>   |
| 4  | Mimbarsumbar.id  | Waspada, Lembaga Filantropi Diduga Galang dana untuk Danai Terorisme                           | <a href="https://mimbarsumbar.id/waspada-lembaga-filantropi-diduga-galang-donasi-untuk-danai-terorisme/">https://mimbarsumbar.id/waspada-lembaga-filantropi-diduga-galang-donasi-untuk-danai-terorisme/</a>   |
| 5  | Jurnalminang.com | Kab. Tanah Datar Tempat "Domisili" 292 Orang Teroris   | <a href="https://jurnalminang.com/kab-tanah-datar-tempat-domisili-292-orang-teroris/">https://jurnalminang.com/kab-tanah-datar-tempat-domisili-292-orang-teroris/</a>   |
| 6  | Fajar.co.id      | Densus 88 Tangkap 16 Teroris di Sumatera Barat   | <a href="https://fajar.co.id/2022/03/26/densus-88-tangkap-16-orang-terduga-teroris-di-sumatera-barat/">https://fajar.co.id/2022/03/26/densus-88-tangkap-16-orang-terduga-teroris-di-sumatera-barat/</a>   |
| 7  | Jurnalsumbar.com | Polri Sebut Ada 1,125 Teroris NII di Sumatera Barat, Tersebar di Dua Kabupaten, Ini Penjelasan | <a href="https://jurnalsumbar.com/2022/04/polri-sebut-ada-1-125-teroris-nii-di-sumatera-barat-tersebar-di-dua-kabupaten-ini-penjelasan/">https://jurnalsumbar.com/2022/04/polri-sebut-ada-1-125-teroris-nii-di-sumatera-barat-tersebar-di-dua-kabupaten-ini-penjelasan/</a>                                   |

Source: (Processed by author, 2023)

synergize with regions to prevent acts of terrorism. He said, *“The primary task of this forum, established by BNPT, is the prevention of terrorism through coordination. The collaboration between BNPT and FKPT is specifically aimed at prevention and engagement in preventive activities and programs targeting specific regions, for example, Baiat (oath of allegiance). These programs are implemented to raise awareness about anti-terrorism, especially among age groups vulnerable to exposure.”*- the interview was conducted in July 2023.

The interview with Ms. Mentari, Staff in the Public Communication Division KOMINFO Tanah Datar, was conducted in August 2023. She said, *“Regarding the news on tanahdatar.co.id, especially concerning sensitive cases like terrorism issues, they are intentionally not displayed. However, concerning the news coverage, we collaborate with the media partner, so those media reports and uploaded on their respective websites. Our relationship with the media is akin to a partnership”*. Hence, the strategic communication approach of the government, characterized by the non-disclosure of terrorism-related matters on official platforms and the utilization of media partners for disseminating such information, is perceived in this study as a counter-issue initiative adopted by the Tanah Datar District government.

In the discussion, these findings highlight a strategic move by the Tanah Datar government to manage public perception by emphasizing positive aspects such as government branding, tourism, and health literacy. This approach effectively diverts attention from negative news related to terrorism, thus maintaining the region’s image as a cultural and religious center. Mass media has proven to play a role in terrorism reporting and in shaping public perception (Pangestu & Putri, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The distribution of news related to terrorism in the Tanah Datar district is only found in external media. A total of 50 news articles published online also covered this issue. The counter-issue by the Tanah Datar District government regarding the coverage of terrorism involves massive releases of alternative issues. The top 3 counter issues addressed are 1) government branding, which received the highest portion with a significant number of 158 posts, (69%); 2) tourism impression with 16 posts (7%); and 3) health literacy with 11 posts (4.8%). Interestingly, the decision not to report terrorism issues in the official channels of the Tanah Datar District Government and instead using media partners represents a counter-issue against the terrorism issue. This research provides a novel perspective on the strategic communication practices of the Tanah Datar government in managing issues related to terrorism. By not directly addressing these sensitive topics on official channels and instead using media partners, the government effectively shapes public perception and maintains the region’s image as a cultural and religious center. This approach represents an alternative form of counter-issues, focusing on positive narratives such as government branding, tourism, and health literacy.

This study has significant implications scientifically and socially. From a scientific perspective, it advances the understanding of government communication strategies in crisis management. This research highlights the importance of narrative control and the use of external media to influence public opinion. Also, it provides a framework for future studies on governmental public relations and crisis communication. For society, the findings proves the fundamental role of media literacy and the need for citizens to evaluate the sources and content of news critically. By understanding the strategic use of media by governments, the public can become more informed and smart. This awareness is particularly crucial in an era where misinformation and disinformation are rampant. This research recommends the need for full involvement of the government and media partners in combating the issue of terrorism. This



study only examined the counter-issues carried out by the Tanah Datar District Government and focused on media coverage. Further research is expected to look at the holistic efforts of the Tanah Datar District Government in addressing the terrorism issue.

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