

Narrative Analysis of Election Fraud Design in Dirty Vote Film on Youtube Channel

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ABSTRACT: Documentary films are considered to have more critical content compared to other mass communication products. Dirty Vote is a documentary film released on YouTube @DirtyVote on February 11, 2024. This film tells the story of the election design fraud in the 2024, focusing on fraudulent practices deemed to undermine democratic values. Researchers used a qualitative research method with Walter Fisher's narrative analysis framework. Fisher emphasizes that humans are storytelling beings, with a crucial aspect of rationality based on coherence and fidelity. This Dirty Vote film directed by Dandhy Dwi Laksono demonstrates how narrative communication can be used as a tool to expose election fraud. The narration proves the occurrence of abuse of authority by state officials, including violations by state institutions. In terms of coherence, the sequence of events is well-structured. Meanwhile, fidelity in the Dirty Vote film is depicted through narratives that align with field conditions. Through the narrative approach, Dirty Vote successfully transforms complex issues into easily understandable stories that touch the emotional side of the audience.

KEYWORD: Election fraud, narratives analysis, Dirty Vote, movie

I. INTRODUCTION

Documentary films are films that are based on factual events that are based on verification of the truth of the realities raised. Documentary films are also often used to give voice to the voiceless, highlight injustices in society, and play an important role in shaping public opinion on issues that affect society. Unlike other forms of media, documentary films look at things that are not seen and discussed more deeply by the mainstream media. The strength of documentary films is that they are characterised by their message and narrative, strong data and critical delivery. It is not surprising that documentary films are also used as an alternative in conducting research by researchers, because they are made based on research, extensive observation, and and bolstered by testimonies from historical actors, as well as historical witnesses in an event.

The Dirty Vote Documentary Film represents a form of criticism, born from widespread concern among the public, sccolars, and civil society over the anomalies in the implementation of elections in 2024. They smell massive, structured and systematic fraud. The fraud is shown through the non-neutrality of state officials including ASN from the centre to the regions, misuse of budgets and social assistance, abuse of authority from the national to the village level, use of public facilities and violations of ethics and law from state institutions, and violations committed by the highest judicial body, the Constitutional Court. It is alleged that these irregularities were orchestrated to secure victory for particular candidates backed by the incumbent authorities. Apprehension regarding such fraudulent activities was voiced not only in offline and online discussion forums and through mass media but also via public demonstrations and in the form of documentary film, entitled Dirty Vote, or dirty election.

Like an alarm, the film signals to awaken the human amyglada, serving as a reminder and awakening the brain sensors responsible for processing emotions, particularly fear and anxiety. The Dirty Vote documentary may be regarded as the first film to review film electoral fraud through a story telling approach. Various fragments of phenomenon that indicate election malpractice are collected, compiled, into a structured story, complete with strong evidence in the form of sound, video, and documentation of media coverage, and data that lead to various violations, irregularities and indications of fraud.

The Dirty Vote film is presented with explanatory techniques employed by three main actors who each possess an academic backgrounds, and esteemed experts in constitutional law and quite respected in people both in civil society and educational sphere. These figures are Feri Amsari, Bivitri Susanti and Zainal Arifin Mochtar. Through stories base on facts and timeline, they explain the narratives of various of phenomenon that occurred before the 2024 elections. (Eriyanto, 2013) explained that the term narrative from the the Latin narre means 'to make know'. Constitutes an endeavour to convey events or phenomena by presenting them within a chronological framework, encompassing motive, plot and the causal relationships between occurrences. By depicting electoral

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fraud through such a structured narrative, the film facilitates the public's understanding of the various forms of misconduct it seeks to expose.

According to Fabrice Lehoucq as cited in (Husin et al., 2021) electoral fraud is defined as a covert endeavour to shape election outcome. In simple terms, electoral fraud can be interpreted as interference or illegal intervention in the electoral process such as vote manipulation, vote buying, or procedural deviations carried out by election officials, among other forms. (Megaloni, 2006) further observes that perpetrators of electoral fraud are often willing to bear the cost of corruption incurred, in order to minimise the risk of defeat and to ensure the uncertainty of election results. Such practices transform what should be a transparent and competitive electoral contest, where participation is free and fair turns into one that favours particular candidates, in extreme cases, electoral fraud is orchestrated to ensure election the desired outcome, even before the polling commences.

Several countries such as Venezuela, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Ukraine provide cautionary examples how electoral fraud gradually lead to the destruction of democracy. However, not all manifestations of fraud readily visible. Levitsky (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018) observe that many attempts to hijack democracy occur through ostensibly 'legal', in the sense that they are approved by the legislative bodies or accepted by the judiciary. Such measures are often portrayed as efforts to "reform" democracy by making courts more efficient, combating corruption, or 'cleaning up' electoral processes. Implicit, therefore, is the notion that attempts to erode democratic integrity may go unnoticed by the public, because citizens remain unaware of the underlying malpractices. Consequently, electoral fraud should not be conceived as an isolated or spontaneously act, rather, it is a well-thought-out plan, a meticulously planned endeavour executed on a massive, structured, and systematic scale—permeating every facet of the process so as to give the appearance of a genuinely democratic exercise, all the while employing non-democratic, deceitful methods.

Electoral fraud not only undermines the integrity of democracy but also poses a grave threat to the rule of law in this country. In an article entitled 'Sane Law' Mahfud MD cited from (Mahfud MD, 2016), identifies the threat of four dis, as consequences that emerge when the law is manipulated:

1. Causing disorientation, if the law has deviated from its purpose to uphold justice.
2. Public distrust of law enforcement officials and even the state.
3. If distrust is left unchecked, there will be public disobedience towards state institutions,
4. If it continues, it will lead to disintegration, or the destruction of the state.

To comprehend the narrative of electoral fraud conveyed in the film *Dirty Vote*, the research uses Walter Fisher's theory of narrative paradigm theory. Fisher believes that narrative is more than just a story that has a beginning, middle and end plot, It includes any verbal or nonverbal description involving a sequence of events that is assigned meaning by the audience (Richard West and Lynn H. Tunner, 2012:51). As stories surrounds all aspects of human life, Fisher argues that narrative rationality is essential. He divides this into two core principles: coherence and fidelity. Coherence refers to the internal consistency of a narrative, evaluated based on the flow, order, and logical progression of events. Coherence itself comprises three types of consistency: structural coherence, which pertains to the logical sequence of the story; material coherence, which concerns the congruence between the given story and other related narratives; and characterological coherence, which relates to the perceived reliability and credibility of the characters within the narrative (Richard West and Lynn H. Tunner, 2012:52). The second principle is the fidelity or the truthfulness and reliability of a narrative. According to Fisher (Fisher, 1987:150) when the elements of a story represent accurate assertions about social reality, those elements possess narrative truth. Jane Elliot in (Elliot, 2005) further explores and utilises the concept of narrative across the human and social sciences, framing it as sequence of events experienced by a individual. This definition highlights that narrative inherently requires both listeners and storytellers. The function as a symbolic action comprising words and action that follows a particular sequence and hold meaning for those who recognised, created or lived it. Elliot further explains that narrative presentation is a weaving together of space and time, shape into story that conveys new, wholeness and clarity, as measured by three key tools: First, chronological nature of narrative, which involves representing a series of various sequences of events initially fragmented and disorderd into structured sequence shaped by narrator's framing. The second is meaning making, which arises from the arrangement of narrative elements in such a way that specific interpretations emerge from the once dispareate parts, or create certain meanings in the puzzle parts that have been arranged. The third is social setting, which emphasises the existence of social space in the narrative presentation. Here, the subjects meaning making process plays a role in social space, indicating that the narrator's interpretation is an inseparable fragment of the subject's social reality. This understanding affirms that narratives is a symbolic act that requires both listeners and narrators, expressed through actions or words ordered in a way that generetes meaning for those who recognise, create or live it.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative research where Denzin and Lincoln as cited in (Moeloeng, 2007) define qualitative research as research that uses a natural background, with the intention of interpreting phenomena through the application of multiple methods. The research utilises narrative analysis method which (Eriyanto, 2020) describes as a wmethod for examineing narrative based on their storyline, narrative structure, character and characterisation in a narrative. The subject of this study is narrative analysis of the elements or design of election fraud depicted in the *Dirty Vote* film. Data analysis in this study is guided by the elements of

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coherence and fidelity from Walter Fisher's Narrative Theory, in order to prove election fraud from the narrative conveyed in the film. This study is grounded in the constructivism paradigm, which holds that knowledge and objective truth are the products of perspective, knowledge and truth are created not discovered by human minds cited in (Andi Mirza, 2018).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dirty Vote uses a poster with a symbolic image, a cracked chessboard, upon which stand pawns, ministers, kings, and a stamp bearing a star with the emblem with the word "President" inscribed on it.



Picture 1, Dirty Vote film poster

The broken chessboard, serving as the central visual of the poster, symbolises a game arena corrupted by unsportsmanlike, deceitful, and manipulative tactics. A solitary king stands prominently, by multiple Minister with several other supporting chess pieces, representing a meticulously organised power structure. The stamp featuring star and the word "President" symbolizes highest power or authority one that is poised to legitimise any strategy employed, while also played and acts as mastermind orchestrating the movements of the supported chess pieces.

The Dirty Vote poster, dominated by dark tones, not only conveys themes of dominance and power, but also suggests a critical, bleak, and intimidating atmosphere. The visual message delivers a strong critique of a leadership suspected of being willing to employ any means necessary—including unethical and corrupt tactics to secure power.

In general, the *Dirty Vote* poster reinforces the central message: that the highest authority in the state, which ought to remain neutral and act as a fair referee to ensure a just and honest contest, has instead deviated from this role. Rather than serving as an impartial arbiter, the legitimacy of power has been repurposed—actively participating in the game itself, employing all the resources and facilities of the state to do so.

The film *Dirty Vote* prominently highlights five major forms of electoral fraud within its narrative. These five key violations are:

1. Abuse of power by state officials
2. Neutrality among public officials
3. Misuse of budget and social assistance
4. Exploitation of state facilities
5. Ethical and legal violations by state institutions

A. Abuse of Power by State Officials

The Abuse of authority occurs in the appointment of regional heads by the president, which is suspected to be a strategy to increase the distribution of territory in elections. Feri Amsari argues that in order to control a region, it is important to control its governing authority. One of the key areas targeted for expanding electoral reach by the Prabowo–Gibran ticket is Papua, a region that was also served as a political stronghold for President Joko Widodo during his two previous elections victories, namely in 2014 and 2019. These successive victories are suspected to have been influenced by the role of General Tito Karnavian, who at the time served as the Chief of Regional Police (Kapolda) in Papua.

"If we observe the results of the previous presidential elections in 2014 and 2019, Jokowi clearly held a strong lead in Papua. He never once lost in that region throughout his campaigns. At the time of Jokowi's victories in Papua, General Tito Karnavian happened to be serving as the Regional Police Chief (Kapolda) of Papua. Now, in the current election, it is quite a coincidence that General Tito is the Minister of Home Affairs. Earlier, we discussed how important territorial distribution is—now let us examine who holds power within those territories. Since 2021, President Joko Widodo has appointed 20 acting governors across 20 provinces. If we look at this map, the areas marked in orange indicate the extent of this spread—from the far west of Indonesia in Aceh, all the way to Papua."

There are strong suspicions of abuse of power concerning the President's appointment of acting regional heads (Penjabat or PJ Governors). The authority delegated by the President to the Minister of Home Affairs to appoint regents and mayors is considered to have failed in adhering to the Constitutional Court's mandate, particularly with regard to transparency. These concerns are intensified by the perception that the appointed officials are closely affiliated with the President. One notable example is Bey

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Machmudin, a former Head of the Presidential Secretariat Bureau in 2016 who later served as Deputy of Presidential Secretariat in 2021, and was subsequently appointed as Acting Governor of West Java.

Furthermore, Heru Budi Hartono, who served as Head of the Presidential Secretariat in 2017, was appointed by the President as Acting Governor of Jakarta (DKI). Similarly, Nana Sudjana, who previously served as Chief of Police in Surakarta during Jokowi's tenure as Mayor of Solo, was appointed as Acting Governor of Central Java. These appointments reflect a pattern in which individuals with personal or professional ties to the President have been placed in charge of key electoral strongholds—regions that represent some of the largest vote bases in Indonesia. This raises significant concerns, particularly given that the President is also the father of one of the 2024 presidential candidates.

"If we closely observe the individuals appointed by the President and the Minister of Home Affairs, we can see several notable patterns. For instance, the Acting Governor of West Java, Bey Machmudin, previously served as Head of the Presidential Secretariat Bureau in 2016 and later as Deputy of the Presidential Secretariat in 2021. In the case of Jakarta a highly strategic region Heru Budi Hartono, who was Head of the Presidential Secretariat in 2017, was appointed as Acting Governor. Likewise, the Acting Governor of Central Java, Nana Sudjana, once held the position of Police Chief in Surakarta in 2010, during the time when President Joko Widodo was serving as Mayor of Solo. A particularly unique case is the appointment of Achmad Marzuki as Acting Governor of Aceh. He was still serving in the military before being transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and only three days after this transition, he was appointed to the acting governor position in Aceh."

The appointment of acting regional heads (Pj Governors, Regents, and Mayors) by the President and the Minister of Home Affairs carries a significant risk of enabling further forms of electoral fraud—particularly the abuse of power at the regional level. Zainal Arifin Mochtar, more commonly known as Uceng, argues that acting governors, regents, and mayors may potentially be utilised as instruments of the ruling power to secure electoral victory, especially in relation to the territorial distribution of votes. *"If we examine what kinds of authority regional heads hold that are prone to misuse, the first and most critical is the mobilisation of the bureaucracy. Second, concerns the issuance of campaign permits, which opens the possibility of selectively allowing or denying campaign activities. And third, is the ability to impose sanctions—or the decision to overlook—village heads who fail to remain neutral, thereby allowing them to remain in office."*

Uceng further elaborates that, beside the great magnitude of influence, the the local heads possess specific powers that are highly susceptible to misuse particularly in relation to voter data, village funds, and the distribution of social assistance. *"What powers do village heads hold that could potentially be misused in the context of elections, and why does the figure of 81 million—represented by the eight village associations—become so strategically important to control? There are at least four key powers that are prone to abuse during electoral periods. First, control over voter data, which is directly linked to the electoral roll. Second, the utilisation of village funds, which have recently become significantly large in amount. Third, access to data on social assistance beneficiaries including the Family Hope Programme (PKH) and Direct Cash Assistance (BLT)—particularly the authority to determine who is deemed eligible to receive such support. And finally, control over the distribution and allocation of these assistance programmes and similar government resources."*

Uceng also highlights another form of abuse of power, this time involving electoral organisers. In his narrative, Zainal Arifin Mochtar recounts an instance of alleged electoral fraud committed by a member of the General Elections Commission (KPU) in Muruh Raya.

"Let us consider one example involving the Gelora Party, which was approved as an election participant. However, numerous irregularities can be observed on the ground. According to the official report from the Muruh Raya Regional KPU in Central Kalimantan, there was a directive from the central KPU to alter the status of the Gelora Party from 'not meeting requirements' to 'meeting requirements'."

In addition to the case in Muruh Raya, Zainal Arifin Mochtar also referred to a similar incident involving a civil servant in Sangihe. The case concerns the verification process of a particular political party, which allegedly bypassed standard procedures, allowing an otherwise ineligible party to qualify as an electoral participant.

"It did not only occur in Murung Raya. The case in Sangihe is equally compelling. In Sangihe, there was an admission from a civil servant who confessed to having committed electoral fraud by altering the verification status of a party that initially failed the requirements, making it appear as if it had passed."

A similar concern was also emphasised by Feri Amsari, who highlighted the abuse of authority in the selection process of Bawaslu (Election Supervisory Agency) commissioners. According to Feri, the selection committee was composed of individuals closely affiliated with President Joko Widodo. He elaborates this issue in considerable detail in the documentary *Dirty Vote*.

"The concerns regarding Bawaslu's integrity are evidently linked to the process by which its members are selected, and more specifically, to those responsible for overseeing this selection. One of the central figures is the Chairperson of the Selection Committee (Pansel) Doctor Juri Ardiantoro, It is publicly known that Juri was part of President Jokowi Widodo's campaign team during the 2019 Presidential Election. Moreover, he is currently serving as a member of the National Campaign Team (TKN) 2024 supporting the Prabowo-Gibran presidential ticket."

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The narratives presented by Feri Amsari and Zainal Arifin Mochtar in the documentary *Dirty Vote* are conveyed through a coherent storyline that facilitates a comprehensive understanding and the emergence of strong characters. This coherence is evident in the depiction of alleged abuses of power by the President, particularly in the non-transparent appointment of regional leaders. Furthermore, the narrative highlights suspected involvement of General Tito Karnavian in securing electoral victories for Joko Widodo in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, as well as for Gibran Rakabuming Raka in the 2024 election.

The narrative clearly outlines the strategic role of regional heads, whose authority as local powerholders is deemed crucial in influencing electoral outcomes. This is compounded by documented abuses of authority by electoral management bodies, most notably the KPU (General Elections Commission), which allegedly approved political parties that failed to meet legal requirements. In addition, concerns are raised about the integrity of the Bawaslu selection process, where individuals closely affiliated with President Jokowi were appointed to what should have been an independent selection committee.

Meanwhile, fidelity in the film *Dirty Vote* is reflected through a narrative that corresponds closely with conditions on the ground, is factually accurate in terms of events, and reveals elements that, upon closer examination, appear to violate the rules and norms that should be upheld by both state officials and electoral organisers. The abuse of power by the President and the Minister of Home Affairs in the appointment of regional officials is shown to correlate with the broader issue of partiality among state actors. This is evident in the conduct of several public officials who openly demonstrated partisan behaviour and actively encouraged the public to vote for a particular candidate.

B. Neutrality Among Public Officials

The partiality of state officials is narrated in *Dirty Vote* beginning with the President's seemingly inconsistent statements. Initially, he asserted that his children had no interest in entering politics and dismissed speculation regarding Gibran's potential candidacy in the 2024 presidential election. However, this statement proved incongruent with reality, as Gibran ultimately did participate in the 2024 presidential race.

"Gibran is not ready not yet seen for political instincts. He still enjoys doing business. Kaesang even more so. Firstly, due to his age; secondly, he has only served as mayor for two years. Let us be logical. As parents, our role is to offer prayers and blessings, not to overly interfere in decisions made by our children. You know, a president is actually allowed to campaign. A president is, in fact, allowed to take sides."



Picture 2, CNN TV - 9 Desember 2018

In addition to the partiality exhibited by the President, Feri Amsari also highlights instances of bias demonstrated by acting regional leaders. One such case involved the Acting Governor of West Kalimantan, who openly urged the public to vote for a candidate supporting the continuation of the new capital city (IKN) project. A similar act was committed by the Acting Governor of Bali, who ordered the removal of campaign materials belonging to the Ganjar–Mahfud ticket. Meanwhile, the Acting Regent of Sorong went as far as signing an integrity pact with the State Intelligence Agency (BIN) to support Ganjar's victory. This series of partisan actions is seen as being closely correlated with the opaque process by which acting governors, regents, and mayors are appointed by the President and the Minister of Home Affairs.

"What occurred with the Acting Governor of Bali, for instance, illustrates this issue clearly. The acting governor issued instructions to remove various banners, billboards, and posters belonging to specific political parties, including those of presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo. Such displays of partiality were also evident among acting regents and mayors. A similar pattern may also be observed in the conduct of other acting governors. A particularly striking example can be found in Sorong, West Papua, where the Acting Regent, Yan Piet Moso, signed an integrity pact with the regional head of the State Intelligence Agency. The agreement outlined a commitment to securing 60% of the vote for presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo an ambitious and highly significant target."



Picture 3, kumparan.com - 30 Janurai 2024

Another compelling portrayal of partiality is presented by Bivitri Susanti, who highlights evidence of bias at a higher level of government—namely, within President Jokowi's cabinet. She substantiates the claim of state officials' lack of neutrality by presenting direct testimonies, wherein the ministers themselves openly express political preference. Among those identified are the Minister of Trade, Zulkifli Hasan; the Minister of Investment, Bahlil Lahadalia; the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto; and the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan. Minister of Trade – Zulkifli Hasan: *"Those who support Jokowi, raise your hands. You see, Mr Jokowi is the National Mandate Party (PAN), and PAN is Mr Jokowi. That's why we support Gibran. Agree? Who is Gibran? He's Mr Jokowi's son!"*

Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs – Airlangga Hartarto: *"So, ladies and gentlemen, please say: 'Thank you, Mr Jokowi'. Please make sure it's recorded. Can we do that? One, two, three."*

Minister of Investment – Balil Lahadia:

"This side—stop. Prabowo–Gibran. The centre—Prabowo–Gibran! This side—Prabowo–Gibran! Everyone—Prabowo–Gibran!"

Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment – Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan: *"So, based on what I've said, my conclusion, fellow Indonesians, is that we must choose the right person to be President of the Republic of Indonesia. On 14 February, make the right choice. I personally will vote for Mr Prabowo. The reason is quite simple: continuity. He has a strong spirit of nationalism and has demonstrated undeniable past achievements. My message is this: I, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, support Prabowo, because in my view, he is the best choice for president at this time, and he will lead Indonesia towards progress."*



Picture 4, Metro TV - 21 January 2024

Bivitri Susanti explains that there are strict regulations for ministers who wish to participate in campaigning for a particular presidential candidate. One of the key requirements is that they must be officially registered as part of the candidate's campaign team and listed with the General Elections Commission (KPU). Failure to do so may result in their actions being classified as covert campaigning, or more broadly, as a violation of the principle of political neutrality expected of state officials. Nevertheless, this requirement has been disregarded by several ministers who have publicly aligned themselves with specific candidates. *"Minister Erick Thohir neither resigned nor took official leave. Yet, it is clearly evident from the event's backdrop that he was actively engaged in campaign-related activities. Similarly, Yasonna Laoly and the Minister of Social Affairs, Tri Rismaharini, were present as participants something that, under Indonesia's electoral law, may be legally permissible. However, the core issue lies in whether they were on official leave at the time. There has been no adequate public information provided on this matter."*

According to Bivitri Susanti, the overt partiality displayed by several ministers and state officials cannot be separated from the example set by the President during the election. Bivitri argues that the President's conduct constitutes a violation of existing regulations, as expressions of political preference by state officials should be confined solely to the ballot box .

"The level of explicit support being shown is so apparent and its raises the suspicion of covert campaigning taking place. But why are they so bold in doing this? It may well be because the President himself is not acting neutrally. The question, then, is: must the President remain neutral? The answer is yes—he must demonstrate neutrality through his conduct. Of course, as a political being, the President is entitled to personal political preferences. Naturally, he will have his own stance. However, such preferences should

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be kept to himself—retained privately in his mind until he casts his vote at the polling station. Supporting a candidate internally is one thing; actively campaigning is another, and it is incompatible with the obligation of neutrality."

Furthermore, Bivitri also elaborates on the legal provisions concerning the neutrality of state officials as stipulated in the Electoral Law. While the law does permit the President to engage in campaign activities, it also sets forth several conditions. These include the requirement to take official leave without using state resources, the prohibition against utilising state facilities for campaign purposes, and the obligation to continue fulfilling official duties appropriately.

"Most importantly, all state officials, ministers, and especially the President are in fact prohibited from engaging in any actions that may disadvantage or benefit a particular candidate pair. The legal requirements are therefore stringent, and such conduct cannot be carried out arbitrarily."

In explaining the violations related to the neutrality of state officials, both Bivitri Susanti and Feri Amsari demonstrate coherence and fidelity. From the perspective of coherence, the narrative structure is clearly established, with interrelated accounts despite temporal gaps between instances of neutrality breaches committed by different ministers. The narrative character effectively highlights ministers well-known to the public within Jokowi's cabinet. Regarding content, the narrative of non-neutrality becomes indisputable, as it fulfills the criteria of neutrality violations, with public officials openly displaying partisanship before the public. Fidelity is maintained in the narrative by providing information on the regulations breached by public officials, particularly concerning their obligation to take leave when participating in campaign activities, as well as rules on the neutrality of state officials.

C. Misuse of Budget and Social Assistance

The narrative on the misuse of regional budget funds (APBD) is presented by Zainal Arifin, who provides data on the alleged embezzlement of village funds suspected to be linked to electoral interests. The corruption of APBD is believed to be connected with political quid pro quo in support of certain candidates.

"Cases of village fund misappropriation are highly likely to be converted into a means of political bargaining. Just consider this: among the many sectors of corruption offences throughout 2022, the largest portion was within Village Budget Funds (APBD). This can once again be converted—very likely becoming part of efforts to exert pressure and serve as leverage for political support, in exchange for halting problematic proceedings against the respective village heads."

Uceng further elaborates on one of the causes behind the misuse of village funds by state apparatuses are pressure from certain parties to secure electoral victory for a particular candidate pair. He uses the metaphor of 'when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers', referring to the plight of village officials caught in the crossfire of political contestation. Zainal's assertion that such officials are being pressured is not without evidence. In the documentary **Dirty Vote**, testimonies are presented—including one from a village official whose identity is concealed—describing the coercion they experienced in the lead-up to the election.



Picture 5, Voice of head village in Central Java

"There were two sources of pressure—one from 02, and another from 03. The directive from the regent was clear: to secure victory for candidate pair 03, with a target of at least 50%+1 of votes in each village, delivered through the sub-district head. The sub-district head contacted the village heads' association. The target covered both the presidential and legislative candidates. As for 02, just one week before the election, village heads were suddenly gathered and instructed to organise the technical distribution of rice aid. It was abrupt, and the data used was unclear—certainly not in line with village poverty statistics. This created considerable controversy within the village. On the same day, I was contacted by a police officer requesting permission to use the village hall for a declaration of support for 02. Later, when news broke about several village heads being implicated in corruption cases, suddenly, in three regencies, we came under constant surveillance by the regional police."

Not only pressure related to the budget, the misuse of social assistance also occurred ahead of the 2024 election, marked by an increase in the amount of social assistance that was allegedly planned long before the election was held. Bivitri emphasised that the increase in social assistance ahead of the election is not new, the same thing happened in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

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"Yet, even when compared to previous elections, the 2024 election stands out with very high cost, almost reaching IDR 500 trillion. It is true that social assistance distributions typically spike during election years. In 2008, things were relatively stable, but in 2009 there was a noticeable increase. By 2014, the pattern became more structured; in 2019, the intensification was apparent. And now, in the 2024 election, the distribution has become even more concentrated, with a significant volume of social assistance released by the government. In fact, by January alone, we had already spent IDR 78.06 trillion on social aid."

To prevent misuse, Bivitri explains that social assistance should ideally be distributed through the Ministry of Social Affairs. However, during the 2024 general election, the distribution of social aid did not follow this protocol. Not only was the Ministry of Social Affairs bypassed, but the official recipient data maintained by the Ministry was also not utilised in the process. *"Then who holds the authority to distribute social assistance? The answer is: the Ministry of Social Affairs. Interestingly, however, the Ministry's official database known as the Integrated Welfare Data (Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial) was not utilised in the distribution process. It is that the current Minister of Social Affairs is a member of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), which is politically at odds with President Jokowi's endorsed successor."*

Suspensions of social assistance misuse became increasingly apparent through Bivitri's explanation, in which she mapped the regions receiving aid and demonstrated a striking overlap with areas of strong political support for President Jokowi. It's not surprising that the distribution of social assistance in the 2024 election is strongly suspected of having been politically motivated, rather than functioning as a state facility aimed for serving poor citizens. Moreover, evidence indicates the involvement of law enforcement officials in the distribution process—institutions that have no legal authority to manage or disburse social assistance.

"When we talk about social assistance, once again we observe its extraordinary distribution within just two months. And we can clearly see the areas where it was concentrated from Serang to regions further east, particularly Central Java, East Java, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and Banten. When this distribution map is compared with the electoral map showing President Jokowi's vote share in the 2019 presidential election, a significant overlap becomes evident. This illustrates quite clearly how a government facility, which should be used for public welfare, has instead been appropriated for electoral purposes. One particular news report, in my view, captures this situation well. It highlights the very issue we've been discussing: the distribution of social assistance, the involvement of government officials including governors and the calls to vote for a presidential candidate who promises to continue Jokowi's legacy."

The politicisation of social assistance in the 2024 general election represents an attempt to gain electoral support by using state funds in the form of aid distributions. Bivitri explains that this concept of social assistance politicisation dates back to the era of slavery in the United States, when politicians exploited public funds—rightfully belonging to the people—for their own political gain. This practice is referred to as 'pork barrel politics'. Bivitri further elaborates that such politics have manifested in Indonesia through the involvement of several ministers openly supporting one particular candidate pair: Prabowo–Gibran.

"What we are discussing here is a form of political practice in which public funds are channelled into electoral constituencies by politicians in order to secure re-election. However, in this case, President Jokowi is not campaigning for himself, but rather for his successor. This form of 'pork barrel politics' arises precisely because it is carried out through official mechanisms, legitimised, in a sense due to the involvement of government ministers who are, in fact, actively campaigning."

The narrative of budget misuse and social assistance has strong coherence in both structure and content. Structurally, the narrative offers a clear understanding by presenting data that illustrates a significant increase in budget allocations, as well as evidence of widespread embezzlement of regional budgets (APBD). The account reveals how such misuse was highly organised and premeditated, with technical aspects of distribution removed from the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the allocation both in terms of quantity and geographic concentration strategically planned to garner political support. What ought to be a rightful public entitlement was instead transformed into an unfair distribution mechanism serving political ends. The narrative exhibits a high degree of continuity, highlighting apparent violations committed by certain actors in pursuit of electoral gain. Its fidelity is also evident, as the politicisation of social assistance is a recurring social phenomenon in every election. Unfortunately, in the 2024 election, this practice became increasingly unrestrained carried out in a massive, systematic, and deliberate manner with the aim of securing victory for a candidate supported by the incumbent administration.

D. Exploitation of State Facilities

The use of state facilities is one of the most vulnerable areas for violations during election periods particularly when candidates are active public officials who do not resign from their posts. A notable breach in the 2024 general election involved the use of state infrastructure during the campaign period by presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto. He was reported to have utilised Halim Perdanakusuma Air Base, a state-owned military airport, for campaign. Bivitri Susanti identified this as a clear violation, citing strict legal prohibitions against candidates using state facilities during campaign activities. This suspected misuse was substantiated by a social media post from Andre Rosiade, which featured the #Gerindra party hashtag—suggesting a partisan context for the use of state resources.

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Picture 6, Twitter: @andre_rosiade

“Let’s look at the facts, because it turns out, there’s this news item where state facilities were used for campaigning. Or we can also see, once again, how state facilities in the form of an Indonesian Air Force aircraft were employed for campaigning. Here you can see some hashtags that also make clear this is a campaign activity, not a Ministry activity”.

Bivitri Susanti also highlighted another misuse of state facilities, namely the Ministry of Defence’s official social media platform being utilised to publicly express support for Prabowo Subianto. This widely publicised violation elicited strong reactions from the public, particularly civil society. Unfortunately, attempts to report this misconduct were met with an inadequate response from Bawaslu, resulting in the case being unable to proceed further.



Picture 7, Twitter: @Kemhan_RI

"Another example that caused quite a stir at the time was a post from the official X the account of the Ministry of Defence, @Kemhan_RI, which used a campaign related hashtag an action clearly intended to promote a political candidate. Civil society actors reported this as a misuse of state facilities; however, the case was ultimately not pursued. We are also witnessing similar conduct by the Deputy Minister of Agrarian Affairs, who openly expressed support for a particular candidate. Most strikingly, this occurred while he was distributing land certificates to citizens—an act within his official capacity—yet he chose to directly address and promote one of the presidential candidates."

Source Instagram: @RajaJuliAntoni

Good Morning- Congratulation Prabowo Gibran.

Landed in Kupang. Today I will share sertificate of PTSL and Wakaf to Kupang Society. Good morning friends, full of blessing.

@psi_id, @Gerindra, @prabowo, @gibran



Picture 8, Twitter: @RajaJuliAntoni

On another occasion, Bivitri narrated that the Minister of Trade was again found campaigning in favour of Prabowo - Gibran. This campaign activity took place during an official ministerial event, with a backdrop displaying the emblem of the Ministry of Trade. Not much different, the Deputy Minister of Creative Economy was also also campaigned using the Ministry's backdrop. There has been no clear information regarding whether either of these officials took official leave (as required by law) when participating in political activities.

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"Here we must pay close attention to the backdrop: the Ministry of Trade. The key question is whether, at that moment, he was acting in his capacity as the Minister of Trade or as a member of the campaign team. No clarification was ever provided. Let us look at another example: this is a Deputy Minister (of Creative Economy). Again, we observe that he was actively campaigning. The critical question here is whether he was on official leave from his ministerial duties at the time."

Other uses of state facilities were carried out by the President and his Ministers as well, including the First Lady who was indicated to use state facilities to support Prabowo - Gibran. Bivitri presents this narrative to illustrate how state facilities were exploited not for the benefit of the nation, but for political purposes. The individuals involved in this misuse were, notably, those currently holding power.

"One particularly striking image that caused public uproar at the time showed the President standing beside his minister—who was also a presidential candidate—at a military airbase, clearly a state facility. They stood in front of military equipment, and the President firmly asserted that he had the right to campaign. Still on the matter of state facilities, it was also observed that the presidential vehicle was used to make a public gesture of political endorsement."



Picture 9, Presiden Jokowi with Prabowo in Halim Perdana Kusuma Airport



Picture 10, First Lady Iriana Jokowi Shows two finger as symbol of campaign

The narrative depicting the misuse of state facilities is conveyed with clarity, demonstrating strong structural coherence and a logical sequence. Although the presentation occasionally interweaves with explanations regarding the legal framework for public officials participating in political campaigns, the overall structure offers a comprehensive understanding. It effectively establishes the interrelation between the regulations on the use of state resources and the violations of political neutrality by public officials. In terms of fidelity, the misuse of state facilities is a phenomenon widely recognised by the public, making this narrative a form of confirmation rather than mere speculation. It reinforces that such conduct by state officials constitutes a breach of legal and ethical standards, and should not be normalised or accepted under any circumstances.

E. Etical and Legal Violation by State Institutions

The *Dirty Vote* documentary also sheds light on both ethical and legal breaches committed by state institutions, including the election management bodies and the judiciary. Feri Amsari expresses his disappointment with the performance of Bawaslu (the Election Supervisory Body), which he deems ineffective in addressing various electoral violations occurring during the campaign period. As a result, numerous instances of electoral misconduct appeared to be overlooked, leading to the perception that Bawaslu lacked the competence and resolve necessary to carry out its mandate properly.

"I would like to begin this issue by discussing Bawaslu. Naturally, all forms of electoral misconduct should fall under Bawaslu's jurisdiction, as it holds the constitutional responsibility to supervise every stage of the electoral process. However, the reality is that Bawaslu has proven to be incompetent."

Feri's assertion of Bawaslu's incompetence is not without basis. Numerous cases that warranted decisive sanctions were neglected. One example he highlights involves the Minister of Agrarian Affairs, who used the Ministry's official social media account to campaign in support of the Prabowo-Gibran ticket. Despite clear and accessible evidence posted online, Bawaslu concluded that the case lacked sufficient material to proceed.

"Another telling example of Bawaslu's incompetence concerns the case involving the official X (formerly Twitter) account of the Ministry of Defence. This account, clearly verified and bearing the ministry's official mark, was used to carry out overt campaign messaging. Yet, Bawaslu decided not to pursue the case, citing insufficient material. This is despite the fact that the evidence was unambiguous it involved the use of a state institution's platform and authority for partisan purposes."

In addition to Bawaslu, *Dirty Vote* also highlights violations committed by the General Elections Commission (KPU), both at the individual and institutional levels. One particularly damaging individual case involves the Chair of the KPU, Hasyim Asy'ari. As Zainal explains, the Chair has been implicated in at least three separate cases. However, the sanctions imposed have been widely perceived as ambiguous and insufficient, raising concerns about the integrity and accountability of the institution.

"Here, there is a case involving the KPU Chair, Hasyim Asy'ari, who allegedly had a special relationship with a women called "wanita emas". Although the Honorary Council of Election Organizers (DKPP) has imposed a sanction specifically, a final stern warning the KPU is often perceived as serving political parties rather than upholding the law or ensuring the public's electoral rights. For example, the KPU failed to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling regarding the 30% quota for women's

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representation. Similarly, the KPU did not adhere to the Supreme Court's decision concerning corrupt convicts, particularly regarding regulations that restrict their eligibility to run for office as stipulated in KPU regulations."

Zainal delivers sharp criticism of KPU's selective enforcement. While KPU neglects the Supreme Court rulings on corrupt legislative candidates and women's representation quotas, it swiftly acts on the ruling regarding Gibran—even without amending KPU regulations.

"What I want to explain is simple: KPU is selective in enforcing court rulings. They ignore the Supreme Court decisions on women's representation and corrupt candidates. But interestingly, the Constitutional Court ruling on Gibran was immediately implemented. When the president's son registered, KPU had not yet created or revised any new regulations, yet his registration was accepted and Gibran was hastily confirmed as Vice Presidential candidate."

Another ethical violation that has had a profoundly detrimental impact on public confidence in Indonesia's legal system is the misconduct committed by the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court. According to Zainal, as the final bastion of legal defence, the Constitutional Court is perceived as failing to maintain its independence.

"There is an institution called the Constitutional Court, which serves as the last line of defence in upholding constitutionalism in Indonesia, yet it has become involved in problematic proceedings."

As a legal expert, Bivitri contends that the approach taken to amend the age requirement at the Constitutional Court was riddled with conflicts of interest and executed in an abrupt manner. Previously, the Court had rejected the same case 31 times, yet this time it reversed its decision following a single petition. Moreover, changes to legislation fall within the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives, not the Constitutional Court.

"There is a contradiction within the Constitutional Court. Imagine the barrier set to regulate presidential and vice-presidential candidacy: the Presidential Threshold requirement was rejected 31 times by the Court for various reasons. Yet, when another requirement was requested to be amended, the Court suddenly opened the door wide with just a single petition. Furthermore, it must be noted that altering laws through the Constitutional Court is, in a sense, an 'expedited' process, as legislative amendments should rightfully be carried out by the legislature in accordance with Article 20 of the 1945 Constitution. This situation also reveals a clear conflict of interest."

The Constitutional Court's decision to waive the age limit for the vice-presidential candidate, thereby enabling Gibran to participate in the contest, is regarded as ethically flawed. This is because Gibran's uncle, who serves as the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, was one of the judges involved in the ruling. From a legal standpoint, the involvement of the Chief Justice in this decision raises serious concerns of conflict of interest. Nonetheless, despite the ethical shortcomings of the process, the ruling remains irrevocable.

"Furthermore, it is important to address the fact that the Constitutional Honour Council (MKMK) has ruled that the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, who is Gibran's uncle, committed a serious ethical violation. However, as this ruling pertains to ethics, it does not directly annul the Court's decision, and Decision No. 90 remains valid."

As a staunch advocate for the rule of law, Zainal expressed his profound disappointment regarding the interventions within the Constitutional Court. He contended that the Court has lost its dignity and integrity in favour of political interests. He even likened the Court's rulings to a 'foul stench,' implying corruption and decay.

"Perhaps that is the reason why this ruling carries a foul stench. I wrote in a national publication that such a decision reveals how the judge's gavel is, in fact, shattered to pieces in the face of Almas' verdict."

The ethical and legal violations committed by state institutions and the judiciary are depicted with great clarity, structured coherence, and strong interrelation between the narratives. This indicates that the account of this section satisfies the element of coherence effectively. From the perspective of fidelity, the narrative incorporates all facts consistent with reality. Sanctions have been imposed by the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, and the Court's ruling is regarded as procedurally flawed yet legally valid. Through Decision 90, Gibran was ultimately able to run as vice president; however, he has been labelled a constitutional illegitimate child, as his candidacy stems from a ruling deemed constitutionally tainted.

IV. CLOSING

The film *Dirty Vote* by Dandhy Dwi Laksono demonstrates how narrative communication can be employed as a powerful tool to expose electoral fraud and shift public opinion away from the initial perception that the election process was conducted democratically. Through narrative communication, the public is granted full authority to determine the story they believe—based on what they see, feel, and experience—grounded in coherent and accurate judgement.

The narrative presented in *Dirty Vote* substantiates the occurrence of fraud involving the abuse of authority by state officials, violations of state official neutrality, misuse of budget and social assistance funds, inappropriate use of state facilities, as well as ethical and legal breaches by state institutions. All these fraudulent acts portray a plan that is structured, massive, and systematic.

From the perspective of coherence, the sequence of events in *Dirty Vote* is well-structured, flowing logically and consistently. It fulfils three types of consistency: narrative flow, the interrelation and mutual reinforcement of connected stories,

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and strong, credible characters—including figures well recognised by the public. Meanwhile, fidelity—the truthfulness in *Dirty Vote*—is evident through narratives aligned with actual conditions on the ground, documented in video footage and disseminated via social media and mass media, reflecting a reality consistent with the field situation.

Through a narrative approach, *Dirty Vote* successfully transforms complex issues into a story that is accessible and emotionally resonant for viewers. This demonstrates that communication need not always be conveyed in technical or formal language. On the contrary, packaging messages in coherent narratives with high fidelity proves to be an effective means of delivering even the most difficult and complex information. The film may justly be regarded as a monument—a reminder that the responsibility of safeguarding democracy begins with clean elections, which demand active participation and political awareness from the citizenry.

V. RECOMMENDATION

The film successfully conveyed the message of electoral fraud during the 2024 General Election, raising awareness that such misconduct cannot be tolerated, as it undermines public trust in the government and threatens the very foundations of the nation's democracy. Employing an explanatory style, the film was strengthened by elements of coherence and fidelity—qualities that are essential in any such production.

Films of this nature should continue to be produced, not only to address issues surrounding elections, but also in response to other pressing matters. In doing so, they help foster public awareness and establish a form of societal oversight over state institutions. At the same time, they serve as a means of presenting information in a comprehensive manner, grounded in facts and data. The General Elections Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) play a pivotal role in the implementation of elections. Therefore, future recruitment of election organisers must be free from interference and political interests, and conducted in a manner that is honest, transparent, and fair. Only through such principles can we ensure the emergence of competent, independent, credible, and high-integrity electoral officials. Election oversight must also be significantly strengthened. This requires the involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including the public, academics, and civil society organisations, to foster a collaborative and robust monitoring system. Supervision should be carried out from the selection phase through to the execution of the elections, ensuring organisers remain free from undue influence or pressure. Moreover, it is not only electoral bodies that require scrutiny and reform. Other key institutions such as law enforcement agencies, judicial institution, civil servants, and state officials must also be restructured and instilled with a shared awareness of the critical importance of maintaining free and independent elections. Only then can democracy be safeguarded, and elections held with legitimacy and of a high standard.

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