
Construction of Narrative Issues of Immorality in Political Discourse : A Critical Study

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Abstract : This study examines the construction of narratives on immoral issues in political discourse through a critical approach. Immoral issues are often used as political tools to build an image, discredit opponents, or divert public attention from the main issues. This study focuses on how immoral issues are designed, disseminated, and received by society through media and political discourse. Using critical discourse analysis, this research explores the relationship between power, ideology, and the representation of immoral issues in a political context. The findings show that immoral issues are frequently manipulated to influence public perception, control political narratives, and reinforce the dominance of certain groups. The implications of this practice include the distortion of public space, the decline in the quality of political discourse, and threats to democratic integrity. This study highlights the importance of critical literacy in political discourse to foster healthier and more substantive discussions.

Keywords: Narrative Construction, Immoral Issues, Political Discourse

1. BACKGROUND

In the era of digital communication and political globalization, narratives of controversial issues often become strategic tools in political discourse . One issue that is often used is the issue of immorality, which has emotional and moral appeal to the public. This issue is often used to frame political opponents, build public opinion, and influence policy direction. This phenomenon reflects how modern politics functions not only through rational debate, but also through moral and social manipulation.

The issue of immorality has a long history in politics, both at the national and international levels. In many cases, this issue is used as a tool to discredit certain individuals or groups. Accusations of immorality are often associated with moral violations, which are socially sensitive and can destroy a person's reputation. In this context, the issue of immorality is not only seen as a moral issue, but also as a political strategy to achieve discourse dominance.

Advances in communication technology have changed the way political issues, including immoral issues, are constructed and disseminated. Mass media, both conventional and digital, play an important role in creating and strengthening this narrative. With the speed of information dissemination and its wide scope, immoral issues often go viral , regardless of their truth. This phenomenon shows how the media functions as a tool for reproducing certain

ideologies and political interests, as analyzed by the Frankfurt School on the culture industry and the role of the media in creating false consciousness.

The spread of immoral narratives often creates polarization in society, dividing the public into pro and con camps. This is relevant to Stanley Cohen's concept of *moral panic*, where an issue is manipulated in such a way that it creates excessive moral fear. In a political context, this *moral panic* is used to divert public attention from more substantive issues, such as economic inequality or corruption.

Foucault's perspective, power is not only exercised through coercion, but also through the production of discourse. The narrative of immoral issues is one form of discourse used to control public opinion and create legitimacy for certain political actors. By framing political opponents as perpetrators of immoral acts, dominant political actors try to seize control of the narrative and establish their hegemony in the public space.

The construction of the narrative of immoral issues in political discourse cannot be separated from the relationship between power, ideology, and media. In this context, critical studies are needed to uncover how this narrative is constructed, who benefits, and its impact on society at large. Perspectives such as Karl Marx's critique of ideology and Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony can help understand how this issue becomes an effective tool of power.

Research on the construction of immoral issue narratives in politics has high relevance, especially amidst the increasing use of digital media and the intensity of political polarization. This study is not only important to understand the political strategies used by certain actors, but also to reveal their impact on democracy, critical awareness of society, and social order.

With this background, the research entitled "*Construction of Narrative Issues of Immorality in Political Discourse : A Critical Study*" aims to examine in depth how issues of immorality are constructed as political tools, using an interdisciplinary approach that includes critical ideology theory, discourse analysis, and media sociology.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Social Construction of Reality

Berger, P.L., & Luckmann, T. (1966) explained how immoral issues are constructed as part of political narratives through social processes, institutions, and media. This construction creates a social reality that influences public perception. This is observed through elements such as language, media, framing used to shape the perception of immoral issues.

In the context of constructing the narrative of immoral issues in political discourse , Berger and Luckmann's theory can be used to analyze how immoral issues are formed in society. The media, political groups, and other social institutions play a role in *externalizing* certain moral values about immoral behavior. This narrative is then *objectified* in political discourse so that it is considered a reality that cannot be debated. Finally, society *internalizes* the narrative, making it a social norm that can influence public policy, political opinion, and individual behavior.

Framing Theory

According to Erving Goffman greetings political discourse , framing is used to provide a framework for interpreting immoral issues. This issue can *be* portrayed negatively or positively depending on certain political goals. How political narratives choose certain elements to highlight *or hide* aspects of immoral issues. In politics, immoral issues are often used to create a certain narrative framework about political actors. Politicians who are involved in immoral issues can be portrayed as violators of moral norms, while others build an image as guardians of morality. When a politician is involved in an immoral scandal, the narrative that emerges is often framed by the media and political opponents as a moral failure that is inappropriate for a leader. On the other hand, the politician may try to present *a front stage* that shows remorse and commitment to change. Political opponents often use this issue to show that they are “guardians of moral values,” utilizing *framing* to gain public sympathy. **O'Connor (2023)** reveals how politicians and policymakers frame sexuality in public debates, of course for political interests. Wiegman (2019) highlights how narratives are used in political discourse to shape public opinion, create collective identities, and justify certain policies.

Hegemony Theory

Gramsci , A. (1971) stated Political narratives are often used by dominant groups to maintain power by dictating public interpretation of immoral issues. Who has control over the narrative of immoral issues, and how this narrative is used to perpetuate power. The narrative of immoral issues is often used by political actors to instill certain moral values in society. In the context of hegemony, these values come from the dominant political class or group that uses this issue to direct public attention according to their interests.

According to Gramsci, immoral issues are often used to divert public attention from deeper structural issues, such as economic injustice or corruption. This is a hegemonic strategy to ensure that public attention remains under control and does not threaten the power bloc. For example, politicians or dominant groups can use immoral issues to strengthen a certain moral, religious, or traditional identity, thereby gaining public consensus. On the other hand, Gert

Hekma (2018) highlights that sexuality is used as a tool in political discourse to strengthen or oppose certain power structures. This issue highlights the role of sexuality in shaping political identities, power narratives, and public policies.

Discourse Theory

Michel Foucault 1972, developed a theory of discourse as a framework for understanding how power and knowledge are interconnected in shaping social reality, including in politics. In political discourse , Foucault emphasized that language and discourse practices are not neutral, but rather tools used to define, control, and distribute power. Michel Foucault .
Relevance: Foucault emphasized that discourse is a medium of power. The narrative of immoral issues can be analyzed as a discursive construction that reflects power relations. Focus of Analysis: The mechanisms of power involved in the formation and control of the discourse of immoral issues.

In relation to the discourse on the issue of sexuality that then influences political views, Kahn (2022) explores how sexual rhetoric in political campaigns influences public perceptions and mobilizes support from certain groups. Case studies from various elections highlight how the issue of sexuality is used differently depending on the cultural and political context of a country.

Media and Propaganda Theory

Herman, ES, & Chomsky , N. (1988) said that the media often becomes a means of spreading political narratives that utilize immoral issues for certain purposes, such as discrediting political opponents. Focus of Analysis: The role of the media in spreading, strengthening, or changing narratives of immoral issues in a political context.

Issues of immorality are often used in political discourse as a propaganda tool to attack political opponents. Media controlled by certain political or economic powers will frame this issue strategically to serve the interests of their owners. Using ideological filters (such as morality or religion), the media can frame immoral issues as threats to societal values. This framing creates a public perception that is in line with the interests of political or economic elites . The media often uses immoral scandals to divert public attention from larger structural issues, such as corruption, economic inequality, or the failure of government policies. This shows how the media helps to "control the agenda" of the public. The source of information about immoral issues often comes from the government or certain groups, who deliberately spread information to frame political opponents negatively. If independent media try to present alternative narratives, they can face flak or pressure.

Political Identity Theory

Hall, S. (1996). Mentioning the narrative of immoral issues can be used to construct or destroy the political identity of certain actors. How immoral issues are associated with the moral, religious, or ideological identities of political actors. Political identity is formed through dominant discourse narratives. Representation in the media, culture, and politics plays a central role in defining group identity. Political identity is often framed through opposition (e.g., "us" versus "them") to strengthen group boundaries. Anderson (2020) explores how sexuality is used as a tool in identity politics, both to shape public policy and as a social mobilization strategy. The same thing was expressed by McNay (2020) that sexuality is part of identity politics and how gender representation in politics contributes to the formation of public policy and social norms.

Panic Theory

Cohen, S. (1972) stated that immoral issues are often used to create moral panic that strengthens polarization in society and supports certain political agendas. How this issue is exaggerated to create public fear or concern for political purposes. Cohen defines *moral panic* as an excessive collective response to certain events, actions, or groups that are considered to violate social norms. This response is often triggered by the media and involves the construction of a narrative that magnifies the actual threat.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is a qualitative method with a Critical Discourse Analysis Approach (Critical Discourse Analysis). Discourse Analysis - CDA). This approach focuses on the relationship between language, power, and ideology in texts and discourses. Data Collection Techniques Document Study and Media Analysis namely texts published in mass media (news, articles, editorials, or reports), political speeches, and digital content on social media platforms to understand the narratives built around immoral issues.

Data sources in the form of texts or discourses to be analyzed, namely media articles and social media containing narratives about immoral issues. Data collection uses relevant and representative texts regarding immoral issues in political discourse. Data analysis uses critical theory, identifying framing techniques, word selection, and discursive patterns used to build social constructions related to immoral issues. Interpretation and Conclusion Drawing through the narrative of immoral issues produced, who benefits, and its impact on public opinion and political policy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Construction of Narrative Issues of Immorality in Political Discourse : A Critical Study

To analyze the portrait of the alleged sexual harassment case involving the gubernatorial/regent candidates, using *the Theory of Social Construction of Reality* by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, we can see how this event is constructed and understood by society and the various parties involved. This theory states that social reality is formed through social interaction and communication, not just objective events that exist outside of ourselves. This case, which occurred a few days before the election, became part of a social construction involving the media, politics, and the public. Sexuality is not only a biological aspect, but is also influenced by social norms, cultural values, and political policies that develop over time. Giddens, (2021).

(1) Social Construction in Sexual Harassment Cases Involving Gubernatorial Candidates /Regent Candidates

The arrest of gubernatorial /regent candidates in a sexual harassment case creates a very sensitive event socially and politically. In the context of the theory of social construction of reality, this incident is not only a legal fact (arrest and alleged sexual harassment), but also part of a broader social construction. This can be seen from several aspects. *First*, the media plays a central role in framing this event. Mass media and social media will determine how this case is perceived by the public. The choice of words, narratives, and even the timing of the news will shape the public's view of the gubernatorial/regent candidates. If the media prioritizes moral narratives and associates the action with a moral accident or a decline in public reputation, then the public will be more likely to judge this case as part of a moral failure or impropriety in the world of politics.

Second, the timing of this incident was very strategic, a few days before the election. This gives political rivals the potential to magnify this scandal and spread narratives that could harm the arrested candidate. The media, in this case, could strengthen the political discourse that links legal problems with the candidate's inability to lead morally. This construction serves to shape public opinion that could influence the election results.

(2) Social and Moral Panic Reactions

panic theory can also be used to describe the social reaction to sexual harassment cases. In this context, there can be a "*moral panic*" triggered by the incident, especially because it involves a political candidate who must be made an example of. Sexual harassment is often considered a very serious moral violation, and the public may respond emotionally, regardless of whether the allegations are proven true or not. This case can be an example of a *moral panic*

, where public fears of a potential leader's immorality can be fostered by the media and political rivals. In some cases, such allegations can damage a candidate's image, even before the legal process is complete.

(3) Influence on Voters

The public, especially voters, may be influenced by the way the case is constructed in the media. Do they see it as an individual's wrongful act, or as an indication of the untrustworthy nature and character of a potential leader? Based on the social construction of reality, this public reaction is influenced by the moral and cultural views that exist in society, which have been formed previously. Miller (2021) analyzes how political rhetoric about sexuality can reinforce social polarization, both by supporting inclusivity and by creating conflict between groups with different views.

Social Construction of Narrative Issues of Immorality in Politics

1) The Influence of Narrative in the Formation of Political Identity

Politics is heavily influenced by social construction in terms of identity and morality. In the case of allegations of sexual harassment against regent/gubernatorial candidates, it has the potential to damage the construction of political identity that the candidates want to build. In the context of the theory of social construction of reality, this political identity is formed through interaction with the public and the media. If the narrative that develops is negative and creates the impression that the candidate is immoral or unfit to lead, then the candidate will lose support from most voters who consider morality to be an important factor in leadership. Hekma (2018) explains how sexuality is not only a personal matter, but also part of the political debate, including in public policy, law, and human rights.

Roulston (2020) explores the relationship between sexuality and social identity, particularly in relation to issues of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. She shows how sexuality becomes an integral part of political and social narratives.

2) The Power of Discourse in Community Assessment

The construction of narratives in political discourse can influence how society views this case. Politics is not only about policy, but also about image and morality. In this case, identity politics plays a big role, where society prefers leaders who they consider to have moral integrity. Therefore, this case can be used as a tool to attack or undermine the popularity of candidates, based on the narratives built by interested parties.

3) Narrative Manipulation for Political Interests

Political rivals can exploit the narratives that emerge from this case to gain political advantage. For example, by portraying the candidate for Regent involved in this case as a

symbol of moral incompetence, political opponents can worsen the candidate's image. The social construction of this issue then becomes a tool for certain parties to gain legitimacy and discredit their opponents. In this case, politics can use moral issues, such as sexual harassment, to assert their moral and political superiority. Overall, through the theory of the social construction of reality, we can see that this case is not only a legal issue, but also involves a social process in which various parties shape the meaning and interpretation of the event. The media, politicians, and the public shape social realities that ultimately influence election results, political image, and power dynamics. This case shows how strong the influence of moral narratives is in the world of politics, which often focuses more on personal image than the substance of policies promoted by candidate leaders.

Framing Theory

Framing theory explains how the media or certain parties select, emphasize, and present information to shape public perception of an event. In the case of sexual harassment by politicians, framing becomes an analytical tool to see how the narrative of alleged sexual harassment involving a candidate for Regent, especially in the run-up to the election. The following is a portrait of this case based on framing theory :

1) Issue Selection Selection)

The media or parties who disseminate information choose to highlight this alleged sexual harassment case a few days before the election. The decision to report or raise this issue at a very strategic moment indicates the possibility of a certain framing , both explicitly and implicitly. The strategic moment is *First* strategic timing . namely, the case emerged close to the election, a crucial moment that determines the candidate's reputation. This timing made the issue receive widespread attention and created a significant impact on the candidate's image. Second, the moral aspect: the media might choose to frame the case as a moral violation rather than a purely legal issue. Thus, the issue would resonate more emotionally with the public, especially since it involves sexual harassment of a teenager.

2) Emphasizing Certain Aspects (Saliency)

The media may emphasize certain aspects of the case to shape public perception. First, the media may focus on the position of the regent candidate, so that the case is perceived as a betrayal of public trust. Second, the emphasis on the age of the victim (a teenager) and the immoral nature of the case may reinforce the narrative of a "*sexual predator*" or abuse of power. Third, the media may also frame the case as a threat to democratic stability or morality in politics, emphasizing how the scandal affects the integrity of the election.

3) *Framing by Political Competitors*

Political rivals may use this issue to frame the candidate in question as a morally unfit leader, emphasizing the allegations as evidence of a failure of character and morality. This narrative may be combined with larger issues, such as political corruption or abuse of power, to reinforce the negative impression.

4) *Framing by Media*

The media often uses sensational framing to capture readers' attention. In this case, the use of terms such as "teenage sexual abuse" can create a strong emotional perception, regardless of the legal facts. The media may frame the case as intentionally or unintentionally damaging the candidate's reputation, depending on the media's bias.

5) *Framing the Defense by the Supporting Team*

The candidate's support team may try to frame the case as part of a black *campaign* . *campaign*) designed by political opponents. By framing the case as slander, they can try to reduce the negative impact on the candidate's reputation. This narrative can be used to emphasize the principle that the candidate has not been proven guilty by law, and the public is asked not to judge immediately.

Portrait of the Case of Indecent Acts of Regent Candidates According to Hegemony Theory

1) *Control of Discourse by Dominant Groups*

This case occurred in the run-up to the election, a moment when public discourse is being directed to elect a leader who is considered worthy. In this situation, control over the narrative becomes an important tool to shape public opinion. Accusations against the regent candidate can be seen as a way to create or break political hegemony. If there is a party in power or a stronger political competitor, they can use this issue to strengthen their ideological dominance by presenting the candidate as an immoral figure. In this case, allegations of sexual harassment are used as a tool to discredit candidates who are considered to threaten the power structure. Local or national media, which are often affiliated with certain political groups, can play an important role in popularizing certain narratives. Through the choice of words and focus of the news, the media helps direct public opinion so that the public accepts certain views about this case as the truth.

2) *Approval and Dominance of Moral Ideology*

Gramsci explained that hegemony is achieved when society accepts a particular ideology as "common law". *sense* ." In this case, the ideology of morality is used as a standard for assessing the suitability of political leaders. This leads to moral standards and a crisis of trust,

namely that accusations against candidates can be interpreted as violations of moral values accepted by society. By using immoral issues, the dominant group creates a narrative that candidates have not only violated the law, but also the moral norms of society, so they are not worthy of being leaders. Narratives that are continuously emphasized through the media or political actors can create a consensus that "leaders with moral issues like this cannot be trusted." The hegemony of this ideology shapes how society views the case and the candidate.

3) Maintaining Hegemony by the Status Quo Group

If the candidate for regent is part of a political group in power, this accusation can be used by political opponents to shake the group's hegemony. In Gramsci's perspective, immoral issues like this can be used as "*counter-hegemony*" to attack the moral ideology previously used by the ruling group to gain legitimacy. Political opponents can frame this case as evidence that the existing power has been morally corrupt, so it needs to be replaced with new, clean leadership. In this process, the opposition group tries to build a new hegemony by offering a stronger moral narrative.

4) Resisting Accusations as a Form of Defense for Hegemony

If the allegations are considered a threat to the existing political hegemony, then the party affected by the case or their supporters may use a strategy to reverse the narrative. The narrative that is constructed is a narrative of political slander, namely that allegations of sexual harassment can be framed as part of a "*black campaign*" to destroy the candidate's reputation. Supporters can state that this issue is a fabrication of a group that wants to seize power. By directing attention to the politicized aspects of the allegations, supporters of the candidate can try to maintain public trust and their ideological hegemony.

The Impact of Hegemony on Public Perception

1) Normalization of Moral Discourse in Politics

Such immoral issues are often used in politics to create moral standards that become the basis for legitimating power. In this case, society is faced with the choice to accept or reject a candidate based on a previously framed moral narrative.

2) Influence on Electability

The hegemony of ideology that emphasizes morality as the main requirement for leadership can have a direct impact on Herry Ario Naap's electability. If this discourse is widely accepted by the public, then his chances of winning the election will be greatly affected.

3) Potential for Counter-Hegemony

If society begins to question the motives behind these accusations, counter-hegemony can develop. The narrative that "this issue is political slander" can be an attempt to shake the hegemony of the dominant group that controls public discourse.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This discussion shows that the issue of immorality in politics is not only a legal event, but also part of a social construction formed through the media, political discourse, and public reaction. Some things that are concluded from this discussion are that cases of sexual harassment involving gubernatorial/regent candidates can be understood through various social theories, such as the theory of social construction of reality from Berger and Luckmann, which shows how media and social interaction shape public perception. The media plays a key role in framing this event, influencing public understanding through word choice and narrative. In addition, the incident close to the election strengthens the possibility that this issue is being exploited for political interests, which has the potential to create a moral panic as explained in Stanley Cohen's moral panic theory.

framing theory, accusations against candidates can damage their political image, with the media and political rivals choosing how to package the issue to influence public perception. Identity politics, which associates morality with leaders, becomes a tool to attack or defend individuals in politics. Furthermore, according to Gramsci's hegemony theory, these accusations can be used by dominant groups to maintain or shake power. This issue can become a political tool to establish legitimacy or attack opponents, with the media and political elites influencing public opinion to accept a certain narrative, which has a direct impact on the electability of candidates.

Suggestion

Based on this discussion, it is suggested that the understanding of the issue of immorality in politics should not only be seen from a legal perspective, but also as a social construction influenced by the media and political discourse. Therefore, it is important for the media to be more responsible in packaging sensitive issues, by maintaining objectivity in the choice of words and narratives so as not to worsen the situation or trigger moral panic. In addition, prospective leaders need to pay attention to the moral image formed in society, considering the influence of identity politics and framing that can influence public perception.

Another recommendation is for the public to be more critical in accepting the narratives circulating, especially those related to political issues, by considering the potential for manipulation through framing or black campaigns. The government and legal institutions also need to ensure that the legal process related to this issue is carried out fairly and transparently, avoiding political intervention that can lead to uncertainty in the democratic process.

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