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Political Framing on the Screen: Media Construction of East Java Gubernatorial Election 2024 News by Metro TV

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the framing of Metro TV's reporting on three pairs of candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of East Java during the 2024 regional elections registration period. Using Pan & Kosicki's (1993) framing analysis model, this research examines the syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures in Metro TV's reporting in the period 28–29 August 2024. The research results show that the pair of Khofifah–Emil obtains a framing as a competent pair and has a religious image, with visual support, symbolic narrative, and high display intensity. In contrast, the Risma–Gus Hans pair is framed as a pair that focuses on a clean and nationalist bureaucracy neutrally and functionally, without strengthening narratives or meaningful political symbols. Meanwhile, the pair of Luluk–Lukman experiences marginal framing, characterized by minimal exposure. This pair is framed as a pair with minimum competence. There are differences in Metro TV frames for the three candidate pairs for the Governor and Deputy Governor of East Java.

Keywords: Media Framing, Metro TV, Political Literacy, Ethics of Journalistic, Media Bias.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 East Java Regional Head Election (Pilkada) is an important moment in local and national political contestation. As the province with the second largest number of voters in Indonesia, it has 31.402.838 voters (Department of Communication and Informatics Province of East Java 2024), East Java is a strategic arena in shaping the direction of the national political coalition ahead of the 2029 Election. Therefore, reporting on candidates in this regional election is very crucial, not only as a form of conveying information but also as a tool to shape public opinion.

In practice, mass media are not just a bridge for information, but also an important actor in shaping the construction of reality. This is in line with the view (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) which states that the media has an agenda-setting function, its ability to influence what issues are considered important by society. Moreover, the media also plays a role in the framing process of reality, selecting certain aspects of an event and emphasizing these elements to shape audience perceptions (Entman, 1993). Carter shows that the media uses frames as "organizing principles" that filter and emphasize certain aspects of an event, then ignore other aspects. As a result, the public is given a selected reality, not the entire reality (Carter, 2013).

Metro TV, as a national news television owned by the Media Group, which is owned by Surya Paloh, General Chair of the National Democratic Party, is one of the most active media outlets covering the stages of the East Java Regional Election. In the context of media ownership, Mosco (2009) states that the political-economic structure of the media, including the political affiliation of the owner, often influences the content and orientation of reporting. In political reporting, television plays an important role in channeling agenda setting (Beckers, 2019). Other research shows that local television remains the main source of information as well as a vital channel for increasing voter participation in regional head elections (Yanich, 2020). Compared to social media, local television still has a higher level of trust in shaping the social construction of regional head candidates. News consumption through local media, including local television, has been proven to encourage voter participation in regional head elections significantly (Dunaway, 2020). As one of the media located in Surabaya, East Java Metro TV believes in its ability to build agenda settings that can strengthen the framing of regional head candidates in the region. However, this raises concerns about potential narrative imbalances, especially during critical periods such as regional head elections.

In Metro TV's reporting during the period 28 to 29 August 2024, there appeared to be an imbalance in the intensity and narrative of reporting on the three candidate pairs for Governor of

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East Java: Khofifah Indar Parawansa–Emil Dardak (Advanced Indonesian Coalition), Tri Rismaharini–Gus Hans (PDIP), and Luluk Nur Hamidah–Lukmanul Hakim (PKB). On August 28, Metro TV broadcast massive news regarding Khofifah–Emil's registration in various programs such as Selamat Pagi Indonesia, Breaking News, Metro Hari Ini, and Top News. A total of 14 broadcasts were reported in just one day, with repeated visuals and narratives that consistently put forward a positive image of the couple, including cultural pageantry, electric vehicle symbols, and charity for orphans.

In contrast, on August 29, 2024, news about the Risma–Gus Hans and Luluk–Lukman pairs were much more limited. Risma–Gus Hans only appeared in a few programs such as Primetime News and Headline News, while the Luluk–Lukman pair was mostly reported in afternoon programs and did not receive direct coverage in the form of breaking news. Even some of the visual coverage was obtained from external sources such as the General Election Commission (KPU) YouTube channel.

These differences show that the media not only conveys what happened, but also *how* and *how often* it is reported, becomes part of a process of framing information that is not neutral. This framing can form a hierarchical perception in the public's mind regarding which candidate is more worthy or dominant. In the framing concept, one of them is salience, it is media that emphasizes a lot of news, so the public will pay more attention, and the latest news is considered the strongest in influencing interpretation (Fadhilah & Candrasari, 2021) (Canella, 2023). Researches show that the use of dominant narrative, visual, and emotional elements will increase the impact of a frame so that the impact on the public is deeper and longer-lasting (Hallinan et al., 2021) (N, 2014). The way television media frames political news not only influences what the public thinks, but also how they think about it, as well as what they consider important or ignore. Frames that are more intense in intensity can dominate public perceptions and narratives. Therefore, it is important to analyze how Metro TV frames the three candidate pairs using the Pan and Kosicki framing analysis model.

Pan and Kosicki (1993) breaks down the framing structure into four components: syntax (structure and arrangement of sentences in news texts), script (narrative flow or sequence of events), thematic (main idea or central message), and rhetorical (selection of language, symbols, visuals, and emotional effects). Using this approach, this article aims to examine how Metro TV's framing in the news period 28–29 August 2024 contributed to building an unbalanced political image of the candidates.

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This analysis is not only important for critically assessing journalistic practices, but also for seeing how the media as political actors play a role in the distribution of symbolic power in the era of electoral democracy. In increasing media ownership by political elites (Sumarni, 2023), the public needs to be more aware of subtle forms of framing that can influence their political attitudes and choices in elections.

METHOD

This type of research is qualitative because it aims to understand the meaning behind news texts, not to measure frequency or quantitative statistics. This research is also descriptive because it seeks to explain how the elements in the Metro TV news text structure are constructed to form a particular narrative for each candidate pair.

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a framing analysis method according to the model developed by Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki (1993). This approach was used to explore how Metro TV framed each candidate pair for Governor of East Java 2024 in its television coverage, especially in the period 28–29 August 2024, it's when the three candidate pairs registered with the East Java General Election Commission (KPU).

Data was collected through documentation of Metro TV news broadcasts and searching broadcast archives that are publicly available on Metro TV's official YouTube channel as well as recording news narratives based on broadcast time, visual content, structure and language of delivery.

The research object is Metro TV television news broadcast on 28 and 29 August 2024, relating to the registration of three candidate pairs for Governor and Deputy Governor of East Java. The news that was analyzed come from Metro TV's main news programs, including:

a. Selamat Pagi Indonesia
b. Breaking News
c. Metro Hari Ini
d. Top News
e. Primetime News
f. Headline News

The candidate pairs that are the focus of media framing in this period are:

a. Khofifah Indar Parawansa – Emil Dardak (Advanced Indonesian Coalition)
b. Tri Rismaharini – Gus Hans (PDI Perjuangan)
c. Luluk Nur Hamidah – Lukmanul Hakim (PKB)

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The election for the period 28–29 August was administered because in these two days there was the highest intensity of coverage by Metro TV regarding the registration of candidates to the General Election Commission (KPU), thus reflecting an important momentum in the construction of a political image in the media.

The analysis was carried out using the framing model from (Pan and Kosicki 1993). This model emphasizes that framing is not only about the content of the news, but also about the structure of the news presentation. Pan and Kosicki divide framing analysis into four main structures, such as:

a. Syntax Structure. Analyzes how sentence structure, narrative sequence, and selection of news leads are structured. Including the choice of headline, who is mentioned first, and the order of information provided.
b. Script Structure. Refers to the flow of events in the news. Are events presented chronologically, dramatically, or packaged in a certain order that gives a certain meaning to the audience.
c. Thematic Structure. Emphasizes the main theme or issue framed in the news. Does the news highlight aspects of achievement, conflict, political symbols, or mass supports.
d. Rhetorical Structure. Analyzes the use of language styles, visual symbols, sound effects, diction choices, even visual elements such as processions, clothing colors, or other political symbols that support a certain framing.

Through these four structures, framing analysis will show how Metro TV structures news not only to convey information, but also to shape public perception of the candidates being reported.

The validity of the data was tested through source and time triangulation, it's by comparing the content between news programs on the same day, as well as between pairs of candidates at the same news time. Apart from that, interpretation is also based on the principles of narrative consistency and theme dominance, in accordance with a meaning-oriented qualitative approach. This type of research is qualitative because it aims to understand the meaning behind news texts, not to measure frequency or quantitative statistics. This research is also descriptive in nature, because it seeks to explain how the elements in the Metro TV news text structure are constructed to form a particular narrative for each candidate pair.

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RESULTS

Based on the results of the analysis of Metro TV news broadcasts on 28 and 29 August 2024, significant differences were found in the number, structure and intensity of reporting on the three candidate pairs for Governor and Deputy Governor of East Java. Analysis was carried out by categorizing news content according to Pan & Kosicki's four framing structures, its syntax, script, thematic, and rhetorical.

Data on the Khofifah Indar Parawansa – Emil Dardak pair

a. Syntax Structure
   1) Metro TV broadcast at least 14 times news in a day (28 August 2024), which specifically highlighted this pair's registration.
   2) Reports appeared in almost all major news programs, including Selamat Pagi Indonesia, Breaking News, Metro Hari Ini, and Top News.
   3) The lead position in the news always mentioned Khofifah-Emil at the beginning, accompanied by positive and repetitive narratives.

b. Script Structure
   1) The flow of events was reported chronologically and dramatically: starting from the morning recitation at Khofifah's residence, preparations for the procession, to registration with the General Election Commission (KPU).
   2) Also included is a sequence of symbolic activities such as reciting the Holy Qur'an, providing compensation for orphans, and leaving on an electric motorbike.

c. Thematic Structure
   1) Themes emphasized include program sustainability (Nawa Bhakti Satya), strengthening party support, and modernity (*green energy*).
   2) The image of the pair is presented as an experienced, religious and inclusive leader.

d. Rhetorical Structure
   1) Used words and phrases such as "*diiringi kesenian daerah*", "*dukungan 14 partai*", "*komitmen energi hijau*".
   2) Colorful visuals, cheering crowds of supporters, as well as a special spotlight on cultural pageantry strengthen the emotional effect.

Data on the Tri Rismaharini – Gus Hans pair

a. Syntax Structure

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News about this pair appeared in around 7 broadcasts, all on August 29 2024. Appeared on programs such as Metro Today, Primetime News, and Headline 20:00. News headlines often combine them with the Luluk–Lukman couple in one broadcast.

b. Script Structure
   1) There are no pageantry or symbolic activities displayed.
   2) Focus on the party's statement and confirmation of the pair, including the moment of the pilgrimage to Governor Soerjo's grave by Risma.

c. Thematic Structure
   1) The themes raised were political surprises (Gus Hans was previously Khofifah–Emil's spokesman) and candidate profiles.
   2) There is no emphasis on work programs or policy symbols.

d. Rhetorical Structure
   1) Use of the word "*eksklusif*" in the main segment.
   2) Visuals tend to be static; Dominant interviews and press conference clips without dramatic effect.

Data on the Luluk Nur Hamidah – Lukmanul Hakim pair

a. Syntax Structure
   1) Metro TV broadcast news about this pair in a limited number of around 3-4 broadcasts on August 29, 2024.
   2) Several news stories were combined with Risma–Gus Hans' coverage in one narrative package.
   3) There will be no Breaking News broadcasts or live special coverage.

b. Script Structure
   1) The news flow stated that the couple prayed together at the DPW PKB, then went to the General Election Commission (KPU).
   2) Visual information was taken from other sources such as the General Election Commission (KPU) YouTube channel, not Metro TV's live coverage.

c. Thematic Structure
   1) The theme of the news centered on PKB's participation as an alternative political axis.
   2) The program or candidate's advantages are not discussed in detail.

d. Rhetorical Structure
   1) The use of neutral terms and minimal symbols such as "*pendaftaran berlangsung malam hari*", "*ditemani Gus Imin*".

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2) There were no dramatic visuals or special symbols that were highlighted.

Table. 1 Recapitulation of Number and Intensity of Reporting

Candidate Pair	Publication Date	Total Views	Dominant Program	Special Coverage
Khofifah–Emil	28 August 2024	14 views	All main programs	Yes (Breaking News)
Risma–Gus Hans	29 August 2024	±7 views	Prime Time, Headline	No
Luluk–Lukman	29 August 2024	±3–4 views	Metro Hari Ini	No

This part of the result shows that Metro TV prepared very different reporting portions and structures for each candidate. These findings are the basis for entering the discussion section, where each framing will be interpreted critically.

DISCUSSION

Framing of the Pair "Khofifah – Emil"

Metro TV's coverage of the pair Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Dardak during the registration momentum with the East Java General Election Commission (KPU) on August 28, 2024, showed very intense and structured framing. Based on the framing model (Pan and Kosicki 1993), framing in television news is not only present in the narrative content, but also in the way the news is constructed through syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures. These four structures work in an integrated manner in presenting Khofifah–Emil as an ideal, superior, and dominant pair.

In the syntactic dimension, Metro TV placed this pair in the lead position in almost all of the main news programs that day, such as Selamat Pagi Indonesia, Breaking News, Metro Hari Ini, and Top News. The mention of their names at the beginning, their position in the headline, and the dominance of broadcast time indicate that the structure of information placement is designed to strengthen the perception of importance-unimportance of the political figures covered. Pan and Kosicki emphasize that the syntactic structure in framing is crucial in building an information hierarchy, whoever is mentioned first tends to be considered more important by the audience.

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This reinforces the agenda-setting concept of (McCombs and Shaw 1972), which states that the more often an issue or figure is reported, the more important it is considered by the public.

Script-wise, Metro TV shaped the narrative of this pair's registration as an event full of meaning and symbolism. The flow presented follows a series of activities that are not only procedural, but also full of values: starting from morning recitation, recitation of the Al-Qur'an, compensation for orphans, departure on electric motorbikes, to a large cultural procession towards the KPU. This is in line with the view (Deddy Mulyana and Eriyanto 2002) that the script structure in framing is used to create narrative logic which functions not only to convey facts, but to provide a dramatic and emotional effect on the audience. In this context, Khofifah–Emil are not only framed as an administrative pair, but also as moral and cultural symbols who "mewakili rakyat".

In the thematic dimension, Metro TV emphasizes the themes of sustainability, development and broad support. The narrative about the "Nawa Bhakti Satya Jilid II" program, support from 14 parties, and the mission to welcome "Indonesia Emas 2045" is a framing strategy that links this pair with the ideas of stability, progress and nationalism. Pan and Kosicki stated that the themes chosen by the media indicate the values they want to convey to the public. This means that Metro TV frames this pair as the only choice that promises continuity and bureaucratic stability. This is supported by the findings of Hassan (2018) in his study of media framing in Pakistan, where media that side with the authorities often frame the main candidates with themes of stability and development, as a strategy to direct public perception towards the ideal leader.

Lastly, in its rhetorical structure, Metro TV uses diction choices and visual elements that strongly support positive framing. Phrases such as "diarak ribuan pendukung", "mengusung energi hijau", "didukung penuh oleh 14 partai besar", and "membawa semangat pembangunan berkelanjutan" were combined with visuals of cultural processions such as Reog Ponorogo, Gandrung Banyuwangi, and electric vehicles driven by Khofifah-Emil. Pan and Kosicki said that visual and verbal rhetoric in the news serves to strengthen emotional effects and build symbolic identification with characters. In this case, the visual communicates to viewers that this pair is a representation of progress, local culture, and bias towards lower society.

The overall framing of Khofifah–Emil is also relevant to research by Rico Lado (2014), who found that Metro TV in the Mata Najwa program often used rhetorical structures and symbolic narratives to build an image of a particular candidate that was in line with the political interests of the media owner. In this case, Metro TV is owned by Surya Paloh who is also the General Chair of the National Democratic Party, one of the parties supporting Khofifah–Emil. Mosco (2009) in

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the political economy of media framework explains that in a system of concentrated media ownership, political framing is very likely to be influenced by the ideological orientation of the owner, either directly or through the editorial structure.

By combining all of these framing structures, Metro TV has indirectly formed the image of Khofifah–Emil as the worthiest, most prepared and most supported pair in the East Java gubernatorial election contestation. This framing not only conveys reality, but creates a new reality through repetition, theme selection, and symbolization. Frames work symbolically: by continuity, a certain structure in the narrative and symbols imparts a stable "impression of reality" to the audience. This is in line with Framing theory that the media carries out selection and emphasis (selection and salience), which the media selects aspects of reality and strengthens certain symbols so that they become more prominent to the audience (güran & özarslan, 2022). As a result, the public who are only exposed to Metro TV will likely form a more positive and stronger perception of this pair than other pairs, even before assessing their vision and mission or performance objectively.

Framing of the Pair "Risma – Gus Hans"

In contrast to the intensive framing of the Khofifah–Emil pair, Metro TV presents the Tri Rismaharini and Gus Hans pair in a more minimalist, formal and limited narrative. Based on news monitoring on August 29, 2024, this pair only appeared in a few programs such as *Metro Hari Ini*, *Primetime News*, and *Headline* 20:00. There is no *breaking news* or special broadcasts that focus exclusively on their registration to the East Java General Election Commission (KPU). It shows a different framing pattern: not intensive positive framing, but more towards neutral reporting with minimal exposure.

In the theoretical framework of Pan and Kosicki (1993), the syntactic structure can be seen from the position of Risma-Gus Hans who rarely appear as news leads. Their names often appear together with other couples, such as Luluk–Lukman, in the same segment. This shows that syntactically, Metro TV does not give priority to this pair. This placement structure signals to the audience that the pair is "important enough to cover," but not important enough to be featured predominantly. This is in line with the concept of *second-level agenda-setting* (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001), which explains that the media not only influences what the public thinks, but also *how the importance* of a person or an issue is constructed through the intensity and depth of coverage.

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Script-wise, Metro TV displays the narrative of the registration of the Risma–Gus Hans couple functionally, without dramatic or symbolic elements. The news flow only conveys factual information: confirmation of the PDIP pairing, Risma's pilgrimage to Governor Soerjo's grave, and the registration schedule to the General Election Commission (KPU). There is no emphasis on emotional elements, mass support, or a series of symbolic activities such as processions or joint prayers. In framing analysis, the absence of dramatic scripts like this tends to create the impression that the couple does not have high public appeal, or at least the media does not highlight this aspect. This is in line with the findings of Hardjana (2012) who explained that the media can frame a person in a "passive neutral" manner, namely by presenting sufficient information without visual reinforcement or in-depth narrative.

In the thematic aspect, the reporting on Risma–Gus Hans emphasizes the issue of political transition and surprising figures. For example, Gus Hans, who was previously Khofifah–Emil's spokesman, is now accompanying Risma as a candidate for deputy governor. This theme actually has the potential to be developed by the media as a symbol of interesting political dynamics, but Metro TV did not explore it further. There is no narrative about work programs, bureaucratic track records, or ideas for change that can be the strength of this couple. This shows that Metro TV only frames them in an administrative context, not in the framework of a political narrative that shapes electoral perceptions.

Meanwhile, in its rhetorical structure, Metro TV almost does not use symbols or visuals that strengthen the image of this pair. There are no visual effects such as crowds, distinctive music, or emotional expressions from candidates. Even in some broadcasts, the images used tend to be static footage of press conferences or interviews. This is very different from the framing of Khofifah–Emil which is full of cultural visuals and mass supporters. According to Pan & Kosicki, the absence of this rhetorical structure creates an emotional distance between the figures and the public. This reinforces Eriyanto's (2001) view that framing is not always active in forming an image, but can also "weaken" a character by allowing the narrative to run flat and without intensity.

This pattern is similar to the findings of Halim (2016) in his research on the framing of the Jokowi–Jusuf Kalla pair in national print media, where opposition or non-coalition media candidates were often positioned neutrally without strong narrative, visual or symbolic support. This does not mean the media is negative, but it is enough to make the character unattractive to the public.

When compared economically and politically, the framing of Risma–Gus Hans can be interpreted as an effect of PDIP's position as a party that is *not directly affiliated* with Metro TV

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ownership. Mosco (2009) explains that in a concentrated media system, "*silence is framing*" namely minimal exposure is a form of passive framing which functions to reduce a person's political reach symbolically.

Thus, it can be concluded that Metro TV's framing of the Risma–Gus Hans pair is not negative, but is formed passively and formally. This pair was reported, but not appointed. They are mentioned, but not framed as central figures. In Pan & Kosicki's framing theory, this condition shows that the media still has the power not only to present characters, but also to "subtly ignore" them through setting news structures that lack emotional and thematic exploration.

Framing of the Pair "Luluk – Lukman"

The pair Luluk Nur Hamidah and Lukmanul Hakim are the only candidates from the National Awakening Party (PKB) who are appearing as an alternative axis in the 2024 East Java regional elections. Even though the existence of this pair is quite important politically — considering that PKB is a large party based on Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) — Metro TV actually frames them in a position with minimal exposure and without narrative emphasis. Based on Metro TV's broadcast on August 29, 2024, this pair only appeared in 3-4 reports, and some of them were not the result of live coverage, but were taken from YouTube broadcasts or quoted statements from third parties. This reflects a form of obscuring framing that works secretly through limiting the space for appearances and eliminating dramatic aspects in reporting.

In syntactic structure analysis, Metro TV tends to mention the Luluk–Lukman pair in third place, even in some shows it is only an insert at the end of the same segment as the Risma–Gus Hans pair. Position in the news text, according to Pan and Kosicki (1993), greatly influences the priority of the audience's perception: the earlier it is mentioned, the more important it is considered. Therefore, the insertion of this pair as "additional information" shows that syntactically, the media constructs them as political actors who are not very important. Framing like this is in line with the findings of Rosidi (2017) in his research on local media and independent pairs in the West Java Regional Election, which stated that reducing broadcast space and time is a form of passive framing that symbolically marginalizes political contestants.

In the script aspect, Metro TV's reporting does not convey the sequence of activities or important events that show the preparation or strength of this pair. In contrast to the Khofifah–Emil pair, which was reported from recitations to processions, or Risma–Gus Hans, who were at least shown with pilgrimages and official announcements, the Luluk–Lukman pair were only said to be registering at night, accompanied by hundreds of supporters, and would be accompanied by

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the General Chair of the PKB, Muhaimin Iskandar (Cak Imin). There is no dramatic narrative or series of activities that give political weight to their presence. The absence of scripts in this report reinforces the meaning that the media does not consider this couple worthy of being featured in an important narrative line.

In the thematic dimension, Metro TV does not display a typical theme or central message that could be attached to this couple. Issues such as program sustainability, regional development, or alternative visions do not appear at all. The theme that appears most often is simply "PKB mengusung kader internal", without a narrative about ideology, experience or superiority. This shows that the reporting on Luluk–Lukman was not directed at building political identity, but only recorded their administrative existence. In framing, the absence of a theme or what Iyengar (1991) calls *episodic framing* will distance the public from a deep understanding of the characters, because the news only focuses on surface facts, not substance. Besides that, episodic framing tends to simplify political issues into individual stories (Boukes, 2022) and results in the public not remembering the prospective pair who is reported as a candidate for regional head. Episodic framing generally reduces in-depth understanding of regional head candidates or political figures reported in the media (Boyer et al., 2024).

There is almost no rhetorical structure in the news about this pair. There is no use of strong diction, visual symbols, or visualization of the supporting masses. There was no field coverage showing crowds, expressions of emotion, or political ornaments such as flags, music, or cultural symbols. In fact, it was stated that this couple was holding a prayer together and would be paraded with artistic attractions. However, Metro TV chose not to show this visual. In Pan & Kosicki's theory, rhetorical framing is very important for building emotional connections between characters and the audience. By not having this rhetorical element present, the Luluk–Lukman pair loses their emotional and symbolic appeal on the public screen.

This kind of framing is in accordance with the concept of invisibility in media studies by Couldry (2003), where certain actors or groups are not explicitly attacked, but are ignored in the reporting structure so that they disappear from the radar of public awareness. Handayani's (2020) research on reporting on independent pair in the Surakarta Mayoral election also shows that the lack of visuals and themes causes alternative figures to be perceived by the public as "*uncompetitive*" even though they have grassroots power.

From a media political economy perspective, the framing of Luluk–Lukman can be seen as a form of political exclusion that arises because of their position as an alternative axis that is not directly related to the media's structural interests. Metro TV, which is affiliated with the coalition

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supporting Khofifah–Emil (especially National Democratic Party/NasDem), is more likely to allocate reporting resources to pairs that are considered to be in line with the media owner's political orientation. Mosco (2009) states that in a capitalistic media system, *what is not covered is often more meaningful than what is covered*. It means that the removal or obscuration of information is also a form of ideological framing.

Thus, the framing of the Luluk–Lukman pair is not just minimal, but shows a pattern of structural marginalization. The absence in the script, the weakness of the theme, and the absence of visual rhetoric make them appear as a pair that is *technically present, but symbolically absent*. It makes them vulnerable to being perceived by the public as merely complementary actors in the 2024 East Java Regional Election contestation.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Metro TV's news framing regarding the three candidate pairs for Governor and Deputy Governor of East Java during the 28–29 August 2024 period reveals the media's active role in constructing political narratives rather than simply delivering neutral facts. Utilizing Pan and Kosicki's (1993) analytical model, it becomes evident that each candidate pair is framed differently in terms of reporting intensity, narrative focus, and symbolic representation. These differences underscore how media framing can shape public perception, influencing not only what the public knows but how they interpret political figures.

The Khofifah–Emil pair receives the most favorable framing, depicted as competent and religious leaders. They are presented with the highest frequency and in a consistently positive light. Through an integrated use of syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures, Metro TV constructs their image as ideal and progressive leaders, supported by major political parties. Their portrayal often includes lead story positions, repeated visuals, and narratives of sustainable development. In contrast, the Risma–Gus Hans pair is framed in a more neutral and bureaucratic manner, lacking strong narrative or visual symbols. This restrained coverage dilutes their public visibility and demonstrates how media framing can diminish a political figure’s influence without direct criticism.

The Luluk–Lukman pair, meanwhile, experiences the most marginalization in media coverage. With minimal exposure and the absence of cohesive storytelling or symbolic reinforcement, they are effectively sidelined in the political discourse. This subtle form of exclusion exemplifies how media can render certain candidates invisible, influenced by political economy considerations and affiliations with media power structures. Overall, this analysis

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illustrates that framing in television news is not purely journalistic but deeply entwined with political and economic agendas. Media not only informs but also exerts power—shaping public understanding through strategic language, narrative construction, and selective visual emphasis.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future research on media framing in political journalism should explore a broader range of media platforms beyond television, including online news portals, social media, and alternative media channels. This expansion is crucial given the growing influence of digital media in shaping political discourse, especially among younger audiences. Comparative studies involving different media outlets with varying ownership and political affiliations would also enrich the understanding of how framing strategies are influenced by structural biases and economic interests. Moreover, longitudinal studies can offer insights into how media framing evolves throughout an election cycle, from candidacy announcements to post-election narratives.

In addition, future studies should incorporate audience reception analysis to examine how different framing strategies impact public opinion, political participation, and trust in media. Investigating the interaction between media framing and voter behavior can provide a more holistic view of framing effects. Integrating interdisciplinary approaches from communication studies, political science, and data analytics—such as using AI-based content analysis—could also enhance methodological robustness. Ultimately, this line of inquiry contributes to the broader goal of promoting media accountability, information justice, and democratic integrity in an era of increasingly complex media ecosystems.

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