



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Representation of Political Messages in the Documentary Film Dirty Vote

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Oct 24, 2024 Accepted: Dec 12, 2024	The documentary Dirty Vote reveals corrupt practices in the organisation of elections in Indonesia, which threaten integrity and democracy. This research aims to analyse the political messages conveyed in the film, as well as the representation of political actors involved in the electoral process. It also examines how these political messages are presented in the documentary. The results show that the film conveys important messages about the need to hold elections that are honest and free from fraud. These messages are presented through visual narratives that contrast the idealism of democracy and the reality of manipulative political practices. The representation of political actors in this film portrays them in two sides: as leaders who have moral responsibility, but are also involved in practices that undermine the integrity of elections. Through interviews with various sources and scenes depicting political manipulation, the film provides a strong picture of the inequality that exists in the electoral system. This research shows that Dirty Vote not only highlights problems in the organisation of elections, but also illustrates the role of the media in influencing public perceptions of election integrity and transparency. This research is expected to deepen the understanding of the importance of honesty in politics and how documentary films can be a tool to deliver critical messages towards the democratic system.
<p>Keywords</p> Political Messages Documentary Film Dirty Vote Electoral Integrity Political Representation	
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INTRODUCTION

Communication is a basic human need that is inseparable in social life. As social beings, humans are always involved in acts of communication to understand their surroundings and themselves. One form of communication that has a broad impact is mass communication, which targets a large audience through various media such as print, audio, visual, and outdoor. Mass media has an important role in conveying messages to the public, one of which is through movies. Films, especially documentaries, serve as a means to convey facts and reality, and are often used as a tool of social criticism. In Indonesia, documentary films are gaining attention as a medium to reveal important issues, and one of them is Dirty Vote, directed by Dandhy Dwi Laksono. This film reveals the alleged fraud in the 2024 elections, which is allegedly structured and systematic. By involving constitutional law experts, Dirty Vote highlights various forms of political manipulation, abuse of power, and the use of the state budget for certain political interests.

The experts interviewed explained that this fraud was not a coincidence, but part of a deliberate political design. This research aims to analyze how Dirty Vote conveys political messages about election integrity and how the representation of these political messages affects people's perceptions of democracy in Indonesia. Through the analysis of the representation of messages in this film, this research is expected to provide insight into how documentary films can be a tool to criticize

irregularities in the implementation of elections and encourage the improvement of the quality of the democratic system in Indonesia, as well as strengthen public participation in maintaining the integrity of elections.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on direct observation of the documentary *Dirty Vote*. Data was collected through two main sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct observation of the film, while secondary data was collected through a literature review of various relevant literature. Data collection techniques involved observation to observe the dialog in the film, as well as documentation to obtain data from non-human sources such as documents and statistical materials. Data analysis was conducted using triangulation techniques to verify the validity of the data through various sources, methods, and theories.

Robert N. Entman's framing analysis model was used to analyze events in the film, including four stages: defining the problem, finding the source of the problem, making moral decisions, and providing recommendations for resolution. The data analysis process followed the stages of Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, researchers select and summarize important data, then present the data in a way that is easy to understand, and finally draw systematic conclusions.

Political Messages Conveyed by *Dirty Vote* Documentary Film Related to the Implementation of Democratic Elections and Integrity

The *Dirty Vote* documentary reveals a number of political messages that are very relevant to efforts to build democratic elections with integrity. One of the main messages conveyed is the need for greater transparency and honesty in all stages of elections. The movie clearly shows that without transparency, elections can be easily manipulated, which in turn undermines public trust in the democratic process. One of the fraudulent practices featured in the film is money politics, which is often used by legislative candidates or political parties to obtain votes by illegitimate means. Vote manipulation is also one of the highlights, where election results can be influenced by the power of money or power possessed by certain parties, overriding the true will of the people. Another strong message from the movie is the need for reform in the electoral system. The film highlights that honest and fair elections can only be achieved if there are systemic changes that minimize the loopholes for abuse of power.

Such reforms involve improvements in the organization of elections, stricter oversight, and improved regulations that ensure every vote is counted fairly and every participant is treated equally. In addition, the film also emphasizes that political education is essential to create a society that is more aware of its rights in elections, as well as to increase people's active participation in choosing their leaders. Through good education, people are expected to judge candidates more wisely and not get caught up in money politics or other manipulations. *Dirty Vote* also warns of the serious threat to the integrity of democracy if non-transparent and fraudulent practices are allowed to continue.

The ongoing practice of money politics and vote manipulation can affect the quality of democracy, reduce the legitimacy of election results, and undermine public trust in the political system as a whole. This film firmly invites the public to not only be passive voters, but also active agents of change, who strive to support the organization of elections that are clean, fair, and in accordance with the true values of democracy.

Representation of Political Messages Conveyed in *Dirty Vote* Documentary Film

The political messages conveyed in *Dirty Vote* are presented through various narrative techniques that are effective in depicting political realities that are often hidden behind the scenes. One of the

main techniques used is interviews with various political figures¹, observers, and witnesses who are directly involved in the election process. Through these interviews, viewers are given an in-depth look at the different sides of the election, from different perspectives, which includes their views on irregularities and violations that occurred during the election process. In addition to the interviews, the movie also features footage of real events that highlight the various issues that often undermine the integrity of elections. One issue that is clearly raised is the influence that money plays in elections to influence the outcome of votes. In several segments, the movie shows how money politics becomes a tool for political parties² or legislative candidates to gain support through illegitimate means, ignoring the principle of fairness in elections. Vote manipulation and non-transparent elections are also highlighted, illustrating how such practices undermine the democratic process and diminish the quality of elections as a means to elect leaders who truly represent the will of the people. The film relies not only on verbal narrative but also reinforces these messages through powerful visuals, including images and footage that illustrate the tensions that arise in unclean elections. These visuals invite the audience to feel the direct impact of fraudulent practices that occur in elections, such as the injustice experienced by the community or legislative candidates who compete in a clean manner. In addition, the use of footage illustrating the negative impacts of non-transparent elections, including damage to political morality and public trust in political institutions, further emphasizes the importance of holding fair, clean and transparent elections to maintain the sustainability of a healthy democracy.

By using careful and powerful narrative techniques, *Dirty Vote* is able to raise the audience's awareness of issues that have often been overlooked in the electoral process.³ The message is that transparent and honest elections are not only an ideal, but a fundamental necessity to ensure that democracy can function properly. The sustainability and quality of democracy relies heavily on integrity at every stage of an election, and this movie clearly shows how fragile democracy can be if fraudulent practices are allowed to flourish.

Representation political actors in the documentary “Dirty Vote”

The representation of political actors in the documentary *Dirty Vote* is depicted in great detail, to highlight the various roles they play in the conduct of elections, as well as the impact of their actions on the integrity of democracy. The film not only shows the formal roles played by politicians and legislative candidates, but also delves into the behind-the-scenes dynamics that influence the course of the electoral process. One of the main actors often represented in the film are legislative candidates and political parties. They are portrayed in the context of their efforts to win elections through various means, both legal and fraudulent. In *Dirty Vote*, political parties are often portrayed as institutions that have strong control in determining the direction and strategy of victory, at the expense of democratic principles in order to gain power. Some legislative candidates are shown manipulating votes, using money politics, or even engaging in corrupt practices to gain public support.

The film illustrates that many of them prioritize personal or group victory over the interests of the people, which should be the main goal of elections. In addition, the film also features the role of

¹ Asdar, A., Hasrullah, A. A. U., & Mau, M. (2024). RESILIENCE OF TRIBUN BONE NEWSPAPER IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT. *Remittances Review*, 9(1). <https://remittancesreview.com/menu-script/index.php/remittances/article/view/1289>

² Najamuddin, & Cangara, Hafied & Mau, Muliadi. (2022). STUDENT CRITICISM TO JOKOWI'S POLICY: (Critical Discourse Analysis on Uploads of BEM UI 2021 on Instagram). *Jurnal Jurnalisa*. 8. 10.24252/jurnalisa.v8i2.31362. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368326859_STUDENT_CRITICISM_TO_JOKOWI'S_POLICY_Critical_Discourse_Analysis_on_Uploads_of_BEM_UI_2021_on_Instagram/citation/download

³ Unde, A. A., & Mau, M. (2023). Komunikasi Politik Anggota DPRD Provinsi Sul-Sel pada Pemilu 2019 (Faktor Pendukung dan Penghambat dalam Kampanye Politik). *JIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6(10), 8291-8297. https://scholar.google.co.id/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=jE9NEqoAAAAJ&cstart=20&pagesize=80&citation_for_view=jE9NEqoAAAAJ:BqipwSGYUEgC

political observers and experts who provide a broader perspective on how political actors influence elections. They are often the ones who provide critical analysis of the electoral process, expose the flaws in the system, and voice the need for reforms in the electoral process. Their role is crucial in providing viewers with an understanding of how electoral fraud and manipulation can undermine the principles of democracy that should be upheld. The film also highlights non-political figures, such as activists and civil society actors who play a role in fighting for transparency and fairness in elections. They are portrayed as heroes in the face of irregularities and strive to educate the public about the importance of voting wisely, and how non-transparent practices can threaten the future of democracy in Indonesia. Their representation in the film shows that there are groups who continue to fight to improve the system, even though they often have to deal with big challenges and bigger political forces.⁴

The portrayal of political actors in *Dirty Vote* gives viewers a keen insight into how power and politics can be intertwined with fraudulent practices, and how this impacts the quality and integrity of democracy. The film seeks to show that in every election, there are actors who work to maintain integrity and others who seek to undermine it for personal or group interests. It is a vivid representation of the challenges faced by the political system in Indonesia and reminds viewers of the need for reform and better political education to create cleaner and more democratic elections.

In an additional narrative, *Dirty Vote* also highlights the role of the media and independent institutions in shaping public perceptions of the electoral process. Media, both conventional and digital-based, play a dual role. On the one hand, they are a very important channel of information for the public to understand the dynamics of elections. However, on the other hand, the movie also reveals how some media can be misused to manipulate public opinion⁵ supporting one party, or covering up fraudulent practices that occur behind the scenes. This shows that the media can be an influential political actor in elections, both positively and negatively. Furthermore, *Dirty Vote* also reveals the challenges faced by election organizing bodies such as the KPU (General Election Commission). While their job is to ensure that elections are fair and transparent, the film illustrates that they are often caught in situations of pressure, both from political parties and from larger political forces. Election organizers, while trying to maintain integrity, have to deal with tremendous challenges, including threats, intimidation and lack of adequate resources. The film illustrates how these institutions are sometimes hampered by a system that does not support change, leading to suboptimal oversight of fraudulent practices. Furthermore, the film emphasizes the need for collective consciousness in society to maintain electoral integrity. People, as voters, also have a responsibility to engage in the democratic process in a responsible manner.

Dirty Vote invites viewers to reflect on how public indifference or ignorance of bad practices in elections can pave the way for manipulations that harm the common good. Therefore, better political education is one of the important messages that the film emphasizes, so that voters can make smarter and more objective decisions in choosing their representatives. Overall, *Dirty Vote* not only portrays the depravity that occurs in elections, but also invites the public, media, and state institutions to jointly reflect on and improve the existing system. Through a deeper understanding of how politics, power, and the media are intertwined, the film provides a powerful illustration of the importance of clean and democratic elections for the future of the nation.⁶

⁴ Muhammad Akbar , Tuti Bahfiarti , Muliadi Mau, Alem Febri Sonni, THE PRODUCTION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENT "LET'S READ TO ACHIEVE A LEARNING SOCIETY" (Analysis of Pre-Experimental Design in Audiovisual Communications Department Laboratory, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University), *Sci.Int. (Lahore)*,29 (1),241-245, 2017 ISSN 1013-5316 <https://www.sci-int.com/pdf/636297082593343462.pdf>

⁵ Fathullah, N. S. (2020). *Propaganda Pembentukan Opini Publik Tentang Aksi Penolakan RKUHP dan RUU KPK 2019 Di Kota Makassar Pada Media Sosial Whatsapp* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Hasanuddin).

⁶ Sonni, A. F., Amrullah, M., & Bahfiarti, T. (2021). The symbolic meaning of the Sandeq boat making process among the Mandarese. *ETNOSIA : Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia*, 6(2), 184 – 199. <https://doi.org/10.31947/etnosia.v6i2.14640>

CONCLUSION

The *Dirty Vote* documentary conveys a very important political message about the importance of holding elections with transparency, honesty and integrity. The film highlights various fraudulent practices, such as money politics and vote manipulation, that can undermine the quality of democracy and reduce public trust in the electoral process. These messages are conveyed through various narrative techniques, including interviews with political figures, observers, and witnesses, showing how political actors and the media are involved in creating these irregularities.

The visual representations and footage used in this film further emphasize the negative impact of unclean elections, as well as the urgency of reforming the electoral system to prevent fraudulent practices that harm society and democracy. In addition, *Dirty Vote* illustrates that the role of the media and election management bodies is crucial in maintaining the integrity of democracy. However, they are often hampered by various challenges and political pressures that make it difficult for them to conduct optimal oversight. Therefore, the film emphasizes the need for political awareness among the public and better political education, so that elections can reflect the true will of the people and maintain the quality of democracy. Overall, *Dirty Vote* not only criticizes bad practices in elections, but also invites all parties - the government, the media, the election management body, and the community - to jointly maintain the integrity of elections, so that democracy can develop in a healthy and sustainable manner.

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