

Framing and Semiotics of Online Media Reporting On The Ira Puspadewi PT ASDP Corruption Case: Critical Discourse Analysis Based On Entman and Barthes Theories

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Abstract

Public trust in anti-corruption institutions in Indonesia remains fragile, as reflected in the declining score of Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in 2025. The corruption case of former President Director of PT ASDP Indonesia Ferry, Ira Puspadewi, attracted public attention because she was found guilty on November 20, 2025, but rehabilitation received from the President, thus sparking a sharp public debate. This study examines how six Indonesian online media outlets framed the case using Entman's theory and Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. Using a qualitative approach based on critical discourse analysis, this study purposively selected news and photo samples from the period of November 20-28, 2025. The research findings identified four conflicting frames: the legal-institutional frame, the victimization frame, the political intervention frame, and the constitutional frame. Semiotic analysis of the acquittal photo shows a shift in meaning from the denotative sign of a defendant wearing a KPK prisoner's vest to the connotative myth of moral redemption. This study concludes that online media do not merely report legal facts neutrally, but have become an arena for the struggle for the meaning of justice among elite actors.

Keywords: Media Framing, Roland Barthes's Semiotics, Corruption in State-Owned Enterprises, Online Media, Critical Discourse

Abstrak

Kepercayaan publik terhadap institusi antikorupsi di Indonesia masih rapuh, tergambar dari menurunnya skor Indeks Persepsi Korupsi (IPK) Indonesia pada 2025. Kasus korupsi mantan Direktur Utama PT ASDP Indonesia Ferry, Ira Puspadewi, menjadi perhatian publik karena ia divonis bersalah pada 20 November 2025, namun menerima rehabilitasi dari Presiden, sehingga memicu perdebatan publik yang tajam. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana enam media online Indonesia membingkai kasus tersebut menggunakan teori Entman dan menggunakan teori semiotika Roland Barthes. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis analisis wacana kritis, penelitian ini memilih sampel berita dan foto secara purposif dari periode 20-28 November 2025. Temuan penelitian mengidentifikasi empat frame yang saling bertentangan: frame hukum-institusional, frame viktimisasi, frame intervensi politik, serta frame konstitusional. Analisis semiotik atas foto pembebasan menunjukkan pergeseran makna dari tanda denotatif seorang terdakwa berrompi tahanan KPK menuju mitos konotatif tentang penebusan moral. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa media online tidak sekadar melaporkan fakta hukum secara netral, melainkan menjadi arena pertarungan makna keadilan di antara aktor-aktor elite.

Kata kunci: Framing Media, Semiotika Roland Barthes, Korupsi BUMN, Media Online, Wacana Kritis

Introduction

Public trust in law enforcement related to corruption in Indonesia has come under significant pressure. According to a report by Transparency International Indonesia, Indonesia's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score for 2025 was recorded at 34, with the country's ranking falling from 99th to 109th among the 180 countries surveyed (Transparency International Indonesia, 2026). According to the Secretary General of Transparency International Indonesia, this decline is closely linked to the shrinking civic space and the weakening independence of the judicial system, which has led to restrictions on social oversight by the media and the public over those in power (Transparency International Indonesia, 2026). In a situation where public trust is in crisis like this, online media play an important role not only as conveyors of legal information but also as a platform for constructing meanings about who may be considered guilty, who becomes a victim, or who is respected as a hero (Sobur, 2013).

One incident that clearly illustrates this struggle over meaning is the corruption case involving the former President Director of PT ASDP Indonesia Ferry (River, Lake, and Ferry Transportation), Ira Puspawati. On November 20, 2025, the panel of judges at the Central Jakarta Corruption Court sentenced her to 4 years and 6 months in prison in connection with the business cooperation and acquisition of PT Jembatan Nusantara during the 2019–2022 period, involving state losses amounting to Rp1.25 trillion (Kompas.com, 2025). What makes this case unique from a discursive perspective is not only the magnitude of the state's financial loss but also the series of events that followed: a dissenting opinion within the panel of judges, with the presiding judge arguing that the case should have fallen under the realm of business (the business judgment rule), and, just five days after the verdict was handed down, President Prabowo Subianto issued a rehabilitation decree restoring the good names of Ira and the two other defendants (Liputan6.com, 2025).

The rehabilitation immediately sparked controversy. Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) views the president's move as a form of executive intervention in the judicial process that has not yet become legally binding, even calling it a shift from "legal warfare" to "narrative warfare" in the public sphere (Tirto.id, 2025). On the other hand, the Palace, thru the Deputy Coordinating Minister for Legal Affairs, emphasized that the action was purely an exercise of the president's constitutional prerogative as stipulated in Article 14 of the 1945 Constitution. Amidst the controversy, several public figures have voiced their defense of Ira by questioning the method used by the KPK to calculate state losses. It is this narrative complexity that makes the Ira Puspawati case a rich subject for analysis, both in terms of news framing and the accompanying semiotic signs, including the widely published photos of her release from the KPK detention center.

This phenomenon shows that current political developments are highly dependent on how mass media or online media shape public perception (Aidah et al., 2026). Political dynamics do not occur solely within government institutions but also within the mass media, which summarizes events or issues that influence how the public interprets those

events. The media selects, in its own way, the issues to be published, highlights conflicts, interprets certain symbols, and simplifies reality to make it easier for the public to understand and accept (Eriyanto, 2002). Each media will report the same issue but will produce a different construction of reality due to the way the media presents it (Sri Nurhayati, 2023). Therefore, reports on legal cases often do not fully reflect the objective truth but are frequently influenced by the way the media selects and presents information.

In the previous journal written by Andriani and Saputra (Andriani & Saputra, 2026) with the title *Framing Keadilan dan Kuasa dalam Wacana Hukuman Mati ABK: Analisis Semiotika Sosial* discusses how the construction of meaning in the news of the death penalty demands for ABK in the media using Entman's framing and Theo van Leeuwen's Semiotics by analyzing the media Tempo, CNN Indonesia and Detik.com. With the results of the study that there are differences in the framing of each media and in semiotic theory Tempo uses personalization, CNN Indonesia uses functionalization and Detik.com uses institutionalization.

Meanwhile, the journal written by Muhammad and Wahid (Muhammad & Wahid, n.d.) with the title *Konstruksi Pembungkahan Visual Edhy Prabowo dalam Kasus Korupsi Benur pada Ilustrasi Sampul Majalah dan Koran Tempo* uses the Gamson-Modigliani framing theory to analyze the visual illustrations displayed on the cover of Tempo magazine regarding the image of Edhy Prabowo who committed corruption in the lobster seed (Benur) export issue. The results of this study are the visual framing of the four Tempo magazine covers related to Edhy Prabowo looks like a visual story that depicts one act to another, where in the first act Edhy is a powerful actor in the export of lobster seeds, but in the second act Edhy takes part in this export game of lobster seeds. Meanwhile, in the third act, Tempo highlights the beginning of Edhy's cunning plan, and in the final act Tempo reveals secrets regarding the figures who took part in this case.

Perdana and Zamzamy's (Yuka Perdana & Zamzamy, 2025) journal entitled *Framing Media dalam Kasus Korupsi oleh PT Pertamina Patra Niaga: Analisis Komparatif Tempo.co dan Antaranews* uses Entman's framing theory and qualitative research. This study used purposive sampling of six news articles in Tempo.co and Antaranews. The results of this study are that Tempo frames this news critically while Antaranews frames this news procedurally and neutrally so that these two media form different constructions of reality. Lastly, a previous journal written by Kusuma et al. entitled *Analisis Sampul Majalah Tempo kasus Korupsi Djoko Tjandra dengan Semiotika Roland Barthes* is a qualitative study using Barthes' semiotic theory by analyzing the covers of Tempo magazine on July 29-30, 2021 (Engga et al., 2021). The results of the study show that the meaning of the two covers has different denotations, connotations, and myths. On the first cover, the denotation meaning is Djoko Tjandra's cooperation with the judge, with a negative meaning, and the mythical meaning is the injustice of the judge who is considered to be playing with

state law. Meanwhile, the denotative meaning in the second magazine is that all existing judges gave a lighter sentence to Djoko Tjandra, the connotative meaning is that the judges work unprofessionally, and the mythical meaning is that the judge's performance is questionable because judges should be fair in every case and fair in imposing sentences.

Based on the previous research above, there are differences in the research. In previous research on corruption case news in Indonesia have generally applied one of two methods separately: framing analysis to examine issue emphasis and problem definition (following the Entman or Pan and Kosicki models), or semiotic analysis to analyze the symbolic meanings found in headlines, images, and cartoons. The combination of these two methods within the same case, particularly in cases that result in contradictory outcomes such as a guilty verdict followed by rehabilitation, remains relatively rare. This gap needs to be addressed because framing and semiotics actually operate at two different yet interconnected levels: framing explains how the media emphasizes certain elements of an issue through four functions (defining the problem, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies), while semiotics analyzes how words, images, and gestures create meaning through the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth.

Based on the explanation above, the research question is how do the media Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia, Tempo.co, Tirto.id, Suara.com, and Liputan6.com construct the framing of the Ira Puspawati corruption case at PT ASDP through Robert Entman's framing and visual representation based on Roland Barthes semiotics?. This research will analyze how six national news platforms presented the events surrounding the verdict and subsequent rehabilitation, as well as examine how the visual and linguistic elements in the headlines, content, and news images create conflicting meanings. The purpose of this research is to explore the framing and semiotics in online media coverage of the Ira Puspawati corruption case at PT ASDP.

The research's novelty is divided into two, theoretical novelty and methodological novelty. The theoretical novelty in this study is that this study combines two theoretical frameworks—Entman's framing theory and Barthes's semiotics—to understand the relationship between frames formed from a constructed text and the way visuals or images are created in reporting corruption cases. In addition, the combination of these two theories to examine modern legal-political events marked by significant discursive tensions, thus providing a deeper understanding of how online media contributes to shaping public perceptions of justice in this case. Meanwhile, the methodological novelty is that this study develops an analysis that combines several aspects such as news headlines, source selection, framing structures and journalistic photos in six online media within the same discourse period, thus allowing for systematic comparisons between media.

Method

This research employs a qualitative interpretive approach combining Robert Entman's framing analysis and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. The primary corpus consists of online news coverage published by six Indonesian media outlets: Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia, Tempo.co, Tirto.id, Suara.com, and Liputan6.com. The analysis focuses on the period from November 20 to November 28, 2025. This period was selected because it encompasses three central stages of the case: the court verdict, the announcement of presidential rehabilitation, and Ira Puspawati's release from detention. News articles were purposively selected according to their direct relevance to: (1) the corruption verdict; (2) arguments concerning state losses and corporate decision-making; (3) the presidential rehabilitation; (4) criticism or defense of the rehabilitation decision; and (5) Ira Puspawati's release and accompanying visual representation. The textual data were analyzed using Entman's four framing functions: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Additional attention was given to headline construction, source hierarchy, lexical selection, quotation patterns, and omission or emphasis of particular information. Visual materials were analyzed using Barthes' three levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. Particular attention was paid to clothing, facial expressions, bodily gestures, detention symbols, courtroom settings, and visual representations accompanying reports of Ira's release. The analysis concerns the construction of meaning within media texts and images. It does not measure audience reception or media effects. Consequently, references to possible meanings are treated as textual or semiotic interpretations rather than as evidence of how readers actually understood the reports.

Result and Discussion

Legal-Institutional Frame: Corruption, State Losses, and Judicial Accountability

The first major frame identified in the corpus is the legal-institutional frame, particularly visible in the early coverage following the November 20, 2025 verdict. Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia, and Tempo.co placed substantial emphasis on the legal process, judicial reasoning, and the financial consequences attributed to the acquisition of PT Jembatan Nusantara. Within Entman's problem-definition function, the event was primarily presented as a corruption case that had resulted in a judicial conviction. The figure of approximately Rp1.25 trillion in state losses became an important linguistic marker in constructing the seriousness of the case. Repeated references to the amount connected the corporate transaction with the broader vocabulary of public financial accountability.

At the level of causal diagnosis, reports emphasized the acquisition process, alleged failures of prudence, corporate governance problems, and decisions related to the purchase of PT Jembatan Nusantara assets. Responsibility was consequently located largely within managerial decision-making and compliance with state-owned enterprise governance. Under moral evaluation, the guilty verdict functioned as the primary source of institutional legitimacy. Judicial statements and prosecutorial arguments were

positioned prominently, thereby giving the court and law-enforcement institutions high authority in defining the event. The implied treatment recommendation was continuation of legal accountability through established judicial mechanisms. CNN Indonesia nevertheless complicated this frame by reporting that Ira had not personally obtained financial benefits and by highlighting the dissenting opinion within the panel of judges. This did not remove the legal-institutional frame but introduced an alternative interpretation within it: legal responsibility could coexist with disputes regarding intent, personal enrichment, and the applicability of corruption law to corporate decisions. Semiotically, courtroom images and detention clothing denoted the status of a person undergoing criminal proceedings. At the connotative level, these visual elements associated the subject with judicial control and accountability. At the level of myth, the courtroom functions as an institutional symbol through which contested conduct is formally classified and judged.

Defense/Victimization Frame: Narrative of Business Policy Criminalization

The second framework clearly emerges in the Suara.com report, which directly shows Ira's defense in the plea hearing and support from various public figures (Suara.com, 2025). In the function of diagnosing the cause, this framework shifts the focus of the issue from the intent of corruption to the method of calculating state losses, which is deemed inaccurate, emphasizing the view that asset appraisers treated the ships as if they were used goods even tho they were still operational as ships. In the handling recommendation function, this framework indirectly suggests that the case should be considered a normal business risk, rather than a criminal act. Semiotic elements also reinforce this framework: Ira's emotional portrayal while reading the plea is used as a connotative sign of vulnerability and sincerity, which serves to shape the image of a professional who is a victim of the system, rather than a criminal pursuing personal gain.

Political Intervention Frame: "Narrative War" versus Presidential Prerogativ

The third frame emerged after President Prabowo issued a rehabilitation letter on November 25, 2025. Tirto.id, Jawa Pos, and Kompas.com continuously quoted criticism from ICW, which described the president's action as an executive interference in the judicial process that was not yet final. In the function of diagnosing the cause, this frame identifies the source of the problem not in Ira's actions, but in the weak legal boundaries governing the president's prerogative, which are considered too broad without any transparency mechanisms. For the function of moral judgment, this frame shows a negative assessment of the precedent of granting rehabilitation to defendants whose cases are still ongoing, by comparing it to previous cases of amnesty and abolition as a recurring pattern. The term "narrative war" expressed by ICW and referred to by various media has become an important linguistic marker: it places the legal process on par with the battle for image in the public sphere, not just as a process of proof in court.

Constitutional Frame and Visual Semiotics of Liberation

As a counterbalance, Liputan6.com (2025) and Beritasatu.com (2025) emphasize the defense from the Palace, which states that rehabilitation is a legitimate exercise of presidential constitutional authority according to Article 14 of the 1945 Constitution, not a legal intervention (Hukumonline.com, 2025). At the semiotic level, the event of Ira's release from the KPK detention center on November 28, 2025, functions as a meaningful unit of visual analysis (Hukumonline.com, 2025). From a denotative perspective, the image and news story show a woman exiting thru the prison's iron gate, with a faint smile, bowing her body, and raising her hand to greet the waiting journalists. At the connotative level, the bowing gesture and faint smile are interpreted as symbols of humility and relief, not as a form of arrogance from a former state-owned enterprise official. At the mythological level, this series of symbols forms a cultural narrative about "redemption" – a story about an individual who was once downcast but then had their dignity restored, subtly shifting Ira's position from a convicted corruptor to a "victim who ultimately received justice." The visual difference between the orange jumpsuit worn by Ira during the trial and the simple clothing during her release also reinforces the binary opposition of guilty/restored, which is at the core of the struggle for meaning in the overall coverage of this case

Comparative Interpretation of Media Framing

This study used several articles from six online media outlets from November 20-28, 2025, to be analyzed using Entamn's four framing elements and Barthes's semiotics. Table 4 was compiled to facilitate comparison of each media outlet's framing in reporting the Ira Puspawati corruption case. Therefore, it can be concluded that although all media outlets reported the same incident, each media outlet emphasized different facts, emphasized different issues, chose different narratives, and used different visuals or photos. These differences led to different ways of constructing reality in identifying problems, determining who was considered guilty, providing moral judgments, and how to resolve the case discussed

Table 4. Comparative Framing

Headline	Defining the problem	Causes Diagnosis	Making Moral Judgments	Treatment Recommendation	Semiotic Analysis
Kompas.com, 20 November 2025. Eks Dirut ASDP Ira Puspawati divonis 4,5 tahun penjara.	Corruption Case	Caused by the acquisition process of PT Jembatan Nusantara, which	Ira Puspawati was found guilty	The criminal sentence given to Ira Puspawati is a form of law enforcement	The photo of Ira Puspawati in the courtroom has a denotative meaning.

		caused losses to the state.			The myth is that the court is a place to seek justice and be held accountable for one's actions.
CNN Indonesia, 20 November 2025. Hakim: Eks Dirut ASDP Ira Puspawati tak menerima keuntungan finansial.	This case is considered a legal case with differing opinions among judges.	The difference is due to differences in interpretation of the elements of the crime of corruption .	The assessment of Ira Puspawati's actions tended to be balanced because she was deemed not to have taken advantage of anyone.	The possibility of examining the court's decision from a different perspective	The prisoner's vest serves as a denotative symbol of the defendant's status and reinforces the myth of the perpetrator of corruption.
Tempo.co, 21&28 November 2025. Eks Dirut ASDP terbukti memperkaya orang lain tetapi tidak memperkaya diri sendiri KPK Jabarkan Kesalahan Ira Puspawati dalam Kasus Korupsi ASDP	Corruption is considered negligence in management resulting in state losses.	The cause is related to business decisions deemed to violate state principles.	Legal responsibility was recognized even though no personal gain was obtained.	Supporting the legal process using judicial mechanisms	The visualization strengthens the legal narrative by showing the trial process.
Tempo.co, 21&28 November 2025. Duduk perkara ASDP mengakhiri rehabilitasi Prabowo,	This case is considered an act of criminalizing business policies.	The cause is an error in calculating state losses and inappropriate	Ira Puspawati was considered a party harmed by the legal system.	Case resolution focused on restitution and protection for those who make business decisions	Emotional expressions help shape Ira's image as a victim.

kenapa KPK bersikukuh Ira Puspawati korupsi?		applicatio n of the law.			
JawaPost & Tirta.id, 26–27 November 2025. Prabowo beri rehabilitasi eks Dirut ASDP Ira Puspawati, ICW minta menghentikan intervensi hukum. Rehabilitasi eks petinggi ASDP: Kronologi, kontroversi, & kritik.	The issue shifts from the corruption case to the debate about the President's authority.	The cause is linked to the use of prerogative rights that are deemed too broad.	Rehabilitat ion was considered a bad example that undermine d the judicial system.	This forces authorities to limit government intervention in legal cases	The courtroom photo maintains the image of the defendant, even though the text presents a defensive tone.
Liputan6.com & Hukumonline.com, 25–28 November 2025. Ira Puspawati bebas usai rehabilitasi, Otto Hasibuan: Presiden tak mau orang tak dihukum. Resmi Bebas, Ira Puspawati Soroti Hukum di Indonesia Harus Beri Perlindungan kepada Anak Bangsa Kala mantan Dirut ASDP Ira Puspawati bebas dari Rutan KPK.	This case is considered an exercise of the President's constitutional rights.	The cause is the authority held by the President as stipulated in Article 14 of the 1945 Constitution.	Rehabilitat ion was considered a way to restore a person's rights.	Supporting presidential action, which is considered a solution in accordance with the Constitution	The gestures of smiling, wearing batik, and greeting with the hand are interpreted as demonstrat ing the restoration of dignity and the myth of redemption .

Based on the research findings above, it is clear that each media outlet employed a strategy of omission, or omitting certain information, thus creating different constructions of reality. Kompas.com and Tempo.co emphasized the Rp1.25 trillion state loss and the judges' verdict, but did not provide sufficient space for lawyers or discussion of business principles. Furthermore, Suara.com focused more on the arguments of Ira Puspawati's supporters and criticized the method of calculating state losses, while only slightly detailing the facts of the trial.

Furthermore, Tirto.id focused more on ICW's criticism of the President's rehabilitation efforts, thus eliminating the need for proof of corruption as a primary focus. Liputan6.com, on the other hand, downplayed much of the criticism and emphasized the President's constitutional legitimacy through the exercise of his prerogative. It can be concluded that these differences in omitted information demonstrate that news presentation in the media is not solely determined by the information presented, but also by the facts deliberately withheld from the public. These findings indicate that media reports are not merely objective reflections of facts, but also constructions of reality influenced by various components, including issue selection, source selection, word choice, and how information is organized in the news. Thus, the framing theory articulated by Entman not only explains how the media frames events but also elucidates how the emphasis on issues can influence the public's perspective on law and justice.

The difference in framing is also evident in the hierarchy of sources. Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia, and Tempo.co consider judges, KPK prosecutors, and court decisions as primary sources of information, making legal legitimacy the primary focus of their news coverage. Conversely, Suara.com often gives space to Ira Puspawati, lawyers, and public figures who support the argument that the case was part of a business policy.

Tirto.id pays more attention to Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), resulting in a narrative that shifts toward criticism of the government. Liputan6, on the other hand, gives the most space to Otto Hasibuan and the Palace, making rehabilitation a constitutionally compliant action for the President. These differences in source priorities demonstrate that the truth of an event is shaped by those who are given the most opportunity to recount it. Source Hierarchy Across Media

The choice of words used by each media outlet indicates the direction of their emphasis or perspective. Kompas.com and Tempo.co consistently use terms like "convicted," "proven," "state losses," and "corruption." This diction reinforces the argument that the case has a valid legal basis. Conversely, Suara.com frequently uses terms like "rehabilitation," "criminalization of business policies," and "not enjoying personal gain," thus shifting readers' attention from the legal error to the more fundamental aspect of justice. Tirto.id uses terms like "intervention," "narrative war," and "bad precedent," prompting readers to view the issue as a form of political conflict. Liputan6 uses the words "free," "restored," and "prerogative," suggesting that the rehabilitation process is seen as a form of restoring someone's rights. These word choices demonstrate that language is used not only to convey information but also as a tool for

constructing meaning.

Media framing also changes over time. From November 20 to 24, 2025, the main news focused on the legal process, evidence of corruption, and the extent of the state's losses. However, after the President granted rehabilitation on November 25, 2025, media attention shifted to discussions about the President's constitutional authority, the legitimacy of the rehabilitation, and the ensuing political controversy. This shift demonstrates that the way media convey information is constantly evolving and adapting to prevailing political and legal conditions.

Furthermore, semiotic analysis also found discrepancies between text and image. In several articles from Liputan6 and Hukumonline, the news content still stated that Ira was a fraudster in a corruption case. However, the photo showed Ira wearing a batik shirt, smiling, bending down, and raising her arms to embrace a journalist. Denotatively, the photo depicts someone recently released from prison. However, connotatively, the image creates an impression of simplicity, serenity, and restored self-esteem. Thus, the visuals not only complement the text but also contribute to constructing a different narrative, transforming Ira's image from someone punished to someone who has achieved moral recovery. This finding suggests that visual images can reinforce the meaning of news stories, and in some cases, even change that meaning.



Photo 1. Sumber: Hukumonline.com



Photo 2. Sumber: Liputan6.com

The Battle of the Word "Free" in News Headlines

One significant result of this research is how the term "free" is applied in an unclear and deliberate manner in news headlines. When the legal-institutional framework became the most prominent, the word was almost invisible because the news focused more on proving guilt. However, after the rehabilitation was carried out, the word "free" often appeared in the headlines of various news outlets to describe Ira's physical freedom from the KPK detention center. In fact, according to the Ministry of Law, legally, there is a clear difference between automatic rehabilitation from an actual acquittal and rehabilitation based on the president's prerogative. The confusion over the meaning of the term "free" serves as a real example of how media word choices can simplify – even obscure – the complexity of someone's legal status in the general public perception.

Framing as a Representation of the Judicial-Executive Power Conflict

The conflict between the political intervention framework and the constitutional framework essentially reflects a broader structural conflict between the judicial and executive powers in Indonesia. In this context, the media not only serves as a provider of information but also as a space where both powers compete to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public. When ICW revealed the shift from legal disputes to narrative battles, it affirmed that online media now plays a battlefield role that is no less important than the courtroom in shaping views on justice.

Dialog with Previous Studies

The results of this study differ from previous research, such as the paper written by Andriani and Saputra(Andriani & Saputra, 2026), which used social semiotics and Entaman framing theory to discuss how meaning is constructed in reporting on demands for the death penalty for Indonesian crew members. This study employed Theo van Leeuwen's semiotic theory and used only two media. Meanwhile, the paper written by Muhammad and Wahid(Muhammad & Wahid, n.d.) used Gamon-Modiigliani framing to analyze magazine covers without analyzing the text. The paper written by Perdana and Zamzamy(Yuka Perdana & Zamzamy, 2025) used Entaman framing alone without using semiotics.

Meanwhile, the findings in this study reinforce previous research on media framing related to corruption in Indonesia, which shows that the media tends to be divided based on its proximity to power. On the other hand, this research also expands the discussion by revealing how visual semiotic elements—especially release photos—work together with text framing to strengthen meaning formation. While previous semiotic studies in legal cases generally focused on the analysis of prisoner clothing symbols as signs of guilt, this study shows that the visual differences between the "before" and "after" states of rehabilitation become a more effective narrative tool in changing public perception of a convict. This research not only relies on Entman's framing theory but also applies Barthes' semiotic theory, thereby providing a deeper explanation of the relationship between news narratives and the formation of meaning thru visual symbols.

Conclusion

This study examines how six Indonesian online media outlets—Kompas.com, CNN Indonesia, Tempo.co, Tirto.id, Suara.com, and Liputan6.com—covered the corruption case involving Ira Puspawati at PT ASDP by combining Entman's framing theory and Barthes' semiotic theory. The findings show that the media did not construct a single narrative but produced four competing frames: legal-institutional, defense/victimization, political intervention, and constitutional, each emphasizing

different problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and proposed solutions. The legal-institutional frame strengthened the legitimacy of law enforcement, the victimization frame supported the defendant, the political intervention frame criticized relations between government and judicial institutions, while the constitutional frame provided legal and symbolic justification for presidential action. At the semiotic level, images of Ira's release from KPK detention functioned as visual symbols of redemption and rehabilitation, illustrating how textual and visual elements jointly construct meanings of justice. These findings demonstrate that online media are not passive transmitters of legal facts but active arenas where law enforcement, defendants, monitoring institutions, and executive power compete to define public understandings of justice. Theoretically, this study contributes by integrating framing and semiotic analysis, which are often applied separately, to explain how headlines, sources, language, images, and symbols collectively shape corruption reporting. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of careful journalistic choices in presenting legal events and offer researchers an integrated framework for analyzing legal and political news. However, this study is limited to news texts and images published within a nine-day period and does not examine audience reception. Future research should therefore employ surveys, focus groups, or in-depth interviews to assess how different media frames influence public perceptions of justice.

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