

## AUTHORITY AND RELIGION IN THE 2024 MOJOKERTO REGENT ELECTION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF FOUCAULT'S POWER RELATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE THEORY

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### Abstract

*Power in the sense of authority according to Paul-Michel Foucault has a close relationship with religion. Foucault views power as positive, because it is able to produce the scope of objects and rituals of truth. Power and religion are often like one entity, but it is not uncommon for the two to clash. The issue of power and religion is reflected in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election (Pilbup). Candidate number one is the incumbent and the son of prominent cleric, candidate number two is also the son of prominent cleric and the son of former two-term Mojokerto Regent. This research purposed to analyze authority relations and religion in Mojokerto Regent Election from the perspective of Foucault's power relations and knowledge theory. This research uses a discourse analysis approach in the mass media about the Mojokerto Regent Election Mojokerto. The results of research conclude, in Foucault's view power works with a series of certain rule systems to produce a chain of power. The relationship between power and knowledge is inseparable, because power produces knowledge, and knowledge has power. In the context of Regent Election Mojokerto, the relationship between power and religion occurs with the production of each candidate's religious identity. Knowledge production about performance that has been carried out during one period, and as representatives of NU cadres by candidate number one. Knowledge production about a figure with qualified religion (ex-scholar of Al-Azhar University Egypt), the son of a famous kiai, and the son of a former two-term Mojokerto Regent, as well as various kinds of massive knowledge production through religious-titled activities by candidate number two. So that the power relations that occurs is a relation of governmentality that makes the subject in the relationship have self-control, not a relationship in the form of power domination that limits the subject's actions.*

**Keywords:** Authority and Religion, Foucault's Power Relations and Knowledge Theory, Mojokerto Regent Election.

### مستخلص البحث

إن السلطة بمعنى السلطة عند بول ميشيل فوكو لها علاقة وثيقة بالدين. يرى فوكو أن السلطة إيجابية، لأنها قادرة على إنتاج مجموعة من الأشياء والطقوس الحقيقية. السلطة والدين غالباً ما تكونان كوحدة واحدة. ولكن ليس من النادر أن يصطدم الاثنان أيضاً. تنعكس قضية السلطة والدين بهذه الطريقة في انتخاب الوصي موجوكرتا لعام ٢٠٢٤. حيث أن الزوج المرشح رقم واحد هو الرئيس الحالي وابن رجل دين مشهور في موجوكرتا، في حين أن الزوج المرشح رقم اثنين هو أيضاً ابن رجل دين مشهور في موجوكرتا وابن الوصي السابق على موجوكرتا لفترتين. هدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل العلاقة بين السلطة والدين في رواية انتخاب الوصي موجوكرتا ٢٠٢٤ من منظور نظرية فوكو في علاقات القوة والمعرفة. تم إجراء البحث باستخدام منهج



تحليل الخطاب في وسائل الإعلام المتعلقة بانتخابات رئيس منطقة موجوكرطا. وتوصلت نتائج البحث إلى أن السلطة، وفقا لفوكو، تعمل من خلال سلسلة من أنظمة القواعد المحددة لإنتاج سلسلة من السلطة. العلاقة بين القوة والمعرفة علاقة غير قابلة للفصل، لأن القوة قادرة على إنتاج المعرفة، في حين أن المعرفة تمتلك القوة. في سياق انتخاب الوصي موجوكرطا، حدثت العلاقة بين السلطة والدين مع إنتاج الهوية الدينية لكل زوج من المرشحين من خلال وسائل الإعلام. إنتاج المعرفة المتعلقة بالأداء التي تم تنفيذها خلال فترة ولاية واحدة، والنائب بصفته ممثلا لكوادر نهضة العلماء من قبل الزوج المرشح رقم واحد. إنتاج المعرفة المتعلقة بشخصية ذات موهبة دينية (خريج جامعة الأزهر، مصر)، وابن رجل دين مشهور، وابن الوصي السابق على موجوكرطا لدورتين، فضلا عن أنواع مختلفة من إنتاج المعرفة الضخمة من خلال الأنشطة ذات الطابع الديني من قبل المرشحين رقم اثنين. بحيث أن علاقات القوة التي تحدث هي علاقات في شكل الحكم والتي تجعل الرعايا في العلاقة يمتلكون ضبط النفس، وليس علاقات في شكل هيمنة القوة التي تحد من تصرفات الرعايا. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** السلطة والدين وعلاقات السلطة عند فوكو ونظرية المعرفة وانتخاب الوصي موجوكرطا.

## INTRODUCTION

Paul-Michel Foucault, a philosopher, historian, sociologist and post-structuralist thinker from Poitiers, France, who is known for his discourse theory, is one of the many thinkers who focuses his research on examining power.<sup>1</sup> According to Foucault, power is a historical sequence that shows an important site for seeing discontinuities, finding the episteme (knowledge regime) that is in power at a certain time period.<sup>2</sup>

In a research result summarized in a book entitled *Power/Knowledge* published by Pantheon Book 1980, Foucault explains that power can basically be unstable, positive, productive, and spread (omnipresent) like a network that has a strategic scope in every social relationship. For example, the relationship between parents and children, husband and wife, teacher and student, friendship, work relationships, and so on. Parents often forbid children to do something, teachers often order their students to do exam questions on time, or superiors who often tell subordinates to finish work immediately.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the relationship that gives birth to power in the form of commands and prohibitions is assumed to be negative by most individuals. However, such negative assumptions are only hasty interpretations. According to Foucault, power relations are not always negative, because parents

<sup>1</sup> Bagong Suyanto et al., *Memahami Teori Post-Strukturalisme* (Surabaya: Airlangga University Press, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge (Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977)*, ed. Coling Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), [https://monoskop.org/images/5/5d/Foucault\\_Michel\\_Power\\_Knowledge\\_Selected\\_Interviews\\_and\\_Other\\_Writings\\_1972-1977.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/5/5d/Foucault_Michel_Power_Knowledge_Selected_Interviews_and_Other_Writings_1972-1977.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Foucault.

who strictly forbid their children do so that the child can avoid unexpected bad events. Likewise, a teacher who asks his students to do questions is so that they pass the exam and get a grade. This is a positive power relationship.<sup>4</sup>

Likewise with religion, religious teachings often take the form of orders and prohibitions for every adherent to carry out what is ordered and abandon or stay away from what is prohibited.<sup>5</sup> Through religious elements, power relations are spread by dominant figures in a social environment.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the relationship between power and religion according to Foucault has the same comparison as the relationship between power and knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

In the study of social sciences, the relationship between power and religion is a unity that each has a noble intention through the rituals of truth. However, not infrequently both also experience clashes,<sup>8</sup> because the power holder in a relationship abuses his power. For example, in a study related to the phenomenon of sexual violence in Higher Education, the imbalance of power in the relationship between lecturers and students causes the emergence of negative power dominance from one party, so that sexual violence occurs in the relationship.<sup>9</sup> This kind of relationship is called a relationship of domination, which has implications for giving rise to a situation in which the realm of choice of actions of the dominated subject is very limited.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the propositions and results of previous research above, it can be understood that power essentially has a positive and productive nature like religious teachings with noble intentions for every follower, behind the commands and prohibitions it has. However, power becomes negative when the relationship between individuals or groups is not balanced. Therefore, Paul-Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge relations can be used as a relevant review in

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<sup>4</sup> Adillah Qurrota Aini, "Relasi Kuasa dan Komunikasi Bungkam di Kalangan Santri Pondok Pesantren Nurut Tauhid," *Risalatuna: Journal of Pesantren Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 15, 2022): 181–200, <https://doi.org/10.54471/rjps.v2i2.1895>.

<sup>5</sup> Tasri Tasri, Hendy Rasyid Kurniawan, and Muhammad Nikman Naser, "Relasi Kuasa Pemerintah dan Guru PAI dalam Mencegah Paham Radikalisme Di Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan," *Al-Imarah: Jurnal Pemerintahan dan Politik Islam* 8, no. 1 (May 6, 2024): 97, <https://doi.org/10.29300/imr.v8i1.3422>.

<sup>6</sup> Waode Sitti Jumiati, Sumiman Udu, and Irianto Ibrahim, "Relasi Kuasa Dalam Novel Tanah Bangsawan Karya Filiananur," *JPB: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa* 13, no. 1 (2024), <https://journal.uho.ac.id/index.php/jpb/article/view/918>.

<sup>7</sup> Suyanto et al., *Memahami Teori Post-Strukturalisme*.

<sup>8</sup> M. Taufiq Rahman, *Agama dan Politik Identitas dalam Kerangka Sosial* (Bandung: Prodi S2 Studi Agama-Agama UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Sumintak Sumintak and Abdullah Idi, "Analisis Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault: Studi Kasus Fenomena Kekerasan Seksual di Perguruan Tinggi," *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial Dan Sains* 11, no. 1 (June 26, 2022): 55–61, <https://doi.org/10.19109/intelektualita.v11i1.11117>.

<sup>10</sup> Scott Lash, "Power after Hegemony," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 3 (May 1, 2007): 55–78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075956>; Couze Venn, "Cultural Theory and Its Futures," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 3 (May 1, 2007): 49–54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407077627>; Nicholas Thoburn, "Patterns of Production," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 3 (May 1, 2007): 79–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407075959>.

observing or interpreting a phenomenon or event that shows a relationship between individuals or groups.<sup>11</sup>

The 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election (*pilbup*) is a phenomenon that identifies the existence of a power and religious relationship. Where the candidate pair (*paslon*) number one is Ikfina Fahmawati who is the incumbent, who is accompanied by her deputy Sya'dulloh Syarofi, a son of a prominent religious figure from Mojokerto (Caretaker of the Salafiyah Al Misbar Islamic Boarding School KH Chusaeni Ilyas). Likewise with the candidate pair number two, a religious figure Muhammad Al Barra who is also the son of a famous religious figure in Mojokerto (Caretaker of the Amanatul Ummah Islamic Boarding School Surabaya-Mojokerto KH Asep Saifuddin Chalim), and his deputy is the son of the former Regent of Mojokerto for two terms.<sup>12</sup>

Based on initial investigations, each candidate pair-built relationships to gain support from the entire community of Mojokerto Regency. In a news column published by [jatim.times.co.id](http://jatim.times.co.id) on November 9, 2024, it was stated that the candidate for deputy regent (*cawabup*) number one was willing to accompany the incumbent Regent in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election solely because of the blessing of his father KH Chusaen.<sup>13</sup> This allows for a power relationship because it was delivered in front of participants of the “*Zikir Kebangsaan*” event held in Brangkal Village, Sooko District, Mojokerto, East Java. Where Gus Dulloh (nickname for deputy regent candidate number 1) was also referred to as a representative of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) cadres.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, candidate for regent number one Muhammad Al Barra (Gus Barra) in the news content in the online mass media [merdeka.com](http://merdeka.com) showed his credibility as a figure who had studied at a *pesantren* (*nyantri*) at the Langitan Islamic Boarding School in Tuban Regency, and completed his undergraduate education at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, as well as the son of the founder of the Amanatul Ummah Islamic Boarding School in Surabaya and Mojokerto, KH Asep Saifuddin Chalim.<sup>15</sup> This made political observer from the 17 August University, Fernando Emas, say that

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<sup>11</sup> Seno Joko Suyono, *Tubuh Yang Rasis. Telaah Kritis Michel Foucault Atas Dasar-Dasar Pembentukan Diri Kelas Menengah Eropa* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001), p. 113.

<sup>12</sup> Enggran Eko Budiarto, “Gus Barra Gandeng Putra Mantan Bupati di Pilbup Mojokerto 2024,” [detik.com](http://detik.com), August 6, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-7476268/gus-barra-gandeng-putra-mantan-bupati-di-pilbup-mojokerto-2024>.

<sup>13</sup> Times Jatim, “Cerita Dibalik Restu Kiai Chusaini Ilyah Utus Gus Dulloh Dampingi Bupati Petahana di Pilbup Mojokerto 2024,” [jatim.times.co.id](http://jatim.times.co.id), November 9, 2024, <https://jatim.times.co.id/news/berita/i0kwmn3a0m/Cerita-Dibalik-Restu-Kiai-Chusaini-Ilyah-Utus-Gus-Dulloh-Dampingi-Bupati-Petahana-di-Pilbup-Mojokerto-2024>.

<sup>14</sup> Faiq Azmi, “Potensi Gus Barra Unggul di Pilbup Mojokerto 2024 Lewat Dukungan Nahdliyin,” [detik.com](http://detik.com), August 15, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-7492080/potensi-gus-barra-unggul-di-pilbup-mojokerto-2024-lewat-dukkungan-nahdliyin>.

<sup>15</sup> Rizka Nur Laily Muallifa, “Mengenal Gus Barra Calon Bupati Mojokerto, Alumni Universitas Al Azhar Mesir Sekaligus Anak Kiai Terkenal,” [merdeka.com](http://merdeka.com), September 10, 2024, <https://www.merdeka.com/jatim/mengenal-gus-barra-calon-bupati-mojokerto-alumni-universitas-al-azhar-mesir-sekaligus-anak-kiai-terkenal-194789-mvk.html?page=3>.

Gus Barra has a great opportunity to gain support from the Islamic Community Organization (*ormas*) Nahdlatul Ulama.<sup>16</sup>

The final result of candidate pair number two received greater support from Mojokerto voters. The power and religious relations between the candidate pair and their supporting groups are the issues raised in this study. As explained previously, to further explore and understand the phenomenon of relations that occur between the candidate pair and their supporting groups in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election, the theory of power and knowledge relations is a relevant review to use.

## METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative research type with Theo Van Leeuwen's discourse analysis approach. According to Theo Van Leeuwen, the discourse analysis approach is an approach that focuses on research on two studies, namely exclusion and inclusion. Exclusion is the process of removing actors presented in the text so that it can change the understanding of the reader or audience so that there is marginalization of the characters in it. While inclusion is how actors are presented in the text in which there is differentiation-differentiation, objectivation-abstraction, nomination-categorization, nomination-identification, determination-indetermination, assimilation-individualization and association-dissociation.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the discourse analysis approach in research on power and religion in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election in the review of Foucault's power and knowledge relations is used to see all kinds of information related to candidate pairs and candidate support groups in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election that are broadcast in the mass media.

Therefore, this study uses secondary data in the form of information related to Candidate Pair Number 1 and 2 during the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election contestation in formulating strategies, campaigning ideas, influences or so on to voters through online mass media. The data was collected using documentation study data collection techniques, namely collecting, organizing, and compiling them according to needs.

The collected data is then analyzed using content analysis data analysis techniques. Content analysis is used to analyze all text content in all documents that have been collected. Krippendorff classifies several forms of content analysis, including: pragmatic, semantic, and sign means. The classification of content analysis used in this study is pragmatic content analysis, namely classifying

<sup>16</sup> Azmi, "Potensi Gus Barra Unggul di Pilbup Mojokerto 2024 Lewat Dukungan Nahdliyin".

<sup>17</sup> Aris Badara, *Analisis Wacana: Teori Metode, Dan Penerapannya Pada Wacana Media* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2012).

signs according to their possible causes and effects.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, this study classifies how often content that shows signs of religion or power in the form of quotes from the Mojokerto Regent candidate pair is uttered so as to influence voters' decisions in determining their choice in the Mojokerto Regent Election.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Paul-Michel Foucault's Theory of Power Relations and Knowledge

After completing the book on the archaeology of knowledge and obtaining the title of professor of philosophy, Paul-Michel Foucault began his activities as a teacher of Nietzsche's philosophy of thought. He found that Nietzsche's concept of genealogy had similarities with his concept of archaeology. However, there was something that Nietzsche had not touched on, namely power. The previous themes he wrote in his works had implicitly touched on power. That is why Michel Foucault's focus of thought focuses on the concept of power. His two books, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, are concrete analyses of his concept of power relations.<sup>19</sup>

Different from the general concept of power, according to Foucault, power does not belong to a handful of people, such as kings, rulers or governments.<sup>20</sup> But power is exercised with a series of complex regulations that influence each other. Power occupies important and strategic positions that are related to each other.<sup>21</sup> Foucault rejects the Marxist view that power is subjective, which views that a person or group controls others or vice versa. However, Foucault views that power has a positive and productive nature. Power is able to produce reality, the scope of objects and rituals of truth. Power operates through normalization and regulation.<sup>22</sup>

Foucault describes the production of power by building a prison (panopticum). Normalization is produced by creating a systematic system of control. Control can be formed through hierarchy so that control is carried out on everyone and by everyone. This is intended to instill discipline in everyone by making everyone feel watched.<sup>23</sup> Power is exercised through a series of certain regulations that influence each other. According to Foucault, power does not come from

<sup>18</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (New York: SAGE Publications, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge (Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977)*.

<sup>20</sup> Mangihut Siregar, "Kritik Terhadap Teori Kekuasaan-Pengetahuan Foucault," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 1, no. 1 (July 12, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.30742/juispol.v1i1.1560>.

<sup>21</sup> K. Bertens, *Filsafat Barat Kontemporer Prancis* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Michel Faoucault, *Power/Knowledge: Wacana Kuasa/Pengetahuan* (Yogyakarta: Bintang Budaya, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> Bertens, *Filsafat Barat Kontemporer Prancis*.

outside but from within. Power carries out its role through a series of certain rules and systems, thus producing a kind of chain of power.<sup>24</sup>

Foucault then maps the power relations into two, namely the relations of domination and the relations of power. First, the relations of domination are a form of power practice that has a domination mentality. Where this relation has implications for giving birth to a situation where the realm of choice of actions of the dominated subject is very limited. Second, the relations of power or called governmentality, namely a form of control or self-government that forms and produces the realm of possible choices of actions of the subject. This concept of power does not exclude consensual forms (hegemony) or the choice of using violence. The use of violence and consensual models have been reformulated into elements in inter-subject control in social relations. The methods of coercion and consensus are elements or instruments rather than the foundation or source of power relations.<sup>25</sup> According to Lemke, governmentality is a concept of power used by Foucault to study the autonomous capacity of individuals to exercise self-control and how it relates to the politics and economic exploitation of the state. Governmentality is a concept of power used to investigate the relationship between the technology of the self (power from below) and the technology of domination (power from above).<sup>26</sup>

In sociology, the conception of the body is often absent from its analysis. If it exists, it is no more than the body in this conception is assumed to be a natural body that has no historical origin and culture of its formation.<sup>27</sup> In the context of Foucault's thinking, the conception of the body is a central part of the operation of power relations. Genealogical analysis brings up the body which is seen as an object of knowledge and a target of the operation of power. The conception of the body is placed in the political realm, embedded in power relations that make it obedient and productive and useful politically and economically. The power that operates on the individual's body is a depiction of the form of disciplinary power.

Disciplinary power is a technology of power that is implemented to discipline the body and make it an obedient and useful body. According to Foucault, this model of power can be effective in closed institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals or rehabilitation centers, and in educational institutions or schools. This model of power essentially tries to create a situation in which the individual body can internalize submission and make it seem like a normal state. This is what

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<sup>24</sup> "Teori Kekuasaan Michel Foucault: Tantangan Bagi Sosiologi Politik", *Masyarakat Jurnal Sosiologi* 18, no. 1 (January 31, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.7454/MJS.v18i1.1253>.

<sup>25</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge (Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977)*, 219–22.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Lemke, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique", *Paper Presented at the Rethinking Marxism Conference*, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Lihat Smart, 2002.

Foucault calls the normalization practice of the ongoing power over the individual body. The concept of disciplinary power is used to refer to a form of power and the form of technology or mechanism by which that power operates. The concept was born as a result of Foucault's genealogy of power analysis of the operation of power in European society from the seventeenth century to the modern century.

Furthermore, Foucault explains the relationship between power and knowledge. According to him, power and knowledge have a very close and inseparable relationship. Power produces knowledge, while knowledge has power. Power is described by Foucault not as the power to control people physically and dictatorship. Power in modern times experiences a normalization pattern, namely power is disguised, hidden and veiled so that it seems invisible. Power no longer works through oppression and physical force. Power is exercised by making regulations that are implemented and obeyed voluntarily in an organization, agency or country.<sup>28</sup>

For Foucault, power is always actualized through knowledge, and knowledge always has a power effect. The organization of knowledge according to Foucault always produces knowledge as the basis of power. It is almost impossible for power not to be supported by an economy of truth discourse. Knowledge is not a vague expression of power relations, but knowledge is in the power relations themselves. Power produces knowledge and not only because knowledge is useful for power. There is no knowledge without power and vice versa, there is no power without knowledge. In other words, Foucault disagrees with the opinion that says that science aims for science, not for the sake of power.<sup>29</sup>

Foucault's concept has consequences, to understand power requires research on the production of knowledge that underlies power. Because every power is structured, established, and realized through certain knowledge and discourse. Certain discourses produce certain truths and knowledge, which give rise to the effects of power. However, Foucault argues that truth here is not something that comes down from the sky, and not as an abstract concept. Truth here is produced, because every power produces and produces its own truth through which the audience is led to follow the established truth. Here power always pretends to produce a certain regime of truth that is spread by discourse that is produced and formed by power.<sup>30</sup>

As explained earlier, knowledge is actually different from discourse, but for Foucault knowledge is a discourse that operates in a network of power. This power is not visible but it works

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<sup>28</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge (Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977)*.

<sup>29</sup> George Ritzer, *Teori Sosiologi Modern* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Arif Syafiuddin, "Pengaruh Kekuasaan Atas Pengetahuan (Memahami Teori Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault)", *Refleksi Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 18, no. 2 (July 30, 2018): 141–55, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v18i2.1863>.

in the organizational system itself. According to him, knowledge is not neutral. However, knowledge is political. Through knowledge, activities and life are regulated by certain rules. In this case, knowledge functions as social control. Society can also form knowledge structures to regulate how its citizens should act and behave or limit certain things. This knowledge can be realized through stories, concepts of belief and so on. Disciplinary practices can be carried out by controlling knowledge/discourse. This practice in modern society does not have to be through physical means. Regulatory systems such as schedules, regulations, activity procedures, implementation, punishments and rewards can become controls without being realized by individuals in the system. The freer individuals feel, the more they are actually under the control of the discourse of power.<sup>31</sup>

In the context of statehood, discourse can be used to regulate, direct and condition a country according to certain goals. During the “*Orde Baru*”, power played an important role in the formation of discourse. Discourse on development and improving nutrition became discourse that was disseminated through various government agencies and the media. The structure of the discourse was built and formed through a solid discourse structure. On the other hand, comprehensive knowledge about the “*Orde Baru*” government system was marginalized.

### **Power Relations and Religion in the 2024 Mojokerto Regency Election**

Based on searches in all national, East Java, and Mojokerto online mass media, the distribution of content related to the religious identity of each pair of Mojokerto Regent and Deputy Regent Candidates in 2024 appears balanced. There is no dominance of knowledge production related to the religious identity of the candidate pairs. Starting from “*detikjatim*”, “*beritajatim*”, “*radar Mojokerto*”, and “*bangsaonline*” reporting on religious information of each candidate pair.

First, candidate pair number one produces knowledge related to performance that has been carried out during one term in office, and the deputy as a representative of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) cadres. Meanwhile, candidate pair number two produces knowledge related to figures with qualified religious knowledge (alumni of Al-Azhar University Egypt), sons of famous clerics, and sons of former Mojokerto Regent for two terms, as well as religious-themed activities with supporters.

According to Foucault, power is always actualized through knowledge, and knowledge always has a power effect. Where the implementation of knowledge according to Foucault always produces knowledge as a basis for power that is almost impossible for power not to be supported

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<sup>31</sup> Faoucault, *Power/Knowledge: Wacana Kuasa/Pengetahuan*.

by an economy of truth discourse. So that knowledge is not a vague expression of power relations, but knowledge is in the power relations themselves. Power produces knowledge and not only because knowledge is useful for power. There is no knowledge without power and vice versa there is no power without knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

Foucault's concept has consequences, to understand power requires research on the production of knowledge that underlies power. Because every power is structured, established, and realized through certain knowledge and discourse. Certain discourses produce certain truths and knowledge, which cause the effect of power. However, Foucault said, the truth here is not something that comes down from the sky, and not as an abstract concept. The truth here is produced, because every power produces and produces its own truth through which the audience is led to follow the established truth.<sup>33</sup>

This concept is actually also applied by the candidate pair for Regent and Deputy Regent in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election. From the research conducted by candidate pair number two, namely Muhammad Al-Barra and Muhammad Rizal Oktavian as quoted from Bangsaonline.com, the Candidate Pair for Regent and Deputy Regent of Mojokerto number 2, Muhammad Al Barra and Muhammad Rizal held a religious activity entitled "*Mubarak Bersholawat*". This activity was attended by ten thousand residents from various villages in the Jatirejo District, Mojokerto Regency, and its surroundings.<sup>34</sup>

Viewed from Foucault's concept, where power is structured, established, and manifested through knowledge, then the production of religious knowledge that is woven into the activities of the candidate pair number 2 (two) is what creates a power relationship between supporters and those supported. So, the results of this study prove that power does not belong to kings, rulers or governments. The regulation of religious activities that brought in ten thousand supporters influenced candidate pair number two to occupy a superior position in the results of the 2024 Mojokerto regional elections<sup>35</sup> as published in the news entitled "*Gegara Mitos Politik dan Lawan Petahana, Gus Barra-dr. Rizal Sempat Diramal Kalah*".<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Syafiuddin, "Pengaruh Kekuasaan Atas Pengetahuan (Memahami Teori Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault)".

<sup>33</sup> Suyono, *Tubuh Yang Rasis. Telaah Kritis Michel Foucault Atas Dasar-Dasar Pembentukan Diri Kelas Menengah Eropa*.

<sup>34</sup> Revol Afkar, "Mubarak Bersholawat Dihadiri Ribuan Warga, Gus Barra Targetkan Menang Mutlak", bangsaonline.com, November 21, 2024, <https://www.bangsaonline.com/berita/139946/mubarak-bersholawat-dihadiri-ribuan-warga-gus-barra-targetkan-menang-mutlak>.

<sup>35</sup> Bertens, *Filsafat Barat Kontemporer Prancis*.

<sup>36</sup> M Mas'ud Adnan, "Gegara Mitos Politik dan Lawan Petahana, Gus Barra-dr. Rizal Sempat Diramal Kalah", Bangsaonline.com, December 7, 2024, <https://bangsaonline.com/berita/140581/gegara-mitos-politik-dan-lawan-petahana-gus-barra-dr-rizal-sempat-diramal-kalah>.

Such power relations are indirectly governmentality as mentioned by Foucault. Where the relations carried out are in the form of control or self-government which forms and produces the realm of possible choices of subject actions.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the relationship carried out by candidate pair number 1 (one) creates a good assumption, thus forming support from the Nahdlatul Ulama cadres who are the largest base of voters in Mojokerto. This is the relationship between power and religion that occurred in the Mojokerto Regent Election. However, if the meaning of power follows limited ownership, namely only owned by the ruler or government. So, candidate pair number one as the incumbent and his deputy is the son of a prominent cleric from Mojokerto, is a stronger power compared to the religious relationship that was born by holding religious-themed activities such as “*Mubarak Shalawatan*”.

Therefore, this study also strengthens Foucault’s view that rejects the Marxist view that considers power to be subjective, which views that a person or group controls others or vice versa. However, Foucault views that power is positive and productive. Power produces reality, the scope of objects and rituals of truth. Power runs through normalization and regulation.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the relationship between the 2024 Mojokerto Regent candidate pair and supporters who are tied through the activity entitled “*Mubarak Shalawatan*” is a power and religious relationship that won the pair number two. Meanwhile, the relationship between the 2024 candidate pair and supporters who are only tied through the affirmation of identity as the incumbent and the son of a famous religious figure or cleric is an unstable power relationship, which may cause a gap in power dominance in the relationship.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that according to Foucault, power works with a series of certain rule systems to produce a chain of power. The relationship between power and knowledge is inseparable because power can produce knowledge, while knowledge has power. In the context of the Mojokerto Regent Election, the relationship between power and religion occurs with the production of the religious identity of each candidate pair which is balanced through the mass media. The production of knowledge related to the performance that has been carried out during one term of office, and the deputy as a representation of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) cadre by candidate pair number one. The production of knowledge related to figures with qualified religiousness (alumni of Al-Azhar University, Egypt), the son of a

<sup>37</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge (Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977)*, p. 219–22.

<sup>38</sup> Faoucault, *Power/Knowledge: Wacana Kuasa/Pengetahuan*.

famous kiai, and the son of the former Regent of Mojokerto for two terms, as well as activities with a religious theme by candidate pair number two.

The results of this study also show that the power relations that occurred in the 2024 Mojokerto Regent Election were relations in the form of governmentality that made the subjects in the relationship have self-government (self-control), not relations in the form of power domination that limited the actions of the subjects. Thus, the study supports Foucault's theory of power relations and knowledge which states that power does not belong to kings, rulers or governments. That is why the regulation of religious activities that attracted ten thousand supporters influenced candidate pair number two to occupy a superior position in the results of the 2024 Mojokerto Regional Head Election. This is a positive power and religious relationship that occurred in the Mojokerto Regent Election.

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