# Femicide in Indonesia: Narrative Analysis of News Reports on Mutilation Cases in Surabaya on the Kompas.id Portal

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**Abstract**.This study analyzes the coverage of a mutilation case in Surabaya that befell a woman as part of the phenomenon of femicide in Indonesia. Using a narrative analysis approach, this study examines how Kompas.id constructs narratives, representations of victims and perpetrators, and the framing patterns used. The results show that the media emphasizes sensational aspects and details of violence rather than structural explanations of the roots of gender-based violence. Victims are often reduced to mere objects of news coverage, while perpetrators are described through psychological narratives that obscure the patriarchal dimension of femicide. These findings indicate the persistence of patriarchal discourse in mainstream media in Indonesia. This research contributes to feminist media studies by emphasizing the framing of femicide as a structural issue closely related to gender inequality, rather than merely individual criminal cases.

**Keywords**. Femicide, Gender Violence, Media, Kompas.id, Narrative Analysis

## INTRODUCTION

Femicide can be defined as the murder of women based on hatred, punishment, a desire to conquer, control, enjoy, and the result of the view that women are property owned by the perpetrator. This act has become a sensitive and concerning global issue. According to a report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), more than 80,000 women worldwide are killed each year (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019). The report also notes that half of the perpetrators of these murders are intimate partners or family members of the victims. The cases continue to rise with no indication of a decline, showing that femicide is the most extreme form of gender-based-violence. The accumulation of systematic violence rooted in unequal power relations between women and men further clarifies that femicide is not just a criminal act without motive and a recurring pattern.

In Indonesia itself, the 2024 Annual Report (CATAHU) of National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) reported a 14,17% increase in cases of gender based violence against women (KBGtp) from the previous year (Komnas Perempuan, 2025). Furthermore, the data shows that the majority of these cases occurred in personal spheres such as intimate partnerships and families. This indicates that the closest and most intimate relationships are actually the most vulnerable space for Indonesian women (Asmara et al., 2023). However, even though the data shows a pattern of similar cases with almost the data showing a pattern of similar cases with almost identical perpetrators, victims, and motives, femicide is still a foreign and taboo subject in Indonesia. Femicide is still rarely discussed explicitly, so these cases once again do not receive special attention but are simply treated as part of other criminal acts (Aini, 2025). In September 2025, a murder and mutilation case in Surabaya caught the attention of the Indonesian public. It wasn't because such cases never happened, but because

this case was particularly sadistic, with the victim's body being mutilated into hundreds of pieces. A woman identified as TAS (25) was killed and mutilated by her own boyfriend, AM (24), over an economic dispute that escalated into a fight. (Sinombor, 2025) The case was reported by various Indonesian media outlets and sparked public discussion. Many media outlets explained the chronology and details of the case in detail, such as Kumparan and Detik. However, Kompas, through their online news portal, Kompas.id, openly referred to the case as femicide. Kompas.id raised the issue as a headline and discussed it in depth, linking the case to gender-based-violence (GBV).

In framing theory, the media not only plays a role in presenting factual information but also constructs reality through narratives, perspectives, and specific representations that are chosen (Entman, 1993). Thus, it can be understood that media coverage can reinforce stereotypes among the public as an audience. In this case, Kompas.id has provided its perspective through gender-related femicide and has become a space for public criticism. A narrative analysis approach was chosen to examine how the news was constructed by highlighting the plot, characters, and their functions.

In addition, research on media framing of femicide is still limited in Indonesia. Several media studies focus on sexual violence or the representation of women in general. This study was conducted to answer how Kompas.id constructs narratives in its reporting of the mutilation case in Surabaya using a feminist perspective. Through this analysis, the researcher hopes to enrich the literature on media, gender, and violence against women in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a narrative analysis approach. Narrative analysis was chosen because it is able to reveal how the media not only presents facts, but also constructs stories through its choice of plot, characters, and language. In other words, news is viewed as a narrative text in which journalists act as narrators who convey reality in a certain form (Eriyanto, 2013).

The primary data used was a Kompas.id news article titled "Mutilation Case in Surabaya: An Increasingly Alarming Femicide" published on September 13, 2025 (Sinombor, 2025). The data was obtained through manual downloads and then analyzed by separating the story and the plot. The story refers to the chronology of events as they occurred, while the plot refers to events that are explicitly presented by the media (Eriyanto, 2013). This distinction is important in order to see which parts of reality the media chose to present and which parts were ignored.

The next step is to analyze the narrative structure using Tzvetan Todorov's model, which has been modified by Nick Lacey and Gillespie. This structure begins with equilibrium (initial balance), followed by disruption, and ending with a new equilibrium (Eriyanto, 2013). Lacey and Gillespie's version adds details to each stage so that it is more applicable to news texts. In addition to structure, the aspect of time is also taken into account, including duration, frequency, and sequence. These three aspects can indicate the parts that are considered important by the narrator, for example, events that are given a longer duration or placed at the beginning of the news.

The analysis then continued with the characters using Vladimir Propp's concept. According to Propp, characters are understood through the functions they play based on their actions (Eriyanto, 2013). These functions help explain how victims, perpetrators, or authorities are portrayed in news texts and what roles are assigned to each.

The next step is to identify the narrator's position, whether it is dramatic or non-dramatic, as well as subjective or objective. This position can be seen through the style of language and diction chosen by journalists. The analysis will also pay attention to binary oppositions or conflicting meanings that appear in the text, so as to clarify how the media constructs reality and frames the issue of femicide. With these

stages, narrative analysis does not only stop at describing events, but also provides an understanding of the social meaning constructed by the media through the way it composes stories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on primary data obtained through the Kompas.id portal entitled "Mutilation Case in Surabaya: An Increasingly Alarming Femicide" published on September 13, 2025, the following analysis was conducted:

**Story and Plot**

A story (fabula) is a sequence of events in real chronology, while a plot (discourse/sjuzet) is a part of the story that is selected to be presented by the media (Eriyanto, 2013). In other words, a story is always longer, while a plot is a selected piece that produces a certain meaning.

In this case, the story covers the intimate relationship between Tiara and Alvi, the conflict that occurred, the murder, the mutilation, the discovery of the body, the legal process, and the broader social impact (Table 1). However, Kompas.id did not present all these details. The selected plot emphasized the psychological, legal, and social dimensions, so that this personal tragedy was seen as a reflection of structural problems.

**Table 1** Story and Plot in the News about the Mutilation Case in Surabaya on the Kompas.id Portal

| Story | Plot |
|---|---|
| Saturday, August 30, 2025 AM (24) picked up his younger sibling at Juanda Airport, Sidoarjo. | The brutal murder of TAS (25) by her boyfriend |
| AM (24) took his younger sibling to an Islamic boarding school in Jombang. | The case was framed not as a common crime but as one related to a taboo issue. |
| Early Saturday morning, August 30, 2025 AM (24) arrived at his boarding house on Jl. Raya Lidah Wetan, Surabaya. | The media presented the opinion of a psychologist from the Pulih Indonesia Foundation to strengthen its argument. |
| TAS (25) was angry and locked the boarding house room from the inside, preventing AM (24) from entering | Intimate relationship conflicts were presented as the trigger for violence. |
| AM (24) waited for 1 hour until TAS (25) finally opened the door | Emphasis was placed on emotional dynamics and personal relationships. |
| TAS (25), who was still angry, immediately went to his room on the 2nd floor | Not presented in detail in the news. |
| AM (24) went to the kitchen and took a kitchen knife | Technical details of the incident were presented selectively. |
| At 2:00 AM on Sunday, August 31, 2025, AM (24) approached TAS (24) and stabbed the victim in the right neck. | The murder is shown as the culmination of escalating conflict |
| AM (24) then took TAS (25) to the first-floor bathroom to dismember the body using a meat cleaver, pruning shears, and a hammer. | Extreme violence is mentioned without excessive exploitation that is outside the focus |
| AM (24) dismembered TAS's (25) flesh and internal organs into 65 pieces, 247 bone fragments, and 22 teeth. | Not presented in detail in the news. |

**Table 1** (Continued)

| Story | Plot |
|---|---|
| AM (24) stored the bone fragments in two black plastic bags behind the drawer of his dormitory wardrobe. | Not presented in detail in the news. |
| AM (24) transported the 65 pieces in a red bag using a white Yamaha Nmax motorcycle with license plate number W 6414 AR. | Not presented in detail in the news. |
| At 5:30 AM on Sunday, August 31, 2025, AM (24) arrived at Pacet-Cangar, South Pacet Hamlet and disposed of body parts in the bushes. | The discovery of the body sparked public attention |
| On Saturday, September 6, 2025, around 10:30 AM local time, Suliswanto (30) found the left foot of TAS (25) in Pacet Selatan Village. | The case is linked to a pattern of femicide occurring in Indonesia |
| Sunday, September 7, 2025, at 1:00 a.m. AM (24) was arrested at his boarding house | The legal process is presented as the state's response |
| AM (24) was detained at the Mojokerto Police Detention Center and faces the death penalty under Article 340 of the Criminal Code concerning Premeditated Murder | Emphasis on punishment and justice for victims |

**Narrative Structure**

According to Tzvetan Todorov, narratives always move from balance to disruption, then end with an attempt to find a new balance (Eriyanto, 2013). The tragedy of Tiara serves as a reminder that false equilibrium can collapse instantly in intimate relationships, when love turns into violence. However, media narratives attempt to provide space to imagine a new equilibrium that is more equitable for women. These stages were later developed by Lacey and Gillespie into five stages (Eriyanto, 2013). Table 2 shows narrative structure in reports of this case.

**Table 2** Narrative Structure in News Reports on the Mutilation Case in Surabaya on the Kompas.id Portal

| Structure | News Content |
|---|---|
| Initial condition, equilibrium, order | TAS (25) and AM (24) as a couple living together |
| Disruption to equilibrium | The murder and mutilation of TAS (25) by AM (24) was triggered by emotional and economic factors |
| Awareness of disruption, increasing disruption | The occurrence of cases with the same recurring pattern. The community and experts recognize this as a pattern of femicide |
| Efforts to correct disruption | Breaking the cycle of violence through parenting, social sensitivity and intervention, relationships, and support for victims |
| Recovery towards equilibrium, order | Awareness of femicide, emotional education, and legal protection |

**Narrative Function and Character**

Vladimir Propp discovered narrative patterns that often appear in folk tales. Although real criminal cases differ from fairy tales, these patterns can still be mapped out. In Propp's framework, this tragedy does not stop at the "villainy" of a perpetrator, but moves towards a collective "solution" (Eriyanto, 2013). This means that Tiara's suffering is given a broader meaning: a push for social change. Propp mentions that there are at least 31 functions that represent each character's actions. However, all 31 of these functions do not necessarily have to be present in the news text as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Narrative Character in News Reports

| Character | Figure in the News | Role | Function in the Narrative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Antagonis (Villain) | AM (24) victim's boyfriend | Toxic masculinity and perpetrators of femicide | Creating the main conflict through murder and mutilation as a form of representation of gender-based violence |
| Princess | TAS (25), victim / girlfriend of the perpetrator | Women who are vulnerable, victims of KBGtP | Suffering that evokes empathy and representation of femicide victims in Indonesia |
| Helper | Police, law enforcement, East Java Regional Police Chief | Enforcers of justice | Apprehending perpetrators and exposing cases |
| Dispatcher | Media (Kompas.id) | Critical narrators | Conveying the message that the case is part of femicide |
| Hero | Gender activists, National Commission on Violence Against Women | Hope for justice | Enforcing the law and social order |
| False Hero | Patriarchal narrative that blames the victim | Victim Blaming | Shifting the meaning of femicide and weakening the position of victims |

Using Propp's framework, this news story not only presents a crime story, but also a social narrative with characters that serve as symbols: the perpetrator as the antagonist, the victim as a representation of female vulnerability, the police as the savior, the media as the messenger of meaning, and the stigma of society as the false hero. The following (Table 4) is an analysis of the functions of these characters in the text:

**Table 4** The Narrative Function in News Reports

| Propp Function | Content/Example in the News | Descriptions |
|---|---|---|
| Initial situation | The relationship between the victim (female) and the perpetrator (boyfriend) appeared normal before the tragedy | Initial equilibrium before the conflict |
| Prohibition (Interdiction) | Social norm: romantic relationships should not end in violence; there is an implicit prohibition on violence | Presented through a social perspective |
| Violation | The perpetrator commits violence, killing the victim | Starting point of the disturbance |
| Reconnaissance | The perpetrator monitors the victim; personal conflict before the murder | Occurs during the relationship phase |

**Table 4** (Continued)

| Propp Function | Content/Example in the News | Descriptions |
|---|---|---|
| Trickery | The perpetrator "lures" the victim into the boarding house before killing them | Element of manipulation |
| Villainy/Lack | Murder and mutilation as the main crimes | Brings suffering |
| Mediation of misfortune | The discovery of the victim's body parts → the case comes to public attention | The incident is announced to the public |
| Counteraction | The police investigate, search for the perpetrator | The beginning of recovery efforts |
| Departure | The police team moves to the crime scene and Mojokerto | Investigation phase |
| First function of donor | Information and evidence begin to be collected (evidence, witness statements) | Testing the authorities as "donors" of information |
| Receipt of magical agent | Police use K-9 assistance, forensic technology | Tools assist in strengthening the investigation |
| Struggle | Police arrest the perpetrator after a struggle → shot in the calf | Climax of the conflict |
| Victory | The perpetrator was successfully arrested and named as a suspect | Victory for the authorities |
| Branding | The media labeled this case "femicide" | An important symbolic marker |
| Return | The authorities brought the case to trial | Narrative restoration |
| Recognition | The public realized that this case was part of a trend of femicide | Social awareness |
| Exposure | The police dismiss the pregnancy issue → reveal the truth | Correcting the false narrative |
| Punishment | The perpetrator is charged under Articles 338/340 of the Criminal Code | The end for the antagonist |
| Wedding | Not in the text (generally the function of a happy ending) | Replaced with "social awareness" about femicide |

Of the 31 functions, not all are present in modern crime news. For example, the "marriage" function is replaced by social resolution (public awareness of the issue of femicide). What is dominant in the text is: Violation → Villainy → Counteraction → Struggle → Victory → Punishment, then expanded with the functions of Branding & Recognition by the media that frames femicide. By incorporating Propp, the news appears not merely as a crime report, but follows a narrative pattern: there is balance → violation → conflict → restoration → social meaning. This Kompas.id news article, when read through Propp's framework, shows how criminal events are constructed according to narrative functions: the perpetrator as the villain, the victim as the victim, the police as the helper/hero, and the media as the dispatcher sending the main message: femicide is an increasingly alarming social problem.

**Narrator's Position**

In this case, journalists as narrators have an influential position in understanding the meaning that the news aims to convey. Narrators can be divided into several types, such as dramatic narrators and non-dramatic narrators, as well as subjective narrators and objective narrators..

1. Dramatic narrator: The news emphasizes tragic details (mutilation, disposal of body parts) to create dramatic intensity. This appeals to the reader's emotions and emphasizes the cruelty of the event;

2. Non-dramatic narrator: In some parts, the news presents factual data (chronology of the discovery, police statements) in a neutral manner without excessive emotional exploration;

3. Subjective narrator: The headline and choice of words "increasingly alarming femicide" indicate a clear editorial stance. Kompas.id is not neutral, but directs readers to interpret this case as part of a phenomenon of gender-based violence; and

4. Objective narrator: Official quotes from the police and statistical data are also included to provide legitimacy.

In other words, the narrator in this text is mixed: objective in terms of data, but also subjective and dramatic in terms of the femicide framework. This is in line with the function of the media not only as a reporter of facts, but also as a shaper of opinion.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of a narrative analysis of news reports on the mutilation case in Surabaya on the Kompas.id portal, it can be concluded that the media did not simply report on a typical crime, but framed this case as a phenomenon. Femicide is the extreme culmination of systemic gender-based violence in Indonesia (Aini, 2025). Kompas.id uses a subjective narrative with a feminist perspective, raising issues of patriarchal domination, gender conflict, and the failure of legal protection as the background to the tragedy. Analysis of the narrative structure using Todorov's model and Vladimir Propp's character function confirms that this news contains a dramatic narrative pattern with the perpetrator as the antagonist, the victim as a representation of vulnerable women, and the media and law enforcement as actors voicing social criticism and hopes for justice. The news narrator consistently directs readers to view femicide as a serious and complex social problem.

This study emphasizes the importance of the media's role in shaping public awareness of gender-based violence and highlights the need for more effective social and legal interventions. However, there are still challenges in the form of victim-blaming narratives that divert attention from the root causes of femicide. The media continues to play a role as an agent of social change by increasing education and gender sensitivity in its reporting. This study certainly has many limitations, therefore future research is expected to further explore public reception of femicide narratives in the media and improve education and literature reviews.

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