
Technomoralism And Epistemic Hegemony: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Academic Knowledge in Indonesia and the United States

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ABSTRACT

This article examines technomoralism as a hegemonic discursive regime through which scientific rationality and moral authority are integrated in contemporary academic knowledge production. While previous studies have addressed morality in science, technocratic governance, and epistemic inequality separately, limited research has examined how these dimensions intersect within a unified analytical framework, particularly in comparative contexts across the Global North and Global South. Addressing this gap, the study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze four academic articles from Indonesia and the United States. The analysis integrates Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework with Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses to examine how moral-scientific discourse operates across textual features, discursive practices, and broader social structures. The findings reveal two dominant configurations of technomoralism. In Indonesia, technomoralism operates through technocratic nationalism, where technical expertise and statist morality legitimize state-centered governance and developmental agendas. In the United States, it takes the form of ethical liberalism, in which scientific rationality reinforces individual moral responsibility and institutional legitimacy. Despite contextual differences, both configurations naturalize the fusion of morality and science as common sense, thereby sustaining global epistemic hierarchies. This study contributes theoretically by conceptualizing technomoralism as an integrated discursive mechanism of epistemic hegemony, and empirically by demonstrating how academic

Article information
(Filled by Editorial
Management)
Received: 30 Jan, 2026
Revised: 27 Mar, 2026
Accepted: 30 Mar, 2026

discourse reproduces global knowledge
inequalities.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis; epistemic
hegemony; moral politics; technocracy;
technomoralism*

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v13i1.116244>

Available at <https://journal.ugm.ac.id/rubikon/article/view/116244>

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary academic and political landscapes, the relationship between morality and scientific rationality cannot be understood as a division between two separate domains. Science does not operate solely as a system of knowledge grounded in data, methods, and verification; it also functions as a source of moral legitimacy that structures claims about public responsibility, integrity, security, and social justice. This reciprocal relationship has long been conceptualized as co-production, a process through which knowledge orders and social orders are formed simultaneously (Jasanoff, 2004). In this article, that relationship is theorized as technomoralism: the integration of technocratic logics such as efficiency, empirical evidence, systems, and data with moral norms including accountability, responsibility, and integrity,

which together constitute a key basis of legitimacy in global knowledge production and policymaking (Head, 2016; Parkhurst, 2017).

The configuration of technomoralism has intensified in the post-pandemic era, when science and expertise have been mobilized not only as sources of knowledge but also as foundations of moral legitimacy in public decision-making (Bozeman, 2022; Christensen & Lægheid, 2022). This condition is marked by growing reliance on science, digital technologies, and data, alongside increasing demands for transparency and public accountability. These dynamics reveal that the classical dichotomy between facts and values, long treated as a cornerstone of modern science, has never been entirely stable. Instead, facts and values remain deeply intertwined in policy formulation, institutional protocols, and scholarly standards (Jasanoff,

2004). Technomoralism, therefore, should not be understood merely as an analytical category, but as a hegemonic logic that shapes how academic and political worlds define truth, expertise, and scientific authority.

The United States represents a context in which technomoralism operates through persistent tensions between scientific rationality and liberal moral frameworks. Oreskes & Conway, (2010) demonstrate that scientific authority is not only deployed in the service of public policy, but is also mobilized within ideological struggles, for instance by framing resistance to regulation as a defense of individual freedom or so-called "American values". Within this framework, science is simultaneously celebrated as a source of objectivity and suspected as a political instrument, rendering scientific claims perpetually subject to moral contestation.

The evidence-based policymaking paradigm further intensifies these dynamics. Santarelli (2025) argues that in the United States and other Western countries, public policy is increasingly driven by technical claims about "what works," a shift that implicitly relocates political deliberation into the domain of

experts and data analysts. When technical effectiveness is elevated as the primary standard, the public and democratic dimensions of policymaking risk being substantially reduced.

These developments intersect with political polarization around science. Gauchat (2012) shows that since the 1970s, conservative groups in the United States have exhibited a significant decline in trust in scientists, while liberal groups have followed the opposite trajectory. This pattern is reinforced by Milkoreit and Smith (2025), who document increasingly sharp political divergence since 2018, particularly in relation to public health and climate change. Under such conditions, science functions not only as an epistemic authority, but also as a marker of moral and ideological identity.

Resistance to science is often mediated through moral considerations. Clark et al. (2025) demonstrate that scientific findings perceived as "morally offensive" can trigger epistemic rejection strategies, such as motivated confusion and motivated postmodernism, enabling the dismissal of science without substantive empirical evaluation. Gligorić et al. (2025) further show that

political ideology shapes levels of trust in scientists in relatively stable ways across issues. In this sense, technomoralism in the United States operates as an arena of moral-political contestation rather than as a settled normative consensus.

Indonesia exhibits a different variant of technomoralism, one that is closely tied to state dynamics, bureaucracy, and national development. This variant can be conceptualized as technocratic nationalism: a fusion of technocratic rationalities such as efficiency, modernization, and data-driven governance with statist moralities that emphasize collective interests, stability, and national sovereignty. Within this framework, science and technical expertise function as the primary language of public policy legitimation.

At the local level, Haryanto et al. (2025) show that the rhetoric of participation and public morality in village democracy often reinforces technocratic-bureaucratic dominance. Moral claims about "popular sovereignty" are used to legitimize administrative practices that lack substantive accountability. At the national level, Syarif (2024) demonstrates that resource

nationalism in Indonesia is managed through technocratic strategies that balance sovereignty claims with market efficiency, positioning technocrats as key mediators.

In the context of macro-level democracy, Aspinall and Warburton (2018) identify an illiberal turn in which nationalist populism and moral conservatism are legitimized through the technocratization of policy. This underscores that technocratic nationalism is not a form of depoliticization, but rather a moral-political strategy that obscures conflict and interests behind technical language, data, and expertise.

Globally, technomoralism operates within structures of epistemic hegemony that remain largely Western-dominated. Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2009) show that global higher education systems position institutions in North America and Europe as central sites of knowledge production, while the Global South occupies a peripheral role. In academic publishing, Canagarajah (2002) and Connell (2007) reveal how Anglo-American rhetorical, methodological, and theoretical standards function as gatekeeping mechanisms that define what counts as legitimate knowledge.

This dominance operates through the naturalization of moral-scientific values such as objectivity, integrity, and transparency as universal standards. Oreskes and Conway (2010) and Parkhurst (2017) show that claims of scientific objectivity often conceal moral and political biases embedded in the selection of evidence. Within this framework, Mig Mignolo (2009) describes the condition of epistemic obedience, namely the uncritical acceptance of Western epistemic frameworks, except where challenged through acts of epistemic disobedience.

To examine these dynamics, this study employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which conceptualizes language as a social practice linking text, discursive practice, and social structure (Fairclough, 2010). The analysis is enriched by Gramsci's concept of hegemony, particularly his emphasis on consent and the role of intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971), as well as Althusser's notion of academic institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1971). Integrating these perspectives allows technomoralism to be read as a discursive regime operating through language, institutions, and power structures.

On this basis, the article advances its central question: how do morality and scientific rationality intertwine within academic discourse in Indonesia and the United States, and how does this interaction shape global epistemic hegemony? Through comparative analysis, the article argues that technomoralism functions as a contemporary hegemonic mechanism that naturalizes the integration of science and morality across policy language, academic practices, and institutional legitimation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Moralization of Science and Global Ethics

Recent scholarship on the relationship between science and society emphasizes that scientific knowledge no longer operates as a value-free enterprise. Blancke (2022) explicitly argues that science now functions as a moral system in which values such as integrity, responsibility, collaboration, and honesty are not merely practiced normatively, but are embedded within epistemic authority itself. Morality, therefore, is not an external supplement to science, but a foundational source of scientific legitimacy. This perspective is reinforced by Clark et al.

(2025), who show that the public evaluates scientific findings not only based on empirical validity, but also according to moral acceptability. When findings are perceived as "morally offensive," individuals tend to respond through forms of cognitive chicanery, including motivated confusion and motivated postmodernism, which operate as denial strategies aimed at preserving moral identity.

This pattern of moral resistance is particularly visible in the United States, where public polarization around science has intensified since the late 2010s. Milkoreit and Smith (2025) demonstrate that the trust gap between conservative and liberal groups continues to widen, with science increasingly interpreted through ideological lenses. For liberal groups, science is framed as an expression of progressive ethics, whereas for conservatives, it is often perceived as a symbol of elitist moral values that threaten group identity. Research by Gligorić et al. (2025) further corroborates this trend, showing that political ideology exhibits a strong and stable correlation with levels of trust in scientists across issues.

Science thus becomes politicized as a moral entity, not merely an epistemic one.

Beyond the US, morality also plays a central role in global issues such as environmental governance. Through a comparative study of religious communities in Indonesia and secular communities in the Netherlands, Wijzen (2025) identifies similar patterns of eco-moral reasoning, namely environmental reasoning grounded in moral beliefs about responsibility, the sanctity of creation, or collective survival. These findings underscore that global morality is not homogeneous. Instead, it is shaped through transcultural ethical frameworks that operate across contexts while remaining locally articulated.

From a discourse-theoretical perspective, the moralization of science constitutes a foundational condition for the emergence of technomoralism, understood as the fusion of scientific rationality with global moral norms within modern governance. Fairclough & Scholz (2020) emphasize that ostensibly neutral scientific language often carries implicit normative values, while Gramsci (1971) demonstrates that public morality can function as a vehicle for hegemony. The integration of morality into

science, therefore, cannot be separated from the ideological processes that shape global knowledge structures.

Technocratic Rationality and the Depoliticization of Policy

Technocratic rationality represents another expression of the integration of morality and scientific knowledge in modern governance. Esmark et al. (2025) show how power elites in Denmark construct technocratic identities that combine professionalism with ethical elitism, positioning "rational," data-driven, and objective decision-making as a superior public good. Within this framework, technocracy is not merely a method of governance, but a moral ideology that claims the most "scientific" policy is also the most morally legitimate, and thus superior to political compromise.

In Indonesia, Syarif (2024) demonstrate how a distinctive form of technocratic rationality operates through resource nationalism, a strategy that balances claims of national sovereignty with the demands of global economic efficiency. In this context, technocrats produce what can be described as moral pragmatism, a synthesis of economic patriotism and compliance with international market logics.

Technocratic rationality thus functions as a bridge between national moral narratives and global economic imperatives.

At the policy-practice level, Romadiyanti (2022) highlights that Indonesia's government procurement system adopts the rhetoric of transparency, accountability, and integrity. Although these terms appear technical on the surface, they operate as forms of administrative moral formation. This discourse contributes to the depoliticization of policy, as public deliberation is displaced by technical standards framed as procedural morality.

Technocratic dominance, however, does not proceed without resistance. Hermawati & Paskarina (2020) show that, in the governance of street vendors in Bandung, civil society actors form networks of resistance through associations and grassroots institutions that challenge the state's moral claims. In line with Gramsci's (1971) notion of a "war of position," these struggles unfold within civil society as subaltern groups contest state definitions of what counts as "rational" or "efficient."

Technocracy, therefore, operates through moralized

governance, in which claims of scientific neutrality serve as the basis for moral legitimacy. As Fairclough & Scholz (2020) argue, technocratic language such as "efficiency," "performance," and "accountability" carries ideological weight, restructuring relationships between the state, knowledge, and citizens.

Epistemic Hegemony and the Role of Academic Institutions

Epistemic hegemony constitutes the institutional dimension of technomoralism, in which academic institutions and international publishing systems standardize global forms of knowledge. Noda (2020) describes this condition as a Western epistemic straitjacket, whereby Western writing styles, methodologies, and scholarly norms function as de facto universal standards for international publication. Non-Western epistemologies are thus positioned as alternative or peripheral, rather than as central sources of epistemic legitimacy.

The open science movement is not exempt from the reproduction of hierarchy. Uygun Tunç, D., Tunç, M. N., & Eper (2023) show that the rhetoric of knowledge democratization in open science often reinforces neoliberal

logics, including competition, auditability, and extreme transparency, which disproportionately benefit established institutions. As a result, global knowledge structures continue to operate through subtle mechanisms of domination, even when framed in the moral language of openness and collaboration.

In Indonesia, Syarif (2024) reveals that technocratic nationalism remains deeply entangled with Western epistemic hegemony. The technocratic language and policy logics employed by the state primarily derive from OECD models and international institutions. Romadiyanti (2022) identifies similar dynamics in public procurement governance, where standards of efficiency, accountability, and integrity are imported from global norms that do not always align with local realities.

Fairclough & Scholz (2020) characterize this condition as discursive operationalization, in which language changes precede structural transformation. Universities and academic journals thus function not only as sites of education and publication, but also as Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) that shape scientific-moral subjects through curricula, publication standards,

research ethics, and evaluation systems.

Epistemic hegemony, therefore, is not merely a matter of access or publication. It forms a central component of technomoralism as a knowledge regime that binds scientific morality, technocratic rationality, and institutional authority into a unified global structure.

Integrating Fairclough, Gramsci, and Althusser in Discourse Analysis

Fairclough, Gramsci, and Althusser offer complementary theoretical frameworks that enable a comprehensive analysis of technomoralism as a hegemonic discursive practice. Fairclough (2010) conceptualizes language as a social practice operating across three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. From this perspective, technomoralism can be understood as an articulation between linguistic choices, such as scientific modality, nominalization, and moral metaphor, and the social structures that govern knowledge legitimacy.

Gramsci's (1971) contribution lies in his concept of hegemony, whereby power operates through consent

rather than coercion. In the context of global knowledge, organic intellectuals include academics, journal editors, donor institutions, and educational organizations that produce moral-scientific consensus regarding what counts as legitimate knowledge.

Althusser (1971) complements this framework through the concepts of Ideological State Apparatus and interpellation, which describe how academic institutions produce scientific-moral subjects. Universities, journals, and research institutions do not merely disseminate knowledge; they also shape scientists' identities as moral agents who are responsible, objective, efficient, and compliant with global standards.

The integration of these three perspectives enables technomoralism to be analyzed as a dialectical phenomenon in which discourse, institutions, and scientific subjects mutually constitute one another within structures of epistemic hegemony.

Existing studies have made substantial contributions to understanding morality in science (Blancke, 2022; Clark et al., 2025), technocracy in public policy (Esmark et al., 2025; Syarif, 2024), and

Western epistemic dominance (Noda, 2020; Uygun Tunç, D., Tunç, M. N., & Eper, 2023). However, most of this research addresses these phenomena in isolation. The integration of morality, scientific rationality, and institutional hegemony has yet to be examined comprehensively within a single theoretical framework.

Moreover, studies that conceptualize technomoralism as a global knowledge regime remain limited, particularly in comparative contexts. To date, no research has explicitly combined Fairclough, Gramsci, and Althusser to analyze how morality and scientific rationality are produced, naturalized, and circulated across two politically distinct contexts, namely Indonesia and the United States.

This article addresses this gap by introducing technomoralism as an integrated analytical framework for understanding the dialectical relationship between morality and scientific rationality in global knowledge production, and for examining how academic institutions reproduce epistemic hegemony through discursive practices.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as formulated by Norman Fairclough (2010). CDA conceptualizes language not merely as a medium of communication, but as a form of social practice that actively shapes and is shaped by relations of power, ideology, and institutional structures. This approach is particularly relevant because it enables an examination of the dialectical relationship between micro-level linguistic choices and macro-level socio-political configurations, especially in relation to how morality and scientific rationality are attached to and naturalized within academic and policy discourses.

Fairclough's CDA model operates through three interrelated analytical dimensions (Fairclough, 2010). The first is the textual dimension, which examines linguistic features such as diction, metaphor, modality, nominalization, and intertextuality. The second is the dimension of discursive practice, which analyzes processes of text production, circulation, and consumption within specific institutional contexts. The third is the dimension of social practice,

which interprets how texts and discursive practices relate to broader social structures, including dominant ideologies, power relations, and social change.

To strengthen the critical depth of the analysis, CDA in this study is integrated with Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony (1971) and Louis Althusser's concept of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) (1971). Gramsci provides a framework for understanding the formation of moral-scientific consensus through mechanisms of consent and the role of intellectuals in constructing common sense. Althusser, by contrast, explains how academic and state institutions—such as universities, scholarly journals, and knowledge bureaucracies—function as ideological apparatuses that interpellate individuals as simultaneously scientific and moral subjects. The integration of these three approaches allows technomoralism to be read not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but as an institutionalized ideological regime.

Data Sources

The data consist of four scholarly articles purposively selected based on the following criteria:

(1) The articles explicitly engage with themes that combine scientific rationality and moral reasoning, as indicated by the presence of normative vocabulary (e.g., responsibility, integrity, ethics) alongside technocratic or scientific terminology (e.g., evidence, policy effectiveness, measurement).

(2) The articles are published in peer-reviewed academic journals to ensure epistemic legitimacy and comparability within global knowledge production.

(3) The articles represent two distinct geopolitical and epistemic contexts, namely Indonesia and the United States, allowing for cross-context comparison between Global South and Global North knowledge systems.

(4) The articles address policy-related or governance-oriented issues, where the intersection between science and morality is most visible and institutionally embedded.

This purposive sampling strategy ensures that the selected corpus is theoretically relevant, analytically comparable, and aligned with the study's objective of examining technomoralism as a discursive

regime. The four articles are as follows:

- (1) Aji (2025). *Cybersecurity Politics in Building Cyber Sovereignty in Indonesia Through Strengthening the Role of the National Cyber and Crypto Agency*. Society.

It represents bureaucratic morality and digital security within a framework of technocratic nationalism.

- (2) Utami et al. (2024). *Political Behaviour of the Indonesian Middle Class: Lower Turnouts in More Modernised Area*. Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik.

It illustrates social morality, collective ethics, and middle-class configurations in national politics.

- (3) Kasdan & Bowen (2025). *Toe the Line or Walk the Plank? Principled Bureaucracy under Trump 2.0*. Administrative Theory & Praxis.

It reflects bureaucratic morality, public ethics, and technocratic dilemmas in the U.S. political landscape.

- (4) Maxey & Powers (2025). *Moralization and Foreign Policy Attitudes*. Political Behavior.

It demonstrates the integration of morality and

scientific rationality in U.S. foreign policy discourse.

The selection of these two contexts enables a comparative reading of how technomoralism is interpreted, institutionalized, and negotiated within different, yet globally interconnected, knowledge systems.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted through systematic stages following an expanded Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, combined with a structured coding procedure to enhance analytical rigor and transparency.

The first stage was textual analysis, which focused on identifying moral diction and scientific-technocratic diction, dominant metaphors, strategies of legitimation, and patterns of nominalization that potentially obscure agency. At this stage, open coding was conducted to identify recurring lexical and semantic patterns related to moral discourse (e.g., responsibility, ethics, obligation) and scientific-technocratic discourse (e.g., data, evidence, efficiency, measurement). This process enabled the initial identification of relevant

linguistic features grounded in the theoretical framework.

The second stage was discursive practice analysis, which examined the conditions of text production and circulation, including authors' institutional affiliations, the position of journals within the global knowledge ecology, target audiences, and intertextual relations with other academic and policy discourses. In this stage, axial coding was applied to categorize the identified linguistic features into broader analytical dimensions, including (a) moral diction, (b) scientific and technocratic diction, (c) strategies of legitimation, (d) metaphorical constructions, and (e) nominalization patterns. This categorization enabled the systematic mapping of relationships between discourse, institutions, and epistemic authority.

The third stage was social practice analysis, which interpreted how moral-scientific discourses relate to broader socio-political structures, such as policy technocratization, scientific nationalism, bureaucratic populism, and Western epistemic hegemony. At this stage, selective coding was employed to interpret how the identified categories interact across the

three dimensions of CDA: textual, discursive practice, and social practice. The coded data were further analyzed using Gramsci's concept of hegemony to examine the formation of moral-scientific consensus, and Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) to explain the institutional reproduction of technomoralist ideology.

All coding procedures were conducted iteratively to ensure consistency between theoretical categories and empirical data. This iterative process allowed the analysis to remain both concept-driven and grounded in textual evidence. Findings from these three stages were then synthesized within the Fairclough-Gramsci-Althusser framework to produce a comprehensive account of how language constructs legitimacy, how that legitimacy is accepted as common sense, and how it is structurally institutionalized.

Comparative Approach

This study adopts a cross-context comparative approach to compare forms of technomoralism in Indonesia and the United States. The comparison is conducted across three analytical units: (1) moral-scientific linguistic devices, (2) argumentative structures and strategies of scientific

authority, and (3) the institutional ecology of discourse production. This approach allows for the identification of contextual differences and the circulation of global ideological flows across national boundaries.

Validity and Researcher Positionality

Within an interpretive qualitative research framework, validity is ensured through argumentative consistency, analytical transparency, and theoretical triangulation among CDA, Gramsci's theory of hegemony, and Althusser's ISA concept. This approach aligns with principles of trustworthiness that emphasize credibility, dependability, and confirmability Lincoln & Guba (1985).

The researcher's positionality is reflexive and critical. The researcher acknowledges being part of the very global epistemic ecology under analysis. Accordingly, the analysis is conducted with an awareness that knowledge production is never entirely neutral, but is always embedded in relations of power and dominant epistemic standards.

DISCUSSION

This section integrates the presentation of findings and

their interpretation by examining how technomoralism operates across textual, discursive, and social levels in academic discourse from Indonesia and the United States. Rather than separating empirical results from discussion, the analysis foregrounds how linguistic patterns, institutional contexts, and ideological effects are mutually constitutive in the production of moral-scientific authority.

Textual Configurations of Moral-Scientific Language

Technocratic Nationalism and Statist Morality in Indonesian Cybersecurity Discourse

At the textual level, the article "Cybersecurity Politics in Building Cyber Sovereignty in Indonesia through Strengthening the Role of the National Cyber and Crypto Agency" exhibits a dense integration of technocratic language and statist morality. Recurrent expressions such as "strengthening the role," "cyber sovereignty," and "national resilience" do more than describe institutional functions. They frame cybersecurity as a moral obligation of the state, positioning the state as a collective ethical agent responsible for protecting the nation in digital space.

This moralization is reinforced through extensive nominalization, particularly in terms such as "resilience" and "infrastructure," which obscure concrete political actors and decision-making processes. By shifting attention away from agency, the discourse presents cybersecurity governance as an objective necessity rather than a politically contingent choice. As Fairclough & Scholz (2020) note, nominalization plays a central role in naturalizing power relations by transforming actions into abstract processes.

Metaphors of protection and defense further strengthen this technomoral framing. Phrases such as "safeguarding Indonesia's cyber sovereignty" and "bulwark of national security" construct the state as a moral body under threat, thereby legitimizing the expansion of bureaucratic authority. Scientific and administrative rationality is thus not neutral, but explicitly moralized. In this configuration, technomoralism operates as technocratic nationalism, where technical expertise and statist morality converge to legitimize state-centered governance.

*Modernization, Participation,
and Middle-Class Moral
Rationality*

A different yet related configuration emerges in "Political Behaviour of the Indonesian Middle Class: Lower Turnouts in More Modernised Areas". Technomoralism is articulated through the language of political behavior and electoral participation. Lexical items such as "voter turnout," "political participation," and "democratic health" frame democracy as a measurable and rational process, aligning political behavior with scientific assessment.

Modernization theory is explicitly invoked, asserting that larger middle-class populations are expected to produce higher electoral participation. The use of modal expressions such as expected signals that participation is not only an empirical pattern but also a normative obligation. Democracy is thereby moralized through scientific rationality, as participation becomes both a measurable indicator and a moral benchmark of democratic maturity.

Nominalization again plays a crucial role. Abstract terms such as "modernization" and "voter turnout" remove

individual and collective agents from view, making democratic processes appear automatic and self-regulating. This linguistic pattern rationalizes democratic values as objective facts while embedding moral expectations within scientific discourse. In this case, technomoralism sustains a developmentalist ideology, where middle-class participation is constructed as both a moral duty and a scientific necessity.

Ethical Liberalism and Individual Moral Responsibility in U.S. Bureaucratic Discourse

In contrast to the Indonesian texts, "Toe the Line or Walk the Plank? Principled Bureaucracy under Trump 2.0" articulates technomoralism through individual morality within a liberal-democratic framework. Moral diction such as "constitutional duty," "professional ethics," "institutional integrity," and "ethical obligation" appears prominently throughout the text.

The central metaphor, "toe the line or walk the plank," frames morality as an existential dilemma faced by individual bureaucrats under political pressure. This metaphor foregrounds agency rather than obscuring it.

Deontic modality, particularly through the use of "must", positions ethical behavior as an individual obligation rather than a collective condition.

Nominalizations such as "politicization of governance" and "erosion of institutional integrity" identify structural threats that require moral action from individual subjects. Unlike the Indonesian cases, nominalization here does not depoliticize governance to stabilize authority. Instead, it highlights a moral crisis that demands ethical resistance. This configuration reflects ethical liberalism, where technomoralism operates by aligning scientific rationality with individual moral responsibility to preserve institutional legitimacy.

Moral Psychology and the Scientific Objectification of Morality

The article "Moralization and Foreign Policy Attitudes" presents the most explicit form of technomoralism by directly integrating morality into scientific methodology. Technical terms such as "embedded experiments," "ecological validity," and "treatment effects" coexist with moral concepts such as "moral conviction" and "beliefs about right and wrong."

Morality is treated as a measurable variable, as illustrated by claims that moralized attitudes resist change and weaken cost-benefit reasoning. Through nominalizations such as "moralization" and "entrenchment", moral agency is removed, allowing morality to appear as an objective cognitive phenomenon. As Clark et al. (2025) suggest, moral conviction is framed as an empirically observable dimension of attitude strength.

In this configuration, technomoralism reaches its most consolidated form. Morality is no longer merely aligned with science; it is transformed into scientific data. This represents a strong variant of American technoscience, where moral judgments gain authority precisely because they are rendered measurable and experimentally verifiable.

Discursive-Institutional Configurations of Technomoralism

State-Centered Knowledge Production and Policy Legitimation in Indonesia

At the level of discursive practice, the Indonesian articles reveal a close alignment between academic knowledge production and state institutions. In the

cybersecurity article, the author's institutional trajectory—bridging academia and government—positions the text at the intersection of scholarly analysis and policy legitimation. The stated aim of strengthening cyber sovereignty through the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) signals a direct orientation toward state agendas and national resilience.

The circulation of this discourse through *Society* (SINTA 2) further reinforces its technomoral function. As a nationally recognized journal, it provides an academic register through which regulatory language such as "protection," "resilience," and "strengthening institutional roles" is recontextualized as scholarly knowledge. Following Fairclough & Scholz (2020), this recontextualization transforms policy imperatives into epistemically authoritative claims, enabling technocratic nationalism to operate through consent rather than directive force.

A similar pattern appears in *Political Behaviour of the Indonesian Middle Class: Lower Turnouts in More Modernised Areas*. Although the article addresses electoral participation, its production

relies heavily on state knowledge infrastructures, including Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS]) and the General Election Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum [KPU]). Discursively, the analysis is situated within an internationalized academic framework that privileges Anglo-American theory, format, and methodological conventions. Publication in *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* (SINTA 1, Scopus-indexed) positions the article within both national authority and global academic circulation.

Within this configuration, morality and scientific rationality converge through modernization theory. Electoral participation is framed as a moral indicator of democratic maturity while simultaneously being treated as a scientific variable. This dual framing secures academic legitimacy and aligns national political discourse with global epistemic standards, illustrating how technomoralism operates through institutionalized publication practices.

Liberal Academic Autonomy and Epistemic Gatekeeping in the United States

In contrast, the US articles are produced within

institutional contexts characterized by academic autonomy and global publication infrastructures. "Toe the Line or Walk the Plank: Principled Bureaucracy under Trump 2.0" emerges from research universities and policy-oriented institutions operating in a polarized liberal-democratic environment. From its conceptual framing onward, the article institutionalizes moral language through metaphors of ethical dilemma and professional responsibility.

Its circulation through *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (Taylor & Francis) situates the text within elite transnational academic networks. Editorial and peer-review processes function as epistemic gatekeeping mechanisms that normalize liberal moral vocabularies such as "constitutional duty" and "institutional integrity" as objective scholarly concerns. As Canagarajah (2002) observes, such publication infrastructures play a central role in defining which epistemologies and moral frameworks achieve global legitimacy.

A more consolidated form of this process appears in "Moralization and Foreign Policy Attitudes". Produced by

US-based political psychologists and published in *Political Behavior* (Springer), the article exemplifies how experimental methodology and quantitative rigor confer epistemic authority. Moral conviction is operationalized, measured, and circulated as a scientific construct, rendering morality compatible with evidence-based policymaking.

Discursive practice reveals that academic journals, methodologies, and writing conventions operate as ideological filters. They validate particular forms of morality—rooted in Western liberal epistemology—as universally relevant, while alternative moral frameworks remain marginal. Technomoralism thus functions through institutional selectivity rather than explicit exclusion.

Social Practice: Power, Ideology, and the Reproduction of Technomoralism

Technocratic Nationalism and Statist Moral Consensus in Indonesia

At the level of social practice, the Indonesian articles operate within a political structure marked by strong state presence and developmental rationality. In

the cybersecurity case, discourses of cyber sovereignty and institutional strengthening are embedded in broader projects of national resilience and global competition. Moral-scientific language legitimizes the expansion of bureaucratic authority by framing security governance as an ethical necessity rather than a political choice.

From a Gramscian perspective, this configuration reflects the production of statist common sense. Academics, bureaucrats, and policy institutions converge around a shared moral narrative that positions state-led technocracy as both rational and virtuous. The author's role as a former state official exemplifies the function of the organic intellectual who mediates between state power and knowledge production (Gramsci, 1971).

From an Althusserian viewpoint, institutions such as BSSN, public universities, and nationally accredited journals operate as Ideological State Apparatuses. They interpellate subjects as moral-scientific actors who accept cybersecurity governance as a natural and necessary extension of state responsibility. Technomoralism thus reproduces technocratic

nationalism by aligning technoscientific rationality with collective moral obligation.

Developmental Ideology and Middle-Class Moral Subject Formation

The middle-class political behavior article reveals a related but distinct configuration of technomoralism. Here, modernization ideology frames the middle class as the moral backbone of democracy. Electoral participation is constructed as both a rational behavior and a moral duty, linking individual action to national democratic health.

In Gramscian terms, this participation morality represents cultural hegemony. Procedural democratic values are internalized as common sense among middle-class actors, who come to view participation as a self-evident obligation. Academics affiliated with universities and state institutions function as organic intellectuals who reproduce this ideology through scientific language and empirical indicators.

Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatus further illuminates how universities, government agencies, and prestigious

journals shape subjects who understand themselves as rational, moral citizens. Even when empirical findings complicate modernization theory—such as lower turnout in more modernized regions—the broader ideological framework remains intact, demonstrating the stabilizing effect of technomoral discourse.

Ethical Liberalism and Institutional Crisis Management in the US

In the US context, technomoralism operates within a social structure defined by institutional liberalism and political polarization. The principled bureaucracy article frames professional ethics as the final line of defense against democratic erosion. Bureaucrats are positioned as moral agents whose responsibility is to uphold constitutional norms under political pressure.

From a Gramscian perspective, these bureaucrats function as liberal organic intellectuals engaged in a war of position to preserve institutional legitimacy. Ethical conduct becomes a site of resistance, articulated through professional standards rather than overt political mobilization.

From an Althusserian angle, federal agencies, research universities, and policy journals operate as Ideological State Apparatuses that interpellate individuals as ethical professionals. Scientific rationality and professional morality merge to stabilize liberal institutions, illustrating how technomoralism takes the form of ethical liberalism rather than state-centered nationalism.

Moral Psychology, Experimental Science, and Global Epistemic Authority

The moral psychology article situates technomoralism within a global epistemic hierarchy. By treating morality as an experimentally measurable variable, behavioral science positions itself as a privileged authority in understanding public opinion and foreign policy. Moral conviction becomes a scientific object, detached from cultural and historical specificity.

In Gramscian terms, political psychologists function as global organic intellectuals who shape moral consensus through scientific expertise. Althusserian analysis highlights the role of high-impact journals and global publishers as transnational Ideological State Apparatuses

that define legitimate moral and epistemic standards.

This configuration reflects what Connell (2007) and Mignolo (2009) describe as epistemic inequality and epistemic obedience. Western moral frameworks, validated through experimental science, are naturalized as universal truths, reinforcing Global North dominance in knowledge production.

**Holistic Comparative
Integration**

Taken together, the integrated analysis shows that technomoralism operates through two distinct yet interconnected configurations. In Indonesia, it appears as technocratic nationalism, where collective morality and developmental rationality legitimize state authority. In the United States, it takes the form of ethical liberalism, where individual morality and scientific rationality sustain institutional legitimacy.

Despite their contextual differences, both configurations perform the same hegemonic function. They produce moral-scientific subjects who accept dominant power structures as natural and necessary. At the global level, this variation demonstrates that epistemic hegemony does

not require uniformity. Instead, it operates through localized adaptations that share a common moral-scientific logic.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated that technomoralism functions as a central mechanism through which morality and scientific rationality are fused to legitimize knowledge, institutions, and policy discourse. By integrating Critical Discourse Analysis with theories of hegemony and ideological reproduction, the analysis shows that technomoralism operates not only at the level of language, but also as a broader social practice embedded in academic publishing, institutional authority, and global epistemic hierarchies. The comparative analysis reveals that technomoralism takes distinct contextual forms. In Indonesia, it aligns closely with technocratic nationalism, where collective moral narratives and developmental rationality stabilize state authority and policy agendas. In the United States, technomoralism operates through ethical liberalism, foregrounding individual moral responsibility and professional integrity as foundations of institutional

legitimacy. Despite these differences, both configurations function hegemonically by presenting the integration of morality and scientific rationality as natural, objective, and beyond contestation, thereby sustaining global epistemic hierarchies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, for the research grant that supported the completion of this study and enabled its successful publication.

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