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# From Text to Context: Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Analysis of the Narrative of Power in Indonesian Political Discourse

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines how narratives of power are produced, configured, and reinterpreted in Indonesian political discourse, utilizing Paul Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics. In contemporary politics, actors rely on storytelling as a legitimation strategy, exercising power through symbolic constructions. Applying Ricoeur's threefold mimesis, this research analyzes political speeches and media discourse as texts shaping collective experience. The analysis reveals that narratives of power are built upon stable patterns such as morality, nationalism, and stability. In mimesis, oligarchic dominance and leader personalization serve as pre-understandings for political stories. Mimesis II demonstrates how political actors weave metaphors to produce coherent leadership narratives. Finally, in mimesis III, audiences refigure these narratives based on their experiential horizons within digital spaces. The study concludes that Ricoeur's hermeneutics provides a powerful critical tool for examining power reproduction and legitimacy, offering a framework for ideological critique and interpretation-based political studies.

**Keywords:** Indonesian Politics, Narrative Hermeneutics, Narratives Of Power, Paul Ricoeur, Political Discourse.

## I. Introduction

Indonesia's political discourse in the last two decades shows that power runs not only through legal-formal mechanisms, but also through the formation of narratives that function as a tool of symbolic legitimacy. As Murray Edelman affirmed that "Political language is political reality" (Edelman, 2025), so that power rests on the ability of political actors to shape perceptions through symbols and stories. Political actors in Indonesia rely on the power of narrative, through speeches, campaign taglines, media imagery, and certain symbols, to regulate public interpretation of their political identity. In the context of post-reform democracy characterized by electoral competition, leadership personalization, and digital media penetration, narrative production is an important mode in building legitimacy and public support. As noted by Aspinall and Mietzner, Indonesian politics is now defined by "highly personalized contests for executive power" (Mietzner, 2025), so that symbolic space is increasingly determining. In this situation, the narrative not only represents political reality, but also actively shapes it through the process of selecting, promoting, and simplifying events into a plot that is easy for the public to understand.

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon can be understood through the relationship between power, ideology, and discourse. Power, as Foucault asserts, works not only through coercion, but also through the production of knowledge and the regulation of truth in the public sphere (Foucault, 2025). Political narratives then become a strategic medium to articulate and normalize these claims of power. (Arendt, 2025) It even emphasizes that power requires stories to sustain its sustainability, as narratives provide a framework that connects political action to collective goals. Within this framework, ideology works through



symbols and representations (Wheldon et al., 2025), while narrative is one of the most effective forms of ideological expression because of its persuasive and acceptable nature (Eagleton, 2025).

Previous research on Indonesian political discourse has indeed been carried out extensively, but most of it uses approaches such as Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis or rhetorical analysis. Fairclough emphasizes that discourse is "a form of social practice" (Gulestø et al., 2025), however, the CDA's approach often stops at the power structure and has not explored the dynamics of interpretation between political texts and audiences in depth. On the other hand, the study of Indonesian oligarchs Hadiz & Robison shows that national politics is shaped by "networks of power that operate behind formal democratic institutions" but has not elaborated on how the network constructs the story for the public. This is where Paul Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics makes an important contribution. Ricoeur understood narrative as a fundamental medium for humans to understand experience and structure time. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur asserts that "time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative" (Ricoeur, 2026) which shows that social experiences, including politics, only become meaningful when they are structured in the form of narratives. In his research, Ricoeur provides a framework known as the mimesis shell to look at how political meanings are created, arranged, and revived by the public as readers of political texts. Furthermore, the framework of mimesis is stated as a process containing conceptual stages in understanding the process of narrative formation, this process takes place in three interrelated stages, namely pre-understanding formed by social values and contexts (mimesis I), the preparation of narratives by political actors through rhetorical strategies (mimesis II), and reinterpretation by the audience based on their experiences (mimesis III) (Ricoeur, 2026). Based on this background, this study formulates three main questions: (1) How is the power narrative shaped by political actors in Indonesian political discourse? (2) How can Ricoeur's model of narrative hermeneutics be used to read the ideological structure of the narrative? (3) How do the public reinterpret the narratives circulating in the digital space and the mainstream media? In line with this question, this research aims to apply a narrative hermeneutic framework to uncover the patterns of Indonesian political narratives and explain the relationship between texts, power, and public interpretation.

## II. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Narrative Hermeneutics Paul Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur understands humans as *homo narrans*, that is, creatures who understand themselves through stories. The main concept in his theory is *emplotment*, the process by which events are organized in a meaningful narrative structure (Ricoeur, 2026). For Ricoeur, narrative is not just a means of communication, but a way of understanding human experience. The mimesis framework consists of three stages. Mimesis I (pre-understanding) is the initial horizon that makes a story understandable. This includes pre-existing values, norms, ideologies, social histories, and action structures. In the Indonesian context, political pre-understanding includes paternalistic culture, leader personalization, and collective memory of order and development. Mimesis II (narrative configuration) is the stage of story preparation by political actors. This process involves the selection of events, the formation of plots, the use of metaphors, and rhetorical strategies to construct a particular image. Ricoeur emphasizes that the narrative always contains intention: he chooses a particular reality to be presented, so that he is always involved in the production of meaning and ideology. Mimesis III (refiguration) is the stage when the reader or audience brings the text back to life through interpretation. Political meaning is never final, because it is formed through the interaction between the text and the audience's experience horizon (Salcedo, 2025). In a digital society, reconfiguration has become more dynamic and often takes place through memes, comments, or alternative narratives on social media.

### 2.2. Power, Ideology, and Political Discourse

Power in a contemporary perspective is understood not only as a capacity for coercion, but also as the ability to form knowledge and regulate what is considered "right" in the public sphere (Foucault, 2025). Political narratives are a strategic instrument in building legitimacy. Arendt (2025) states that power requires stories to survive, because stories provide a framework for society to connect political action with collective goals. Political narratives always carry an ideological dimension. Wheldon et al., (2025) explains that ideology works through symbols to maintain power relations, while Eagleton (2025) It shows that narratives are one of the most effective forms of ideological expression because they are persuasive and easy to accept.

### 2.3. Indonesian Politics as a Narrative Production Space

Indonesian politics is characterized by the phenomenon of leadership personalization, image politics, and media penetration. Political campaigns rely on symbols such as "simple leader," "changemaker," "guardian of stability," or "son of the region." Wiseman (2025) and Mietzner (2025) shows that political parties in Indonesia often rely on figures rather than ideological platforms. Mainstream media and social media then reinforce that narrative structure through repetition, visual imagery, and amplification of content. Thus, Indonesian political discourse is an arena of meaning contestation, where political actors and the public interact in producing and interpreting power narratives.

## III. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach based on narrative hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 2026). The selection of this method is based on the nature of the object of study in the form of texts that contain symbolic and ideological meanings, so an in-depth interpretive approach is needed to reveal the relationship between text, time, and action (Ricoeur, 2026). This research uses two types of study objects, namely material objects and formal objects. The material objects are in the form of Indonesian political discourse texts that include state speeches, campaign slogans in the last election period, official government statements, and political news narratives circulating in the mass media and digital platforms. Meanwhile, the formal object of this research is the theory of mimesis (mimesis I, II, and III) within the framework of Paul Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics, which is used as an analytical knife to dissect the construction of the narrative of power.

Furthermore, the data in this study was selected by purposive sampling with several criteria. First, the primary criterion, namely texts that come from key political actors, both from the executive and party elites, or mainstream media that have a national reach and significant influence in shaping public opinion. Second, the temporal criterion, namely texts produced in the last two decades (post-Reform) to contemporary discourse in 2024–2025. Based on these criteria, the total data analyzed amounted to 15 key documents consisting of 7 political speech scripts and official statements, and supported by 20 international and national journal articles as a source of analysis reinforcement. The data in this study was collected through a combination of documentation studies and digital observations. The documentation technique is carried out by collecting archives of state speech manuscripts and official records of government statements. In addition, literature studies are used to collect relevant literature, including online media articles and visual campaign materials related to political discourse. The digital observation is carried out by monitoring narrative patterns, the use of symbols, and political metaphors spread in the digital space and social media as a form of representation of the audience reconfiguration process in interpreting the power narrative.

To maintain the validity of the data and the objectivity of interpretation, this study applied several validation techniques. First, source triangulation is carried out by comparing narratives from various sources, for example between official government speeches and media responses or public opinion, in order to identify consistency and shifts in meaning. Second, peer discussions (peer debriefing) were carried out with academics in the fields of philosophy and politics to review the accuracy of the hermeneutic interpretations produced. Third, referential adequacy is used by utilizing supporting data in the form of previous research results and relevant sociopolitical theories to strengthen the findings of the analysis (Ricoeur, 2026). Data analysis was carried out through the application of three stages of mimesis within the framework of Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics cyclically. The first stage, mimesis I (prefiguration), focuses on identifying the socio-political contexts, values, and pre-understandings—such as oligarchy and paternalism—that frame the formation of narratives. The second stage, mimesis II (configuration), is directed at the analysis of how political actors weave narrative structures, metaphors, and symbols into a coherent story. The third stage, mimesis III (refiguration), focuses on reading how the narrative is reinterpreted by the public, especially in the digital space, so as to produce new meanings in social reality.

## IV. Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Mimesis I: Pre-Understanding Indonesian Politics

In the framework of Paul Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics, mimesis I refers to the stage of pre-understanding, which is the horizon of meaning that existed before a narrative was explicitly formulated. At this stage, the world of human action has been structured by a system of symbols, norms, and schemes of

meaning that allow a story to be produced and understood (Ricoeur, 2026). Political narratives, thus, do not emerge from a vacuum, but are rooted in a socio-political context that has been interpreted collectively. In the context of post-Reformation Indonesia, the pre-understanding of politics is shaped by a paradoxical configuration of electoral democracy. Indonesia has succeeded in institutionalizing relatively free and competitive elections, but this change has not been fully followed by a transformation of economic and political power structures. A number of studies show that oligarchs remain the dominant actors who are able to adapt to democratic mechanisms and even use them to maintain influence (Heep, 2025). Indonesian democracy, in this sense, is more procedurally strong than substantive.

The oligarchic structure forms a pre-understanding horizon of how power is exercised and interpreted. Politics is perceived as a negotiation arena between political elites, capital owners, and informal power networks, not merely an ideological or programmatic battle. Within this horizon, practices such as high-cost politics, pragmatic coalitions, and cross-ideological compromises are understood as normal parts of electoral democracy. This kind of pre-understanding explains why the contradiction between formal democracy and structural inequality is often not read as a systemic crisis, but rather as a "given" political reality. Along with the survival of the oligarchy, Indonesia's democracy is also marked by the strengthening of political personalization. Direct elections encourage a shift in orientation from party and ideology to candidate figures. Political parties often function as electoral vehicles, while the main attraction lies in the leader's personal image (Kaftan, 2024). In the pre-public understanding, the ideal leader is not primarily a formulator of complex policies, but a figure who is considered firm, popular, and able to guarantee stability.

This political personalization operates in a symbolic system that has long been embedded in Indonesian political culture. The image of a leader as a paternalistic figure, protector, or "father of the nation" has long historical roots and continues to be reproduced across regimes. Within the framework of mimesis I, these symbols provide a normative assessment scheme of leadership, making figure-based political narratives more acceptable than narratives that emphasize structural conflict or ideological battles (Mietzner, 2025). In addition to the oligarchic structure and personalization, the pre-understanding of Indonesian politics is also shaped by a relatively stable tradition of national narrative. Since the beginning of independence, the country has consistently produced great stories of nationalism, unity, and development. This narrative forms a collective imagination about the nation as a political community that must be guarded from fragmentation and internal conflict (Ploszka, 2024). In this framework, political discourse does not only talk about power, but also about the meaning of Indonesia itself. The narrative of stability is one of the most dominant elements in this pre-understanding. Stability is understood not only as a secure political condition, but also as a normative value associated with the moral responsibility of a leader. Instability is often framed as a threat to national unity and people's well-being. Within this horizon, policies that emphasize order and control easily acquire symbolic legitimacy (Ricoeur, 2026). Alongside stability, the "people's" narrative plays a central role in the structure of political pre-understanding. The people are often represented as homogeneous entities that have a single will and pure morality. This representation allows political actors to claim symbolic authority by speaking on behalf of the people, while simplifying the social complexities that are actually fraught with conflict. In a discursive perspective, "people" serves as a blank marker that can be filled with various meanings according to political interests (Toha & Cosslett, 2024).

The development narrative complements this pre-understanding horizon. Development has long been the main language of political legitimacy in Indonesia, from the New Order to the era of electoral democracy. Infrastructure, economic growth, and visual modernization are symbols of leadership success that are easily communicated to the public. In this pre-understanding, development serves as a narrative of progress that masks deeper power relations and structural inequality (Hossain, 2024). The three narratives of stability, people, and development, form a collective narrative competence that allows the public to recognize the characters, goals, and conflicts in the political story. In Ricoeur's terms, this symbolic structure allows political action to be understood as a coherent story within a given social time horizon (Ricoeur, 2026). This is where language and discourse function as social practices that are not neutral, but are closely connected to power relations and ideologies (Suhardi & Salamah, 2025). The development of digital media is currently a crucial element that strengthens the pre-understanding structure. In his research, (Heep, 2025) explains that digital media and platform algorithms serve as "cognitive and emotional accelerators" that intensify the reproduction of power narratives in digital public spaces. This is in line with the logic of connective action, where personal identification is more dominant than formal ideological affiliation (Bennett & Livingston, 2025). In Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, mimesis I is dynamic; The public internalizes political logic through the massive circulation of symbols on social media, thus forming implicit knowledge that determines how the narrative of power is received before the official political text is formulated (Ricoeur, 2026).

By reading the Indonesian political context as part of mimesis I, this analysis shows that the narrative of power worked long before the political text was explicitly formulated. Oligarchic structures, political personalization, and national narrative traditions form the boundaries of the political imagination that allow certain types of stories to appear dominant, while alternative stories tend to be marginalized. The understanding of mimesis I is therefore an important foundation for examining the narrative configuration in the mimesis II stage and the public interpretation process in the mimesis III stage.

#### 4.2 Mimesis II: Narrative Configuration of Political Actors

Within the framework of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, mimesis II marks a crucial moment when the still fragmented social experience begins to be strung together into a coherent narrative. At this stage, reality no longer exists as a series of loose events, but rather as a story that has a certain beginning, conflict, and direction (Ricoeur, 2026). In politics, this configuration process does not take place neutrally. Political actors actively select, compose, and emphasize certain elements of social reality in order to construct narratives capable of sustaining their claims to legitimacy. In the context of contemporary Indonesian politics, the configuration of the narrative is evident in the way political actors frame themselves and the political situation they face. Economic crises, social inequality, or public distrust of institutions are not presented as complex structural problems, but rather as dramatic settings that demand the presence of certain leading figures. Thus, political stories not only explain reality, but also lead the public to a specific meaning about who deserves to lead and why power needs to be centered (Latifah et al., 2026).

This kind of narrative works through the simplification of conflict. Political actors tend to reduce complex power relations to easily recognizable moral opposition: the people versus the elite, the clean versus the corrupt, or the moral versus the deviant. This process allows political conflicts to be understood not as institutional or economic-political issues, but as ethical dramas. This is where leadership personalization gets its appeal. The leader figure is positioned as the center of the story, while the power structure that underpins it becomes an almost invisible backdrop (Wheldon et al., 2025). Language plays an important role in this narrative configuration, especially through the use of metaphors. Metaphors such as "clean", "change", or "moral guardian" do not simply convey normative messages, but shape the way the public sees political reality itself. As Ricoeur points out, metaphors open up the possibility of new meanings by moving understanding from one realm to another (Ricoeur, 2026). When power is framed as a "cleansing" project, for example, then politics is understood as a moral arena, not an arena for negotiating interests. Consequently, criticism of power can easily be represented as immoral or a threat to order. From the point of view of discourse analysis, this kind of configuration shows how language functions as an ideological practice. Fairclough emphasizes that discourse not only reflects social realities, but also produces and reproduces them. In Indonesian politics, certain metaphors and symbols continue to be repeated until they form a relatively stable horizon of meaning. The public is invited to understand political change as a change of figure, not as a transformation of power relations. In this way, the narrative serves to close the possibility of a more critical alternative reading (Gulestø et al., 2025).

Narrative configurations also almost always involve heroic elements. In the political stories that circulate, leaders often appear as subjects who are able to transcend the impasse of institutions and procedures. This heroic narrative places the leader as the central figure who faces a clear enemy, whether in the form of the old elite, moral threats, or social chaos. This pattern is in line with the logic of populism, where society is imagined as a moral unit waiting to be saved by a certain figure. This kind of narrative explains why electoral democracy can continue to take place competitively, while at the same time eroding its liberal and institutional aspects. The development of digital media further strengthens this narrative configuration process. Through social media, political stories are not only conveyed in one direction, but are recirculated in a more personal and emotional form. Bennett and Segerberg show that the logic of collective action in the digital age allows political narratives to be fragmented, yet still move within the framework of the grand narrative that has been constructed by political actors. Thus, mimesis II did not lose its hegemonic power, but found a new medium to work more flexibly and quickly. In the end, mimesis II shows that political power does not stand on facts alone, but on stories that make these facts seem meaningful and necessary. Narrative configurations determine how events are understood, conflicts framed, and solutions imagined. In Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, this narrative is never completely closed; It always leaves room for reinterpretation. However, its strength lies in its ability to limit the possibilities of meaning from the start, so not all readings have the same chance of emerging. This is where mimesis analysis II becomes important to dismantle the workings of ideology in Indonesian political discourse.

#### 4.3 Mimesis III: Refiguring the Audience

If mimesis II shows how political actors configure social experiences into coherent stories, then mimesis III marks the stage when the story escapes the author's control and enters the world of the audience's experience. In Ricoeur's framework, reconfiguration is not a passive process; It is a moment in which the text meets the reader's horizon of experience and, in that encounter, produces a new meaning (Ricoeur, 2026). In politics, audiences do not simply accept the narrative of power, but relive it in everyday practice, public conversation, and concrete political attitudes. In the context of Indonesian politics, this reconfiguration process is greatly influenced by the social conditions and historical experiences of each community group. The narrative of "clean leaders", "change", or "moral guardians" is not uniformly understood. For some of the public, the narrative is read as a hope for moral improvement and social stability; For others, it is interpreted as a new form of concentration of power that ignores democratic procedures. This difference in interpretation suggests that political narratives never fully determine meaning, but rather always negotiate with the audience's concrete experiences.

The process of refiguration also explains why the narrative of power is acceptable even when material reality has not changed much. As Edelman points out, political symbols and stories often work more strongly at the level of perception than at the level of real policy (Edelman, 2025). In this case, the public not only judges power based on measurable results, but on the extent to which the narrative circulates in line with their political expectations, anxieties, and imaginations. A successful narrative is one that is able to "make sense" in the audience's daily life, even though structurally the problem of power persists. Social media plays a crucial role in accelerating and expanding this refiguration process. Unlike conventional media that is relatively centralized, digital media allows political narratives to be interpreted, repeated, twisted, or even openly opposed. Bennett and Segerberg show that in the logic of connectivity-based collective action, political narratives become more personal and emotional, as individuals are directly involved in the production and circulation of meaning (Bennett & Livingston, 2025). In this context, mimesis III no longer takes place in a linear manner, but rather is fragmentary and simultaneous. However, this fragmentation does not necessarily weaken the narrative of power. Quite the opposite, the strong narrative configuration of the mimesis II stage often provides a basic framework that limits the direction of interpretation. Although the public may interpret them differently, the difference still moves within the pre-arranged field of meaning. Fairclough calls this condition the hegemonic effect of discourse, in which variations in interpretation remain within ideologically acceptable limits.

The effects of refiguration also differ between social groups. Groups that economically and politically benefit from the status quo tend to interpret the power narrative as a guarantee of stability and order. In contrast, marginalized groups often read the same narrative ambivalently, between hope and suspicion. This difference strengthens van Dijk's thesis that the meaning of discourse is always related to social position and the power relations of the audience (Korrelboom et al., 2025). At this point, narrative refiguration becomes a political arena in itself. Narratives of power can be reproduced through symbolic support, but they can also experience resistance through irony, satire, or cynical readings circulating in the digital space. However, the resistance is not always radical. In many cases, it actually extends the life of the narrative by keeping the issue in the public conversation, albeit with shifting meaning. This phenomenon explains why Indonesian democracy can remain electorally competitive, but stagnate in the deepening of substantive democracy. Thus, mimesis III affirms that power works through the dynamic relationship between the text and the audience. Political narratives are not only produced by political actors, but are constantly negotiated by the public in the context of their own experiences. In Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, refiguration opens up space for criticism, but at the same time shows its limitations. Ideological criticism becomes possible precisely because meaning is never completely closed; However, the strength of narrative lies in its ability to frame possible meanings from the start. This is where the importance of reading Indonesian politics lies as a narrative field, where power is maintained not only through institutions, but through stories that continue to be revived by the community.

#### 4.4 Ideology in the Narrative of Power

The mimesis stage III shows that the narrative of power does not stop at the production and circulation of meaning but continues to live through the interpretation of the audience. However, this refiguration process does not take place in a completely free space. Political narratives always carry an ideological charge that works subtly by establishing the boundaries of meaning: what is considered reasonable, who is seen as legitimate, and which positions are placed as deviant. Thus, ideology does not exist

as an explicit doctrine, but is woven into the structure of the story itself. Within the framework of this analysis, ideology can be understood as a logic of meaning that naturalizes certain power relations. Ricoeur emphasizes that narratives have the ability to "configure the world of action" in a certain way, so that certain actions and social positions seem plausible and acceptable (Ricoeur, 2026). In Indonesian politics, the narrative of power often embeds moral values in political actors and social groups, so that differences in interests translate into ethical differences. At this point, ideology works not by imposing agreements, but by framing conflict in seemingly natural moral categories.

This ideological charge is evident in the way political narratives define the line between "right" and "wrong". Political actors who are placed within the narrative as agents of change, moral guardians, or representatives of the people are positioned as legitimate subjects to rule. Instead, parties outside of that configuration are represented as an obstacle, a threat, or a remnant of the past that needs to be removed. This process is in line with what Edelman calls the production of symbolic enemies, in which social complexity is simplified into an easily recognizable moral opposition (Edelman, 2025). In this context, ideology does not always work repressively, but rather through symbolic consensus. Gramsci called this mechanism hegemony, which is the ability of the dominant group to lead through approval, not coercion (Ploszka, 2024). The narrative of power serves as a hegemonic medium because it provides a narrative framework that allows the public to identify with power, even as unequal structural relations persist. In other words, ideology works through stories that make power feel close, personal, and meaningful.

Critical discourse analysis helps clarify how ideology operates at the language level. Fairclough shows that discourse determines not only what is talked about, but also what is considered worthy of discussion (Korrelboom et al., 2025). In Indonesia's political narrative, certain issues such as stability, morality, and unity are often overemphasized, while structural issues such as oligarchy or economic inequality tend to be marginalized or technocratically framed. Thus, ideology works through selection and structuring of meaning, not through open denial. The narrative also determines "who is in power" by attributing leadership to certain personal qualities. Political personalization, as noted by (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019), allowing power to be detached from institutions and attached to figures. The ideology at work here is not merely an individual ideology, but an ideology that centers legitimacy on the character, morality, and life narrative of the leader. As a result, criticism of policies or procedures can easily be interpreted as an attack on a figure or even on the "will of the people". However, it is important to note that ideology in the power narrative is not monolithic. The process of reconfiguring the audience opens up space for alternative reading, although that space is often limited. On social media, dominant narratives can be parodied, reversed, or criticized, but these criticisms often move within the same vocabulary and symbols. Van Dijk calling this condition an ideological reproduction through everyday discourse, where even resistance can help strengthen the existing framework of meaning. Thus, an analysis of ideology in the narrative of power shows that Indonesian politics is not only determined by electoral competition or institutional design, but also by the stories that govern the way the public understands truth, error, and legitimacy. Narrative serves as a reality filtering mechanism, allowing power to be reproduced without always having to appear as power. In Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, dismantling ideology means critically rereading political stories, realizing that meaning is always open to reinterpretation, but never detached from the power relations that frame it

## V. Conclusion

This research shows that power in contemporary Indonesian politics is not sufficiently understood through institutional analysis, electoral procedures, or public policy alone. Through Paul Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics, this study emphasizes that power works at the narrative level, namely through the way social experiences are configured, circulated, and interpreted in political discourse. Thus, the legitimacy of power is produced and maintained through the construction of symbolic meaning. Analysis of the three stages of mimesis shows that the narrative of power is rooted in relatively stable socio-political pre-understandings, such as oligarchy, procedural democracy, and leadership personalization. In the configuration stage, political actors build leadership stories through moral metaphors, conflict narratives, and heroic figures to simplify political complexity. This narrative is then reinterpreted by the audience, especially in the digital space, which allows for a variety of meanings but remains within the established framework. In the process, ideology works subtly by defining legitimacy, threats, and naturalized values in the public sphere.

The main contribution of this research lies in the application of Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics in Indonesian political studies, which enriches dominant approaches such as critical discourse analysis and political communication by adding temporal and narrative dimensions. This approach suggests that political

experience is structured as a story that connects the past, present, and future, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of how power is interpreted. In practical terms, these findings imply that the analysis and practice of political communication need to consider the narrative dimension as a key factor in the formation of public legitimacy. However, this study has limitations in the relatively limited amount and type of data and focuses on text-based qualitative analysis, so it has not fully captured the dynamics of audience reception in a broader empirical manner. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop this approach through a combination of methods, such as quantitative analysis, experimental studies, or digital ethnography, in order to broaden the understanding of how power narratives are produced, disseminated, and negotiated in various political contexts.

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