# Visual Structure and Verbal Narrative: Reproduction of Socio-Cultural Values and Political Realities in the 2nd Vice-Presidential Debate of the 2024 Presidential Election

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## ABSTRACT

**It appears that there has been a reproduction of values behind the stage of the 2024 Presidential & Vice-Presidential Candidate debate, the use of costumes is not just a cloth covering the body, but a symbol of identity and political communication strategy carried through the elaboration of social and cultural capital. This study aims to answer three things, namely: *First,* to see the socio-cultural values carried in the construction of the political reality of the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential election campaign in Indonesia for the Ganjar-Mahfud candidates in the 2nd Vice-Presidential Candidate debate through the visual structure of costumes in the context of verbal content narrative; *Second,* to find out the socio-political reality constructed in the interpretation of socio-cultural values reproduced in the candidate's Performance, especially only in the subjective political reality section; *Third,* to find out the meaning of the interpretation of the candidate's Performance displayed. Values, norms, symbols of religion, ethnicity, locality or institutions for the candidate's legitimacy in his victory are the focus of discussion and analysis. The urgency of being studied and researched in academic literature to answer why, in the context of the reproduction of socio-cultural values and political reality, it is necessary to look at the context of social class based on social and cultural capital, so that it produces a specific meaning in the candidate's Performance? This study uses the socio-cultural reproduction theory and the political reality concept. An interpretive qualitative method to examine the reproduction of socio-cultural values and political reality through the visual structure of costumes, then contextualized with tabulated verbal narrative content to analyze the candidate's performance according to the themes and sub-themes, the substance of the content given by the committee to Vice-Presidential Candidate Mahfud MD. The research findings show three things, namely: *First,* a comprehensive understanding of the reproduction of socio-cultural values through the display of the visual structure of costumes and verbal narrative content in the dialogue of the 2nd debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential Candidate; *Second,* the construction of the political reality of the**

**candidates carried through the YouTube channels of the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU RI) and SCTV; *Third,* Interpretation of Candidates' Performance in the Featured Reality by the candidates. The study results indicate a reproduction of socio-cultural values and political reality that produces the performance of the Ganjar-Mahfud candidates based on subjective political reality.**

**Keywords:** Political Image, 2024 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debate, Political Reality, Reproduction of Socio-Cultural Values, Subjective Political Reality.

## INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential elections reflect a significant shift in national political communication patterns. Debates, as a form of political communication, contribute to democratic practices. In this regard, the debate stage serves not only as a platform for exchanging ideas but also as a means of building an image and influencing public perception. Indonesia is the third-largest democracy in the world, with social media used as a news source through both print and television [1]. This demonstrates a significant shift in public consumption of digital politics. Campaigns are no longer confined to conventional media, but have shifted to digital spaces like YouTube, which offer broad reach and direct public engagement. As explained, YouTube has become a strategic tool for candidates to build their image, convey messages, increase interactive public engagement, and strengthen affiliations with community groups [2]. Campaign content often incorporates cultural symbols, local identities, and religious narratives, demonstrating the close relationship between political space and sociocultural expression. Thus, YouTube's digital space serves as a medium for political communication and an arena for symbolic reproduction where cultural identities, local values, and ideologies are displayed.

Currently, image-based political practices in Indonesia often dominate campaign strategies. For example, in the 2014 presidential election, Prabowo-Hatta implemented an "image war" strategy through mass media, aiming to brand themselves and reach Jokowi-JK voters, thus gaining electability, even though they ultimately lost [2]. This demonstrates that mass media has long been used as a medium for political campaigns. Today, mass media has modernized and created various platforms as digital arenas, including YouTube. YouTube is not merely a vacuum, but is saturated with the deliberate reproduction of socio-cultural values. Candidates discuss work programs, development visions, and project images reflecting specific cultural representations to build public trust and appeal. Contests between politicians and leadership candidates often employ marketing in their winning strategies to gain public support [3]. In this case, political marketing is viewed from the perspective of winning strategies using imagery or purely substance, by democratic election practices. Political practices such as campaign slogans or the use of local cultural symbols demonstrate the struggle for power, habitus, and social class as aspects of cultural representation in political campaigns, as explained in Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction [4], [5]. Therefore, the dominance in the campaign strategy can be through visual language depicted through daily activities with costumes that represent the candidate's socio-cultural values.

Ideally, the political campaign process should be a means of conveying ideas and rationally exchanging them. Democracy requires openness of information and substantial argumentation, not merely the mobilization of emotions or the exploitation of cultural identity for electoral

purposes. This is supported by Habermas and Rawles' theory of deliberative democracy, which contains structural elements of the normative theory of political parties, namely the special status of political parties: *First,* as mediators between cultural backgrounds and political forums; *Second,* between the political system and the public sphere; and *Third,* between individuals and the state, thus providing a central position for political actors to use reason in public deliberation [6]. This means that political campaigns should be based on policy-based arguments, programs, and visions and missions in line with the substance of the debate, not merely image-based or emotional strategies designed by political actors or political parties. When campaigns place too much emphasis on symbolic and emotional aspects, there is concern that there will be a shift from the quality of deliberative democracy to superficial political practices. In this regard, the media's role should be to educate the public, not simply to serve as a channel for symbol-based propaganda [7]. In addition, digital media can be a means of political participation for the younger generation to maintain credibility, data validity, balanced reporting, and support the implementation of digital democracy [8]. Therefore, excessive emphasis on emotional rhetoric indicates immaturity in democracy. This can create shallow politics and narrow the space for substantive discussion of visions, missions, programs, and policies during the second Vice-Presidential debate in 2024.

There is a gap between reality and the ideal practice of democratic politics. Politics, which should be a space for exchanging ideas and rational programs, is filled more with image strategies. This shows the imbalance between image and substance, which are the hopes and foundations of work programs when candidates eventually succeed in occupying the leadership seat. This raises important questions that need to be answered through academic studies: *First,* how does the visual structure of costumes reproduce the socio-cultural values promoted by the Ganjar-Mahfud pair?; *Second,* how is political reality constructed in the interpretation of socio-cultural values in the second debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential Candidates?; *Third,* how is the Interpretation of Candidates' Performance in the Featured Reality? This research emphasizes a critical analysis of the three questions above, resulting in an interpretation of the reproduction of values formed by the candidates.

The urgency of this research stems from the limited research examining the reproduction of socio-cultural values promoted by candidates through digital media. Previous studies have focused more on digital campaign content, political agenda strategies, and political communication processes [9], [10], [11]. Thus, this study contributes to expanding the political and cultural communication perspective by involving the reproduction of values promoted by candidates. This approach opens a new understanding regarding digital media that is not only a distributor of political messages, but also forms socio-cultural meanings that the audience can represent. In the context of the Presidential & Vice-Presidential debate, this study explores the socio-cultural values reproduced while observing political reality, resulting in an interpretation of candidate performance through the visual structure of costumes and verbal narrative content published by the YouTube channels of the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU RI) and SCTV. Therefore, this study presents a significant contribution in understanding the relationship between digital media, the reproduction of socio-cultural values, political reality, and the interpretation of political candidate performance in the political contestation arena.

## LITERATURE REVIEW
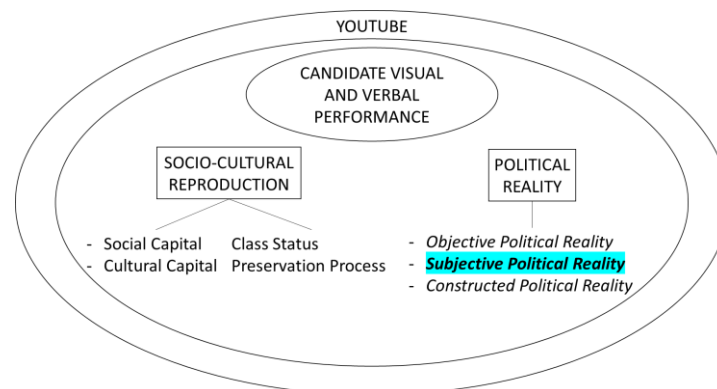


**Picture 1: Framework of thinking**
Source: Researcher's Process

### Theory of Socio-Cultural Reproduction

The main theory adapted from Bourdieu consists of the concepts of capital and reproduction itself. Capital includes cultural capital (knowledge, skills, academic degrees, tastes), social capital (relationships, networks, social connections), economic capital (money, assets, wealth), and symbolic capital (status, honor, and prestige)[12]. Reproduction is a systemic process for maintaining the structure of social relations between generations through social, cultural, and educational mechanisms that make inequality appear natural or legitimate, even though mobility is limited [13]. The education system also contributes to the reproduction of social inequality through what is known as cultural arbitrariness (values, norms, language, thought styles, and customs considered normal by a dominant group, but in fact, arbitrary). This means that reproduction perpetuates social structures from generation to generation, structures that existed before individuals were born, and limited mobility reinforces the system and makes inequality seem normal. In this context, candidates attempt to portray the visual and verbal structures they reproduce.

Cultural reproduction can be interpreted as the process by which cultural values, norms, traditions, and symbols held by dominant groups are passed on and maintained, primarily through institutions such as education. In this case, cultural reproduction is controlled by the dominant class to strengthen its social status and perpetuate its interests. Cultural reproduction maintains the dominant group's power [13]. This serves to ensure that certain cultures and social frameworks of meaning remain alive and transmitted from one generation to the next, a process also known as habituation. Furthermore, cultural reproduction serves as a social mechanism that not only transmits values but also shapes how people think and act to align with existing social structures.

Social reproduction focuses on the strategies of social groups to maintain and pass on their social status, which will then increase depending on knowledge, values and norms, as well as culture and way of thinking [12]. This means that the greater the role of cultural capital (such as higher education, artistic taste, language skills), the greater the attention paid to educational matters. This is reinforced through social capital, namely the network of social relations and connections that enable individuals to access various social and educational opportunities, as well as cultural resources as capital. As explained, social capital is an institution involving

norms, networks, and social trust that encourage coordination and cooperation as social collaboration for the common good [14]. This serves as a foundation for elaborating findings and discussions. Thus, social capital serves as a means or medium for maintaining or strengthening cultural capital within a social group. This allows cultural values, skills, and customs to be passed down and maintained from generation to generation, contributing to sociocultural reproduction.

Based on the two points above, the reproduction of socio-cultural values can be explained as a process of preservation, re-presenting a reality according to the context of the needs and interests of political actors. In this study, socio-cultural reproduction is the starting point illustrated by the costume symbol. The costumes worn by Ganjar-Mahfud in the second vice-presidential debate symbolize values, norms, traditions, and socio-cultural symbols that are reproduced and brought into YouTube as a medium for conveying messages.

**Political Reality**
Political reality is closely related to language. As explained, language and political reality can be observed at three levels, namely: *First,* stylistic (language style or word choice already carries a particular bias); *Second,* manipulative (information provided is not neutral, thus causing misinformation or distortion of reality); and *Third,* semantic (language is not a message conveyor, but rather a construction and interpretation of social reality) [15]. In this context, candidates act as political actors, portrayed through the media as message-delivering mediators who determine how political language is packaged and disseminated to the public. In other words, political actors can dominate discursive space and exercise an invisible yet highly effective form of power. Based on this, if these three levels of language and political reality are continuously produced and consumed by the public, they can normalize specific meanings, forming hegemonic political perceptions.

Conceptualization or telling events or circumstances related to politics is an effort to construct reality or is also known as the process of constructing reality [16]. For example, reports of gatherings in open fields to listen to political speeches during election season result from constructing a reality about events commonly occurring during that election period. In this case, the mass media narrates these events by constructing the reality into a meaningful story. The reality constructed by the media tends not to provide a comprehensive picture, because it often selects parts that are considered important, ignoring other things, and interprets it from a narrow perspective [17]. Given that media representation significantly influences individual perceptions of social reality, critical thinking about the understandings presented by the media is necessary. In a political context, this is particularly relevant because public perception of candidates and political issues is heavily influenced by the political reality constructed and conveyed by the candidates through the media.

In this study, political reality is seen as the result or product of the process of reproducing socio-cultural values of candidate performance in the digital arena. According to Kaid (1991) in [18], political reality is divided into three categories, these are: *First,* objective political reality; *Second,* subjective political reality; and *Third,* constructed political reality. Objective political reality encompasses political events as they occur. This means that real political facts and events can be directly observed. Subjective political reality then examines political events as perceived by actors and citizens. This means that this political reality can vary depending on

the perspective and background of each individual observing it. As explained, there are three roles of the media in constructing political reality that form political images, namely: *First,* the selection of symbols as a function of language; *Second,* the selection of facts presented as a framing strategy; and *Third,* the media's willingness to provide space as an agenda-setting [19]. This means political reality is formed and reconstructed through coverage and representation, which assign specific meaning to political events. However, this research focuses only on subjective political reality.

Based on the above, subjective political reality is the researcher's choice because of its in-depth focus on how political actors or candidates reproduce socio-cultural values and political realities, resulting in dynamic and contextual performative interpretations. In this context, costumes are not merely visual attributes, but rather part of the reproduction of socio-cultural values whose reality is constructed by the candidate. They can function as symbols of political legitimacy, strategic talking points, and arenas for socio-cultural capital battles between different support groups. The costumes are not only perceived individually but also consumed and reproduced socially by the public, particularly through YouTube as a messaging medium. The verbal narrative content of the dialogue during the second vice-presidential debate becomes a crucial element in constructing and communicating political meaning. This narrative analysis attempts to identify whether the messages conveyed align with the debate's substantive themes (economy (populist & digital), investment, finance, taxes, regional and state budget governance, urban areas, infrastructure, and trade) or whether they have shifted to mere political image-building tools. Therefore, the visual structure of the costumes and the verbal narrative content of the debate are integral to viewing socio-cultural values and political realities as they are simultaneously reproduced and understood by the public. The subjective political reality approach is highly relevant in this research because it portrays political reality as a product of social interaction and the construction of meaning that constantly changes depending on perspective, not simply as objective facts.

## METHODS

This research is based on an interpretive paradigm that emphasizes understanding the meaning, context, and subjective interpretation of the phenomena studied, particularly in analyzing audio texts in the form of narrative dialogues of debates between candidates and visual images in the form of comprehensively elaborated costumes. This approach focuses on an in-depth analysis of the audio text and the visual structure of the image, analyzed with social and cultural capital, reproduction, and political reality. Thus producing a candidate's readable performance in their visual and verbal communication. Based on this, this study uses an interpretive qualitative method that emphasizes in-depth meaning and interpretation. The primary focus is directed at the visual and verbal aspects of the content of the second Vice-Presidential debate to identify symbolic meanings and the social background behind them. This analysis includes reading texts and visuals, mapping the cultural context of the elements used by the candidates, and tracing the implicit political messages they wish to convey based on socio-cultural values and the construction of political reality contained in the candidates' visual displays and verbal narrative content during the debate. Data collection was conducted through: *First,* visual documentation of the second debate video of the 2024 Vice-Presidential Candidates, with the source being the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU RI) YouTube channel. The prologue and epilogue sections were supported by the Surya Citra Televisi (SCTV) YouTube channel to supplement the data on costume structure and verbal

narrative content; *Second,* a literature review that included references from books, academic journals, media articles, and previous research relevant to the issue under study.

The data presented is the visual structure of Ganjar-Mahfud's costumes and the verbal narrative content in the dialogue of the 2nd Vice-Presidential Candidate debate on the KPU RI YouTube channel, and additional data from the SCTV YouTube channel is needed for the prologue and epilogue of the debate that are not included in the KPU RI YouTube channel. During the epilogue (opening of the 2nd debate), the pair wore regional costumes from East Nusa Tenggara and Madura, then in the epilogue (media conference), they wore *Sat Set* shirts and Tes Tes. It is known that visual symbols can be the main component of political communication, along with the dominance of visual media such as social media, so it is necessary to dig deeper into the function of visual symbols as interpreted by the public [20]. This means that the use of regional costumes is important to research because it can be a political strategy to attract the sympathy of voters from certain regions, which then increases visual appeal and a deep impression so that the public easily remembers it. This is supported by the understanding that the effectiveness of political communication is determined mainly by a shared perception between candidates and voters through reaching areas of shared values within the cultural values of the community [21]. Researchers chose the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU RI) YouTube channel because it is an official and credible source from the election organizers, publishing live debates. SCTV was also chosen because it required comprehensive data from the opening to the closing, which the KPU RI did not publish. Link: KPURI:https://www.youtube.com/live/YzC828FYrwM?si=JKLeZWrY_MNerAnh    Link SCTV: https://www.youtube.com/live/UhTrAd1TypQ?si=MMzoJTmS-rAvth1w In this case, YouTube became a strategic channel in the process of reproducing social and cultural symbols carried out by candidates, including through visualizations such as the use of traditional clothing, ethnic or religious symbols, and local expressions. This kind of representation is part of a communication strategy that plays a role in building a political image and expanding the candidate's social legitimacy in the eyes of the public, by Bourdieu's idea that symbolic power is reproduced through social arenas such as the media [18]. Thus, the research process not only focuses on the meaning of the substantive text (text, talk, act, and artifact), but also explores the structures and dynamics of power hidden behind it.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study presents findings in the form of the visual structure of the candidates' costumes and a narrative table of verbal content from the dialogue of the second debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential Candidates. These two elements represent the reproduction of socio-cultural values promoted by the Ganjar-Mahfud pair. In the discussion, the analysis is supported by the theory of socio-cultural reproduction and political reality constructed by the candidates as political actors, which is used as a supporting concept in the analysis and discussion of this research.

**Result**

This study presents the structure of the presidential and vice-presidential debate costumes worn by Ganjar-Mahfud. The costumes feature traditional attire from East Nusa Tenggara and Madura, complete with accessories. Both candidates' costumes were visually analyzed based on the elements displayed during the second vice-presidential debate in 2024, including the prologue, content, and epilogue.

**Visual Structure of Presidential & Vice-Presidential Candidate Debate Costumes:**



Traditional Clothing of East Nusa Tenggara "Kain Tenun Ikat"

**Picture 2: Visual Structure of Ganjar Pranowo's Costume from East Nusa Tenggara "Kain Tenun Ikat"**
Source: Researcher's Processing

Ganjar Pranowo's costume as a presidential candidate in the second presidential-Vice-Presidential debate originated from Rote City, located in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province. This costume is known as "Kain Tenun Ikat." The Kain Tenun Ikat costume consists of several elements, such as a *Ti'i Langga* hat, a *Habas* necklace, a Sikka motif woven cloth used as a sash, a *Pending*, and a Kain Tenun Ikat wrapped around the waist. In Rote culture, the *Ti'i Langga* hat reflects the strength, leadership, and honor of men [22]. The round necklace that is positioned right on the heart is called *Habas*, symbolizing the one heart of the Rote people as one unbroken unit with strong bonds of brotherhood, always holding hands, and having a spirit of cooperation in social life together [22]. Kain tenun Motif Sikka weaving originates from the Sikka Regency in East Flores. Sikka ikat fabrics feature unique and diverse patterns, such as the sarong motif, which symbolizes the strength and beauty of nature. Sikka ikat is also known for its use of bright, vibrant colors. These woven fabrics are works of art that showcase the rich traditional beauty of Flores [23]. Lastly is *Pending* or Peni, which is jewelry made of brass, silver, copper, or gold that has been worn by our ancestors around the waist when wearing traditional clothing [24]. Based on this, Ganjar Pranowo's costume represents a symbol of leadership that upholds strength, unity, and respect for local culture. Each element, such as the *Ti'i Langga* hat, *Habas* necklace, Sikka ikat woven cloth, and *Pending*, reinforces the image of a leader who is down-to-earth, inclusive, and rooted in the values of traditional Indonesian wisdom.



Madura Traditional Costume "Pesa'an"

**Picture 3: Visual Structure of Mahfud MD's Costume from Madura "Pesa'an"**
Source: Researcher's Processing

Mahfud MD's costume as Vice-Presidential candidate in the second presidential-Vice-Presidential debate originated in Madura. This costume is known as "Pesa'an." Some elements of the Pesa'an costume include a tapoghan *odheng*, a striped (red and white) shirt, a loose black shirt, and a belt. For Madurese, the *odheng* complements or accessories the Pesa'an to enhance a dashing appearance for men. In the second debate, Mahfud wore a tapoghan *odheng* with a red floral or flame motif, triangular in shape, and uncovered on top of the head [25]. The twin triangles on the *odheng* can be interpreted as humility and firmness, two values that align with Mahfud's character in upholding the law in Indonesia. Mahfud is seen wearing a red and white striped shirt, which symbolizes humanity derived from *Bopo-Biyung* (father and mother), with the bold lines symbolizing the bravery of the soul as well as the spirit of fighting against enemies and persistent sustenance [26]. Loose black clothes have a symbolic meaning related to something pure, meaning that Madurese people do not hesitate in all their actions and show a firmness in life that has been carefully calculated [26]. A belt made of cowhide with a plain pattern and brown or black color. The front part functions to store money and tighten the pants tie [27]. Brodo makes local shoes with the aim of making domestic shoe products global [22]. These shoes were made because the presidential and vice-presidential candidate number 2 is in line with Brodo's steps to align the meaning of local elements with the leadership innovation of Ganjar-Mahfud.
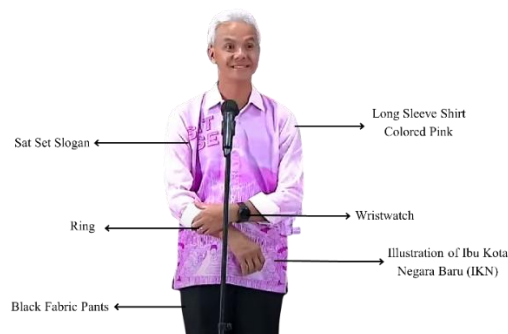


**Picture 4: Visual Structure of Ganjar's *Sat Set* Costume**
Source: Researcher's Processing

As seen in Figure 4, the visual structure of Ganjar's costume includes a pink long-sleeved shirt, the *"Sat Set"* slogan, a ring, a watch, an illustration of the New Capital City (IKN), and black trousers. The pink and purple colors on the Ganjar-Mahfud shirt were chosen to honor the second Vice-Presidential debate, which coincided with Mother's Day, December 22, 2023 [28]. Then, a wedding ring appears on Ganjar's left ring finger, which is a symbol that the person is in a committed relationship in Western culture. [29]. In this case, it indicates that Ganjar is married. A watch worn on the right wrist is a symbol of wealth and status. Wearing a watch on the right wrist is a tradition that dates back to ancient times, when jewelry was considered a luxury item and worn only by privileged individuals or royalty [30]. Furthermore, it demonstrates punctuality, discipline, and a respect for time. The slogan *"Sat Set"* is Javanese for conveying the impression of Ganjar-Mahfud's concise, alert, practical, agile, fast, and responsive work ethic [31]. Then, the illustration of the Ibu Kota Negara Baru (IKN) was displayed as the design of the long-sleeve shirts for Ganjar-Mahfud at the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate of 2024. Finally, the black fabric pants worn by Ganjar can refer to the dress code for state events and formal occasions to demonstrate formality or appear professional in front of the audience.

**Picture 5: Visual Structure of the Costume *Tas Tes* Mahfud MD**
Source: Researcher's Processing

In Picture 5, Mahfud MD is seen wearing a long-sleeved purple shirt. The choice of color symbolizes the celebration of Mother's Day, coinciding with the second vice-presidential debate on December 22, 2023. The shirt also features the slogan '*Tas Tes*' and an illustration of the New Capital City (IKN). Mahfud is wearing glasses, which complement his appearance. Besides helping to see objects clearly, glasses can also enhance the social value of the wearer, as they can be perceived as highly intellectual, hard-working individuals, viewed as honest, and trustworthy. In this case, Mahfud is wearing square-shaped glasses that reflect the image of an active, competent, and also apathetic leader [32]. The visual structure of the final costume consists of black fabric pants. The black fabric pants Mahfud wore are long pants that cover the legs and ankles. This type of pants is commonly worn in formal and casual events, such as while working or attending official events, giving an impression of being clever, classy, serious, and authoritative, and suitable for various occasions [33]. Next, highlighting Mahfud's body gesture in the picture above, Mahfud's hands fall into the form of a barrier signal gesture known as body-cross. Body-cross is a position where the arms or hands are crossed in front of the body like a barrier, commonly performed when feeling awkward or nervous when approaching a dominant host [34].

His movement is also characterized by rubbing his hands together, as if he were washing his hands like Mahfud. This action is usually performed unconsciously; even the person making the gesture may not remember doing it. This gesture is not intended to be a physical defense, but rather a biological protection that is usually disguised so it is not visible to others. Thus, the overall costume and body gestures of Mahfud during the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate of 2025 demonstrate a leader who is intelligent, authoritative, socially concerned, and capable of building emotional closeness with the public. Meanwhile, the body-cross gesture shows an emotional dimension that suggests alertness, caution, or awkwardness in high-pressure situations, forming a complex visual narrative related to his personality in front of the public.

**Verbal Narrative Content in the 2024 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debate Dialogue:**
In Table 1, the content of the verbal narration in the second vice-presidential debate of 2024 is divided into prologue (introduction), body (theme up to closing statement), and epilogue (media conference). In the prologue section, candidate Ganjar-Mahfud only displayed visuals and did not speak. Then, entering the body of the debate, Mahfud MD began to answer questions related to the theme given by the panelists concerning the economy (people's welfare & digital), investment, finance, taxation, management of regional and national budgets, urban issues,

infrastructure, and trade, which concluded with a closing statement. For the epilogue, a media conference was held as a session for the media to question the Ganjar-Mahfud pair regarding the second vice-presidential debate that had taken place.

**Table 1: Verbal Narrative in the Dialogue of the 2nd Presidential & Vice-Presidential Candidate Debate**

| VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MAHFUD MD DEBATE | |
|---|---|
| OPENING (PROLOGUE) | |
| **Visual** | **Verbal** |
| <br>Forming symbols using both hands | (No talking) |
| <br>Membentuk salam tiga jari dengan tangan kanan | (No talking) |
| **1. THEME: ECONOMY (PEOPLE AND DIGITAL)**<br>Digitalization can be beneficial. However, it can also be detrimental to partners and consumers. How can the candidate pair's policies address this? | |
| Visual | Verbal |
| <br>Serious expression and eyes looking at the camera | "No one can avoid the digital economy and cannot be avoided but one must be careful" |
| <br>Straight body, serious expression, and right hand pointing to the podium | "Civil law via gadgets, want to borrow so much money, yes, the interest is so much, yes, that's civil law." |
| <br>Hand movements when naming three infrastructures, accompanied by a slight nod | "Three infrastructures must be built: first, physical infrastructure...<br>Then, regulatory infrastructure, and then digitalization infrastructure." |

| **2. THEME: INVESTMENT** ||
| Kontribusi usaha menengah terhadap ekonomi menengah hanya 13% sedangkan di Thailand 18% dan Singapore 22%, bagaimana strategi pasangan calon untuk meningkatkan investasi dan mendorong ekonomi kecil untuk meningkat? ||
| Visual | Verbal |
|  Hand movements facing forward, slowly shaking head, and a serious, convincing expression. | "Investing is difficult, sir, the procedures are long-winded, there are conflicts of interest." |
| **3. THEME: FINANCE, TAXES, AND APBD & APBN GOVERNANCE** ||
| Only one-third of the state budget can be allocated for development, but the candidates demand significant funding to meet their stated vision and mission. Which should be their priority: physical development or human resources and the people's economy? ||
| Visual | Verbal |
|  Left hand on the podium, right hand raised, and with a teasing gesture | "Not a single investor has entered there yet" (IKN) |
|  Body leaning forward, head nodding down, arms swinging forward | "Tapi semua yang sudah jalan itu dari APBN, sehingga diperlukan langkah-langkah perbaikan agar warisan baik Presiden Jokowi bisa kita lanjutkan" |
| **4. THEME: URBAN** ||
| With 56% of Indonesia's population living in urban areas, problems such as waste, slums, and transportation will become increasingly complex. How can candidate pairs prepare specific fiscal measures to address these issues? ||
| Visual | Verbal |
|  Body tilted to the right, eyes glance to the right and left (as if thinking) | "I was a bit surprised that they wanted to build 40 cities on the level of Jakarta in 5 years." |

| 　Serious expression, right hand pointing, head nodding down | "It has been decades since the IKN was implemented, investments are still in the form of promises and nothing has been implemented." |
|---|---|
| 　Left hand scratches head, expression of doubt towards Vice-Presidential Candidate 01 | "It's amazing that 40 cities on the same level as Jakarta are already metropolitan." |
| 　Right hand pointing, eyes glancing to the upper right while speaking | "Is the funding from the APBN budget or APBD budget? Is a special institution like the one asked earlier necessary?" |

### 5. THEME: INFRASTRUCTURE

In five years, the cost will be 2,350 trillion rupiah, while sanitation and clean water are of concern. What is the candidate pair's strategy to ensure social infrastructure is addressed without reducing regional budgets?

| Visual | Verbal |
|---|---|
| 　The body is tilted and leaning to the right, facing the 02 Vice-Presidential Candidate, with a serious facial expression while staring sharply. | "It seems like it hasn't been answered yet, earlier what was answered was all about physical infrastructure." |
| 　The head swings from side to side, the gaze occasionally turns to the moderator, and the right hand is raised while explaining. | "If physical infrastructure can be manipulated from the APBN and APBD" |

| 6. THEME: TRADE |
|---|
| To liberalize the economy, Indonesia has ratified free trade agreements, but they haven't been optimally utilized to boost exports and investment. What strategies do the candidates use to increase exports and narrow the trade deficit? |

| Visual | Verbal |
|---|---|
| <br>Eyes fixed on notes, head nodding slowly towards the audience then giving an attentive look | "First, prioritize economic diplomacy" |
| <br>Looking at the audience with a convincing expression | "Akan melakukan perdagangan untuk mengintegrasikan perdagangan nasional ke perdagangan global" |
| <br>Berbicara sambil mengangkat tangan kiri dan mengarahkannya ke depan, menatap dengan ekspresi yakin, dan menekankan setiap kata | "Masuk dengan strategi kedua tadi, bahwa kualitas barang dagangan kita itu bisa diterima luar negeri" |
| <br>Serious expression, looking towards Vice-Presidential Candidate 02, responding with a firm intonation | "The diplomatic system needs to be reviewed... There's a party's mandate... After the assignment, it's unclear, and you don't understand." |
| *CLOSING STATEMENT* | |
| Visual | Verbal |
| <br>Bowing his head to the podium while reading notes, speaking with a straightforward intonation. | Ensuring a clean nation through impartial law enforcement. Preparing 21 flagship programs:<br>1. Create 17 million jobs.<br>2. One health facility, one health worker per village.<br>3. Pocket money for Posyandu (Integrated Service Post) cadres. |

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| | 4. Provide 10 million homes, making owning a home as easy as owning a motorbike. |
| | 5. Schools receive salaries, graduates are guaranteed a job. |
| | 6. One graduate from every poor family. |
| | 7. Women progress. |
| | 8. Workers are promoted. |
| | 9. Free tuition for children of soldiers and Bhayangkara. |
| | 10. Easy business, including MSMEs and cooperatives. |
| | 11. Mosques prosper, mosque administrators are protected. |
| | 12. Quranic teachers and other religious teachers are paid. |
| | 13. Secure food supply, affordable prices. |
| | 14. Happy seniors, happy children and grandchildren. |
| | 15. Farmers are proud to farm. |
| | 16. At sea, prosperous fishermen. |
| | 17. Independent, high-achieving individuals with disabilities, one village, one car. |
| | 18. Free and equitable super-fast internet access. |
| | 19. Social assistance will definitely continue, but it must be well-targeted. |
| | 20. Eliminate corruption, collusion, and nepotism. |
| | 21. Magic KTP. |

**MEDIA CONFERENCE (EPILOGUE)**

1.      Earlier, Mr. Mahfud mentioned carbon storage, which was said to be the theme of the 4th debate. Is this a note for the KPU from Mr. Mahfud himself for the future? Maybe there shouldn't be any questions that are outside the theme?.

| Visual | Verbal |
|---|---|
| <br>Ganjar stood straight with his hands behind his back and Mahfud answered with his hands in his trouser pockets, with a firm intonation. | "We have already made quite extensive notes on carbon capture, but it will be on the 21st, so the question asked earlier is irrelevant." |

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| <br>Ganjar's expression is serious with furrowed brows, hands folded in front.<br>Mahfud responds with a serious expression, right hand pointing forward, left hand in his pocket, and a sharp gaze ahead. | "Earlier I still followed the rules, including not being allowed to leave that podium, right?" |
| 2. Why did her clothes suddenly turn pink? What was the reason? | |
| <br>Ganjar answered with a wide smile, his left hand tucked into his trouser pocket, and his gaze fixed on the audience.<br>Mahfud looked down at his shirt and held it with a faint smile. | "It's Mother's Day and we celebrate with two colors that mothers usually wear, purple and pink" |
| 3. Let me introduce myself, Ibnu from Bloomberg Indonesia, I would like to ask three questions. (1) What topic makes you confident and satisfied with what topic? (2) The response after this debate is optimistic about increasing electability. (3) The recent response from candidate pair 03 regarding the "*ndasmu etik*". | |
| <br>Mahfud answered casually, both hands in front, with his body and gaze directed at the journalist (questioner). | " For me it's the same from one to five because it's a package that my head has prepared" |
|  | " But what I'm most excited about is the fifth and final segment, because I concretely conveyed what we will do to achieve 7% growth." |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mahfud answered casually with both hands in front of his chest. | |
| <br>Ganjar stood with his hands behind his back and looked at the journalist (questioner).<br>Mahfud answered with both fists clenched and a relaxed tone. | "If raising electability is already our optimism, it has even become a conviction" |
| <br>Ganjar folded his arms in front while laughing.<br>Mahfud answered curtly, his face showing a serious expression. | "The term of "*ndasmu etik*" does not exist here, so I don't know" |

Source: Researcher's processing from the YouTube channel KPU RI and SCTV
KPU RI: https://www.youtube.com/live/YzC828FYrwM?si=JKLeZWrY_MNerAnh
SCTV: https://www.youtube.com/live/UhTrAd1TypQ?si=MMzoJTmS-rAvth1w

In the verbal narrative content of Ganjar-Mahfud during the second vice-presidential debate, a firm, rational, and systematic character is evident. They did not speak in the prologue and only showed visuals greeting the audience in traditional Kain Tenun Ikat and Pesa'an costumes. This was followed by the debate contest or content from Mahfud, who answered questions from the panelists according to the theme. In the digital economy theme, Mahfud MD emphasized the importance of regulatory infrastructure to accompany technology. The investment theme critically addresses conflict of interest practices and convoluted bureaucratic procedures. For the themes of finance, taxes, and the governance of regional and national budgets, Mahfud explained that no investors have entered the new capital city, and improvements are needed. Then, regarding urban themes and infrastructure, Mahfud criticized the development of the new capital city and 40 metropolitan areas and the financing of physical infrastructure that can be manipulated from the national and regional budgets. The last theme, to address ways to increase exports and reduce the trade deficit, Mahfud prioritized economic diplomacy, integrating national trade into the global sphere, and improving the quality of local products to be accepted in the global market. During the closing statement, Mahfud presented 21 flagship programs with straightforward narratives, emphasizing equity, social protection, and empowerment of marginalized sectors. Thus, the verbal narrative presented contained the programs' substance and reflected values of justice, inclusivity, and ethical leadership.

When conducting a media conference (epilogue), there were three questions asked by journalists, namely: *First,* related to questions that came out of the theme of the 2ⁿᵈ debate;

*Second,* the reason for the change of clothes from traditional regional costumes to pink; *Third,* themes that make confidence, optimism for increasing elactability, and responses to "*ndasmu etik*". In this case, Mahfud MD answered the first and third questions, stating that he did not get out of the rules because he did not leave the podium. Then the third question was answered with confidence that Mahfud had prepared themes from debates 1 to 5, was optimistic that he could increase his electability, and did not know the meaning of ndasmu ethik. Then, for the second question answered by Ganjar, the change of costume to pink and purple is for wanting to celebrate Mother's Day, which coincides with the date of the 2nd Vice-Presidential Debate, and shows that this candidate loves mothers.

Looking at the visuals of Ganjar-Mahfud in the form of body gestures and expressions, both displayed fingers forming the letter three and 3-finger greeting during the prologue. Then at the time of the epilogue, Ganjar stood upright with his hands behind his back, a serious expression with furrowed eyebrows and hands folded in front, smiling broadly with his left hand stuffed into his pants pocket, and his eyes fixed on journalists while occasionally laughing. Then Mahfud MD during the debate (content), gave a serious expression, looked at the camera, straight body, right hand pointing at the podium, hand movements mentioning three infrastructures with a slight nod, shaking his head slowly, right hand raised in a teasing gesture, glancing at the top right and left, scratching at the same time an expression of doubt towards Cawpres 01, right hand pointing while speaking, right hand raised when explaining, and occasionally looking at notes. As for the epilogue, Mahfud put his hands in his pants pockets, his right hand pointed forward, a sharp look forward, holding the clothes he was wearing, and occasionally both hands in front and clenched or in front of the chest.

## Discussion

Debates between presidential and vice-presidential candidates are no longer merely a venue for conveying visions and exchanging ideas between candidates. Debates have developed into a political performance space with symbolic usurpation and imaging strategies. In this forum, candidates not only appear with verbal statements, but in their political communication also become a means of visual signaling, such as costumes, makeup, hairstyles, and logo design [18]. These elements can shape the image or political identity of the candidates. Then, symbolic power structures also emerge in the form of cultural capital. Here, important elements such as education, art, and literature accumulate into symbolic capital that can be a force to strengthen, challenge, or cause social divisions [35]. In modern politics, communication is not only the content of the message, but also "how" the message is packaged emotionally, visually, and narratively to influence public perception. Both body language, costume choice, and social background shown in the debate are important elements to construct political identity while strengthening symbolic appeal to voters. In addition, these costumes provide a visual narrative that supports Ganjar-Mahfud's political message, namely commitment to Indonesia's cultural diversity, regional empowerment, siding with local wisdom as a down-to-earth, inclusive political identity, and effectively differentiating themselves from other candidates. Therefore, political debates are no longer just a space for rational deliberation, but have transformed into a symbolic contestation arena where visual imagery, cultural capital, and emotional communication strategies play a crucial role in shaping public perception and candidates' political legitimacy in the eyes of voters.

**Reproduction of Socio-Cultural Values through the Visual Structure of Costumes and Verbal Narrative Content in the Dialogue of the 2nd Vice-Presidential Debate 2024:**

The choice of clothing by candidates often reflects certain cultural symbols they want to highlight, for example, traditional clothing that can show respect for Indonesia's cultural heritage while strengthening the nationalist image. In this case, costumes are widely used to represent cultural identities such as heritage, social identity, cultural symbols of local community values, identity expression to define themselves, and convey messages or images to the viewer [39], [40], [41]. Society considers the candidate's way of maintaining and conveying social values important. Dress, demeanor, and the context of social situations, such as public speaking, represent cultural capital (knowledge, speaking skills, artistic tastes, and academic titles or capabilities associated with a certain social status). These positions and contexts also reflect social capital in the form of access to social networks and social positions that enable candidates to perform and communicate in official public spaces. This process is part of the reproduction of socio-cultural values, in which social structures and statuses held by individuals are systemically maintained or inherited through symbols, actions, and social access that are also limited by the norms and values of the dominant group.

In the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate, the Ganjar-Mahfud pair used four costumes. In this case, during the opening of the debate (epilogue), both used traditional costumes of Ikat Tenun and Pesaa'an. Then, when giving closing statements at media conferences, the pair used pink and purple long-sleeved shirts. The costumes were displayed directly and published through the YouTube channel of KPU RI and SCTV, which became a messaging medium or digital arena (where capital is contested and contested). Here, costumes become a medium that carries the narrative that candidates are not just nationalists, but also close to the people through respect for local culture. This is a way for candidates to maintain and convey social values that are considered important by the community.

In Picture 2, Ganjar wears a costume of Kain Tenun Ikat from NTT, representing local identity and a concrete reproduction of socio-cultural values through visual symbols. Ganjar Pranowo chose this costume to symbolize that Ganjar-Mahfud are part of the people and even the people's men, following the campaign tagline "*Tuanku, ya Rakyatku*! We are Ready to be Ruled by the People" [42]. In Bourdieu's framework of cultural and social capital, this costume choice shows how political candidates utilize local cultural heritage as symbolic capital to create an image of leadership rooted in the values of tradition, solidarity, and togetherness. Cultural capital in Ganjar's costume can be seen from the *Ti'i Langga* hat, *Habas* necklace, Sikka ikat weaving, and *Pending* as cultural artifacts passed down between generations and have strong symbolic meanings. The *Ti'i Langga* hat symbolizes might and leadership, becoming an important attribute in building the image of a President. The *Habas* necklace reflects social unity and the spirit of gotong royong, collective values that are part of the habitus of the Rote people. Then Sikka weaving holds the value of strength, natural beauty, and local creativity, symbolizing a rich and classy cultural heritage. Lastly, *Pending*, a distinctive metal belt, often symbolizing authority and social status and is an essential complement in the structure of traditional clothing. *Pending* signifies that the wearer is a figure of social and symbolic importance, usually used by influential people or kings [43]. By wearing this costume, Ganjar shows an attempt at cultural reproduction and symbolic appropriation for the needs of his political campaign. This is done by linking his leadership through local values widely accepted by Indonesian society.

From the social capital perspective, the costume connects the candidate and a particular community whose values are to be brought to the forefront of national politics. This means that social capital works simultaneously with cultural capital through costumes. This gives the candidate access to symbol solidarity from the people of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) and the wider community, who interpret traditional clothing as a symbol of respect for local culture. By wearing these cultural symbols in the 2nd debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential candidate, Ganjar built meaningful socio-political affiliations and recognized the role and local values in shaping social identity. This is by Bourdieu's understanding that social capital is a network of trust and collective norms that can be activated to strengthen one's position in the social structure. Overall, the use of Kain tenun Ikat reflects Ganjar as a leader who has hope, unity, and equality in his leadership, as expected by the people of Rote [44].

In Picture 3, Mahfud MD wore a Pesa'an costume, which in the 2nd debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential Candidate became a representation of the cultural identity of the region of birth as well as a manifestation of cultural capital. In Bourdieu's perspective, the use of this costume can be read as a strategy to reproduce local values through visual symbols that are full of meaning, then republished in digital space as part of forming political legitimacy. Mahfud MD chose this costume because it originated from his homeland to carry populist impressions, which consists of layers of *Priyayi* and the people [1]. Madurese men usually wear Pesa'an in their daily activities, which consists of a red and white striped t-shirt top, black outerwear, black gomboran pants in a large size, and an *odheng* head cover [45]. From the cultural capital perspective, the Pesa'an costume element carries a cultural meaning that reflects the habitus of Madurese society as a local heritage, as a symbol of leadership. The "*odheng* tapoghan" element in the form of twin triangles symbolizes humility and firmness, two moral qualities closely related to Mahfud's figure as a law enforcer. In Bourdieu's context, this element shows the internalization of cultural values that have become part of the social structure. The red-and-white striped shirt symbolizes the origin of humans from *Bapo-Biyung* and represents the spirit of struggle in facing life's challenges. This depicts a populist narrative and Mahfud's closeness to the people. Then the black loose shirt means purity and firmness, strengthening Mahfud's image as a leader who is clean, brave, and thinks carefully in every step.

From the perspective of social capital, Pesa'an costumes become a tool for activating social solidarity (solidarity making performance art) with communities of birth and voters from regions with cultural affinities. Then, *odheng* , striped shirts, and belts become collective symbols that contain shared norms (cultural capital) and strengthen social attachment in national politics. This is important because the art of social appearance in Indonesia can reflect diversity in one, maintain diversity, and promote inclusion [36]. This means that art practices involving communities as a form of solidarity building through cultural inclusion in various regions in Indonesia portray local symbols, such as *odheng*, striped shirts, and belts, as active tools in building cultural-political solidarity. Local Brodo shoes are also a form of strengthening contemporary social capital, namely, collaboration with the UMKM industry as part of the narrative of national economic independence. This is in line with Bourdieu's concept that social capital is not only built from a network of relationships, but also social trust in collective work for common interests.

In Picture 4 and Picture 5, Ganjar is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, and Mahfud MD is wearing purple. From the cultural capital perspective, the pink and purple colors show a culture

associated with a particular social class, namely women or mothers. Both also wear black cloth pants commonly used in formal or official casual events, projecting the impression of classy, intelligent, severe, authoritative, and a form of reproduction of formal dress culture in the political realm. The presence of the IKN motif is a symbolic marker of control over local culture. For Ganjar, the use of wedding rings, cultural capital in the form of a symbol of family commitment, is by social values in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the watch reflects social capital related to the image of discipline, good time management, and a much higher awareness [37]. Then, Mahfud wears square-shaped glasses, reflecting an active, intellectual, serious, and authoritative leader, as cultural capital that is in line with his academic habitus as a professor in the field of constitutional law. In this case, Mahfud has served as a Professor of the Faculty of Law at the Islamic University of Indonesia who is an expert in Constitutional Law and Legal Philosophy, senior academics, constitutional law experts, Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Minister of Defense, and Minister of the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs [38]. This aligns with his educational background, which is a Bachelor of Law from UII, then S2 and S3 in Constitutional Law at Gadjah Mada University (UGM). From a social capital perspective, these attributes strengthen public perceptions of Mahfud's competence and self-integration.

Based on the above, it shows that costumes are not just clothing, but a representation strategy that Ganjar-Mahfud is a figure rooted in the nation's culture. These clothes were chosen as a representation of cultural identity and social status. From a social perspective, the costumes used by these candidates are uniform, signaling solidarity and political affiliation. In this context, costumes symbolize networks and reciprocal relationships between political actors. The shared stage and visual uniformity reproduce cohesion and symbolic unity, shaping the image of a solid and unified team into an important value in the Presidential Election (pilpres). As for Ganjar-Mahfud, they reproduce socio-cultural values that show that candidates must appear cultured, nationalist, and competent. Both reproduce the appropriate standards in the political public sphere, namely knowing how to dress "proper" leaders who recognize cultural symbols and can adjust to symbolic norms. This also removes the dress style of "ordinary people" from the formal political stage, strengthening the cultural boundaries between political and non-political actors.

Ganjar-Mahfud candidates consciously reproduce socio-cultural values in the modern political arena using traditional costumes and pink and purple long-sleeved shirts. These costumes are not just clothes, but a means of reproducing socio-cultural capital that emphasizes Ganjar-Mahfud's socio-political position as a representation of inclusive, nationalist leaders rooted in local traditions. These values are disseminated and recontextualized through YouTube as part of a political communication strategy oriented towards forming a subjective political reality. To find out more about socio-cultural reproduction apart from the visual structure of the costumes, it is also necessary to understand the verbal narrative content in the dialog of the 2nd debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential candidate.

In the prologue, Mahfud does not directly convey the message, but displays the three-finger greeting as a symbol of candidate 03 that contains cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, this action is a form of non-verbal communication that shows the internalization of political habitus and efforts to build collective identity. In this case, cultural capital is manifested in the form of gestures that have a strong symbolic meaning to voters. Mahfud appears with a serious, neat,

and calm expression that shows embodied cultural capital [37]. Mahfud's personality and style are shaped by his social experiences as an academic, judge, and politician. Thus, Mahfud, in this case, is not trying to appear like civil society, but remains within the framework of intellectual and legal authority.

Entering the content of the debate, Mahfud faced the themes of the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate: the economy (populist & digital), investment, finance, taxes, APBD & APBN governance, urban areas, infrastructure, and trade. In the digital economy theme, Mahfud emphasized the importance of caution in digitalization and mentioned three main infrastructures (physical, regulatory, and digitalization). Here, the intellectual cultural capital appears strong, as Mahfud uses legal and economic frameworks to explain the issue. Statements such as "borrowing money using gadgets is civil law" are converting legal knowledge into political discourse, where Mahfud tries to position himself as a leader who understands modern social structures. This is intended to cement his position as an expert in law and public policy. Not only that, but Mahfud's action is a form of cultural reproduction because it brings the legal framework into the broad public domain, educating the public through debate and expanding the reach of the values of legal professionalism. Furthermore, on the theme of investment, finance, and tax, Mahfud stated "investment is difficult because of long-winded procedures and conflicts of interest", which was also conveyed in financial and tax procedures. This reflects institutional social capital, which is knowledge and experience from within the bureaucratic system. Mahfud does not simply convey data, but voices structural experiences that demonstrate a position in the power field. This is social reproduction, as Mahfud uses his experience as an insider to criticize unfair structures. At the same time, it also shows that he is part of a group of political elites who want to change the system from within.

The following debate themes were APBD & APBN governance, cities, and infrastructure. Mahfud used skepticism towards the construction of IKN. The responses "I'm a bit surprised" and "IKN has no investors yet" are forms of cultural capital in evaluative rationality, by questioning populist ideas through implementative logic. The question "APBN or APBD? It needs a special institution" is not just technical, but also a cultural reproduction strategy. In this case, getting the public used to thinking critically about political promises made by candidates or political actors. Mahfud is shaping public political knowledge to be more reasonable and educated. Then, the trade theme, Mahfud mentioned the strategy of economic diplomacy and the quality of exports that show cultural capital internationally, namely, an understanding of global relations. Mahfud said that Indonesia must enter the global market with quality goods, not just follow the flow of liberalization. The criticism of "party entrustment" in the diplomacy system shows social capital, which reflects that Mahfud knows the power network that shapes institutions and criticizes it. This subversive form of social value reproduction dismantles the inherited patrimony system to be replaced with meritocracy.

In the closing statement session, Mahfud read out 21 excellent programs of the candidate pair 03 straightforwardly and systematically. Some of them target the lower class and marginalized groups, "one village one health worker", "one poor family one scholar", and "independent disability". This is cultural capital (policy knowledge) expected to be easily understood and accepted by the community. Mahfud also uses a horizontal social reproduction strategy, which includes groups that have been ignored in the development scheme. Finally, in the prologue, Mahfud MD answered two questions from the media or journalists. *First,* answering the debate

rules, Mahfud emphasized that he still followed the rules by not leaving the podium. This reflects cultural capital in the form of knowledge and internalization of formal institutional values. Mahfud showed that he understood the institutional rules and made them the basis for his behavior. By saying this, Mahfud reproduced institutional cultural values, namely, familiarizing the values of compliance with rules as part of political ethics. *Secondly*, in response to "*ndasmu etik*", Mahfud did not understand his meaning. This is a form of cultural capital management in communication, where he chooses not to reply with emotion, but to maintain a neutral style. This response also shows the reproduction of an ethical political culture by refraining from aggressive or offensive debate styles. Thus, Mahfud is not only promoting a non-reactive political culture, but one based on the values of civility and self-control that are part of the habitus of the educated.

On the other hand, Ganjar also provided narration related to questions from the media or journalists during the epilogue (media conference). In this case, Ganjar focused on answering questions related to the reason for changing costumes from traditional clothes to pink and purple long-sleeved shirts. This long-sleeved shirt is used to commemorate Mother's Day, which coincides with the $2^{nd}$ debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential candidate. This is the use of popular cultural capital, namely, knowledge of the symbolic meaning of colors in the Indonesian social context, especially related to women, tenderness, and compassion. The relaxed attitude and warm answer "I love you, *Ibu*" shows the reproduction of social culture that is both inclusive and emotional. Ganjar shows that leaders must also be sensitive to the cultural values in voters' daily lives. In other words, Ganjar displays a leadership style that is not rigid, but rather familiar with the culture of Indonesian society.

Beyond the verbal substance, observations on the visual and gestural aspects indicate that the Ganjar-Mahfud pair builds a political image with a firm character, but still displays a humanist side. In the prologue section, Mahfud MD demonstrated the three-finger greeting while wearing the traditional NTT and Pesa'an Madura costumes, which symbolized respect for local culture while forming a symbolic closeness to voters. Then, during the debate (content), Mahfud MD showed body gestures, firm intonation, and serious expressions. Rarely joking, not populist, and focused on substance. This is a form of intellectual-based cultural capital obtained from the habitus of his academic background. Through this $2^{nd}$ Vice-Presidential debate, Mahfud reproduces the cultural structure of the educated elite, not in an exclusive sense, but as a value he wants to bring to the public sphere. Mahfud wants to change how people understand politics, not just rhetoric, but the quality of substantive content. Furthermore, Ganjar stood tall with his hands behind his back when Mahfud answered questions from the media, not just a neutral gesture, but a reflection of cultural capital that has been internalized. This means that Ganjar represents the habit of maintaining an orderly, calm, and authoritative posture in formal public spaces. According to Bourdieu, this is included in the embodied form of cultural capital, which is a bodily expression that is acquired over time because it is realized from a long process, the cultivation of cultural values, hard work, and to get of the desired results [37]. Formal education, work experience, and interaction with bureaucratic structures can realize this cultural capital. Ganjar also tends not to dominate question-and-answer sessions but is visually present to support Mahfud. This shows a form of collective social capital, the fabric of trust and cooperation built within the political structure. Ganjar did not interrupt, take over, or give space to Mahfud as his leading vice-presidential candidate in the session.

Based on the content of verbal narratives in the dialogue of the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate, it can be concluded that the internalization of character and the way the candidates communicate is not something instantaneous, but the result of accumulated life experiences, including knowledge, family environment, socio-cultural background, and formal education. These aspects form a habitus, the tendency to think, speak, and act that characterizes Ganjar-Mahfud. In this context, Mahfud MD, for example, displays a communication style that is argumentative, sequential, and based on legal logic. This shows that when someone makes a public statement, they are not just expressing a momentary opinion, but there is an activation of habitus that has been formed since the beginning through internalizing values, norms, and knowledge. Communication delivered in debates, whether in the form of answers, affirmation of ideas, or choice of diction, articulates cultural capital consistently embedded in him. This process shows how formal education, professional experience, and spiritual insight become a *Pending* foundation that allows a candidate to appear mature in compiling narratives and answering substantive issues. In a broader context, this relates to how candidates utilize and combine various forms of capital, namely cultural capital (knowledge, skills, academic degrees, tastes) and social capital (relationships, networks, social connections) in building their arguments and public appearances. Thus, all verbal narratives and visual performances that candidates present are a reproduction of socio-cultural values internalized through a long life journey.

These values are reproduced through the choice of visual structures of costumes, cultural symbols, and speaking styles during the debate. Candidates did not just deliver programs, but also embedded local and national cultural values as part of their political identity. Cultural symbols, such as the use of traditional costumes or the delivery of narratives with diction close to the community, become a means of representation that not only strengthens the image but also shapes public perception and awareness socially and culturally. In this case, formal education is the primary foundation in transmitting and internalizing these values and articulating them effectively in the public sphere, such as the 2nd debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential Candidate.

**Political Reality Constructed in the Interpretation of Socio-Cultural Values by Candidates through YouTube Channel:**

From the perspective of subjective political reality, according to Kaid in [18]Political reality is not understood as a completely objective entity, but rather as the result of interactions between political actors and the public that shape perceptions, beliefs, and expectations of a political phenomenon. This construction can be understood as the result of information selection, message delivery, and interpretation by the public that occurs in a discursive space mediated by mass media and digital platforms. KPU RI's YouTube channel and SCTV's live broadcast reinforce this dynamic by presenting the debate content visually and verbally, which can be widely accessed, re-watched, and interpreted.

The first indicator refers to how actors and media choose parts of objective reality [36] to be displayed in the public space. In the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate, Mahfud MD used a symbolic strategy since the prologue session, by wearing Madurese Pesa'an traditional clothes and NTT ikat weaving, and forming a three-finger greeting without saying a word. The perception of Mahfud was not only through words, but also through visual symbols that the audience understood and interpreted in their respective social contexts. The choice of these cultural attributes is not a coincidence, but a reflection of a conscious effort to display the value of

simplicity, closeness to the people, and Indonesian identity. Therefore, using Pesa'an becomes a form of performative narrative that affirms Mahfud's attachment to cultural roots while answering the demand for leaders who cannot be separated from local values. The political reality reflected in the 2ⁿᵈ Vice-Presidential debate is a subjective social construction. This shows how political actors frame reality selectively to create a moral and social image that is in accordance with the audience's cultural values. Within the framework of subjective social reality, Mahfud's actions are a form of "selected perceptions" strategically brought into the public sphere through media channels.

The second indicator covers how the media presents information and reconstructs social reality through discourse. During the debate, KPU RI's YouTube channel and SCTV media not only aired Mahfud's verbal arguments but also highlighted his facial expressions, body language, and costume changes throughout the session. For example, during the economic session, Mahfud pointed at the post firmly when conveying three digital infrastructures that must be built. The visual editing reinforced Mahfud's position as a rational and serious technocratic figure. Similarly, in the epilogue session, when Ganjar-Mahfud wore pink and purple shirts in honor of Mother's Day, the media cameras provided visual focus to strengthen the symbol of empathy and family values. In this context, the media is not just a messenger, but also shapes the construction of reality through a discursive process [38].

The third indicator refers to how audiences receive and interpret information that has been constructed by actors and presented by the media. The public response to Mahfud MD's performance was seen in social media comments, online media coverage, and post-debate discussions that showed diverse interpretations, some highlighting Mahfud's legal integrity, others highlighting the cultural symbols and social sensitivity he displayed. The public interprets the combination of verbal and visual elements, such as statements on law enforcement, hand gestures, and clothing colors, within the framework of their own experiences[36]. The proximization process allows the audience to feel closer emotionally, spatially, and even in value to the issues brought by Mahfud MD. Thus, the formation of public perception of Mahfud MD does not solely depend on the content of the arguments presented, but also on the emotional bonds that are successfully created, which are then strengthened through the use of political symbols in the next moment.

The use of political symbols is also evident in the epilogue session through the change of Ganjar-Mahfud MD's clothes from traditional to pink and purple shirts. This change did not just follow the momentum of Mother's Day. Still, it became a representation strategy that emphasized the value of empathy, social sensitivity, and respect for the role of women and family values. The media emphasized the symbolic meaning by providing visual highlights that contrast the image of a rational bureaucrat and a warm and humanist leader. During the media conference, the 03 pair's political communication seemed adaptive and ethical; Mahfud MD responded to the issue of "ethical ndasmu" and podium rule compliance in a firm but polite manner, while Ganjar presented a relaxed vibe through friendly gestures and light explanations regarding the choice of costume colors. The combination of verbal messages, visual symbols, and communication styles formed a construction of political reality that positioned Ganjar-Mahfud as clean, rational, inclusive, and grounded in local socio-cultural values, in line with Bourdieu's view of symbolic capital as an instrument of political legitimacy in public spaces. Therefore, this symbolic strategy not only strengthens the couple's image in the eyes of the public but also

maintains the continuity of political narratives that align with the socio-cultural context, while opening up space for strengthening messages in the next stage of the campaign.

Overall, the process of constructing the political reality of the Ganjar-Mahfud pair in the 2nd Vice-Presidential debate works through three main stages, namely; *First,* the selection of symbols and narratives by political actors; *Second,* the discursive presentation by the media, and the interpretation process by the public; *Third,* these indicators are interconnected in creating a social reality that is not neutral, but full of value content and representational interest [36]. The combination of local symbols, verbal performance, language, and visual media reinforcement constructed a political reality that positioned Ganjar-Mahfud as clean, rational, and rooted in cultural values.

This role is also increasingly evident in the digital space, where social media is the primary channel that shapes and disseminates political reality through direct interaction between political actors and society. Social media functions as a means of communication and as the main tool for framing political narratives and symbols appropriate to the social and cultural context. This process includes the selection of symbols and narratives by politicians, discursive delivery by the media, and subjective interpretation by the public, which corresponds to the three leading indicators in this study. However, challenges such as polarization and the spread of misinformation also influence public perception in complex ways.

**Interpretation of Candidates' Performance in the Featured Reality:**
In this theory, performativity relates to gestures (theater) and speech (linguistics), so the two cannot be separated because they are interrelated. This includes gestures, speech, and behavior that follow social norms. By repeating these actions, individuals perform identities such as gender, race, or political affiliation. For example, a politician consistently using national rhetoric and specific symbolism is performing a political identity that is then accepted by society as "authentic". This theory helps to understand the processes of power, how culture shapes identity, and how performance can reinforce or challenge dominant norms. Thus, performativity theory is not just about "acting" or pretending, but about "how" identity is formed through repetition of actions or performance. Performance can then be one of the ways performativity occurs.

Ganjar-Mahfud's performance in the 2nd Vice-Presidential Debate 2024 formed a subjective political reality built from a combination of the reproduction of socio-cultural values and political strategies. To know the meaning of performance, it is necessary to understand performativity. Butler argues that in performativity, identity is not naturally inherent, but is built through a series of repeated actions[38]. In Butler's performativity framework, performativity relates to gestures (theater) and speech (linguistics), so the two cannot be separated because they are interrelated. In this case, political identity comes naturally and is constructed through the repetition of gestures, costume choices, and consistent speaking styles in every public appearance. Mahfud's three-fingered salute, the traditional costumes of NTT and Pesa'an Madura, to Ganjar's choice of shirt color on Mother's Day, are repetitive actions that bind his image with the values of nationalism, diversity, and emotional closeness to the public. Not only that, the verbal narrative content in the Ganjar-Mahfud dialog can also be interpreted as a communication strategy that is informative, instructional, and persuasive. In this case, the media bridges the cultural gap between the communicator (Ganjar-Mahfud) and

the communicant (Indonesian people as voters) in receiving a powerful message. It is also explained that communication strategies have multiple functions, namely: *First,* to obtain optimal results, informative, persuasive, and instructive communication messages are disseminated systemically to the target; then *Second,* it bridges the cultural gap between communicators and communicants in receiving messages due to conditions of ease of obtaining and at the same time being operationalized by the media, if left unchecked, it will damage the values built [39]. By repeating these actions, candidates perform a specific identity. For example, a politician who consistently uses national rhetoric and certain symbolism is performing a political identity that the public accepts as "authentic". This theory helps to understand how power and culture shape identity, and how performance can reinforce or challenge dominant norms. Thus, performativity theory is not just about "acting" or pretending, but about "how" identity is formed through repetition of actions or performance.

Performance can also be interpreted as all of a person's activities in front of other people or audiences that aim to give a particular impression about themselves. This is supported by the understanding that Performance can be seen as a "structured event" where everyday life is built from the art-making process in an event that becomes entertainment *[40]*. In this case, Goffman's dramaturgy compares the representation of everyday life to a theater performance where individuals become actors and society becomes the stage. Goffman distinguishes between the front stage, where individuals perform roles to audiences such as public speeches or appearances in the media, and the back stage, the smallest space where actors can remove their performances, such as candid or private moments. Political figures deliberately manage impressions through costumes, settings, and scripts to shape "how" the public perceives them. Based on this, through dramaturgy analysis, Goffman revealed that political behavior is often strategic and designed, not spontaneous. Based on this, through dramaturgy analysis, Goffman revealed that political behavior is often strategic and designed, not spontaneous. Thus, Ganjar-Mahfud's candidate performance in this study uses costumes as socio-cultural symbols and verbal narrative content for communication strategies and political identity performances (performativity and dramaturgy).

Based on the foregoing, it can be explained that Ganjar-Mahfud's performance in the 2nd Vice-Presidential Debate 2024 forms a subjective political reality that does not come naturally but is constructed through a series of repeated symbolic, verbal, and visual actions. Referring to Butler's concept of performativity, Ganjar-Mahfud's political identity is formed and maintained through repetition of gestures (three-finger greetings, formal body posture), selection of cultural costumes, and rhetoric in line with the image he wants to present. In Goffman's dramaturgy perspective, Ganjar-Mahfud's front stage is strategically managed through costumes, narratives, and settings to form a credible, authoritative, and humanist public impression. Meanwhile, the "back stage" element remains hidden in the private space. By performing cultural capital (knowledge, cultural symbols, communication style), social capital (trust network, group affiliation, as well as reproducing socio-cultural values (nationalism, communication ethics, respect for tradition), this candidate is able to manage political identity as a planned performance. This builds an image and influences public perception of Ganjar-Mahfud's legitimacy and leadership capacity. Therefore, the candidate's performance reflects the subjective political reality built from the combination of the reproduction of socio-cultural values and his political strategy.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The connection between the theory of socio-cultural value reproduction and the concept of political reality forms a research analytical framework that highlights how candidates utilize social capital to construct a political image while influencing public perception through performativity and dramaturgical strategis. Subjective political reality becomes the starting point for understanding the political reality displayed by the Ganjar-Mahfud pair. At the same time, Bourdieu's cultural capital dan social capital provide tools to identify the resources used in building the image. Butler's performativity explains that political identity is formed through repetition of gestures, costumes, and rhetoric. On the other hand, Goffman's dramaturgy provides an understanding that the candidate's appearance in the public space is part of a planned "front stage" strategy. In this research, all of these concepts are integrated to analyze the socio-cultural values reproduced through the display of the visual structure of costumes and verbal content narratives in the 2nd debate of the 2024 Vice-Presidential candidate.

The reproduction of social and cultural values is fundamentally built through the candidate's educational background. Formal education not only shapes daily habits but also plays a role in instilling values that are then internalized in the candidate's activities and actions. This process is further strengthened by the surrounding socio-cultural environment so that these values grow and become embedded in daily behavior. Interaction through discussions and dialogues that carry socio-cultural substance since childhood (socialization arena) also strengthens the reproduction of knowledge gained from education, family, and social environment, significantly influencing how a person acts, speaks, and behaves. In one's performance, this value reproduction process also manifests the diversity of Indonesian culture. In addition, the reproduction of knowledge gained from education, family and social environment significantly influences how a person acts, speaks and behaves. In one's performance, this value reproduction process also manifests the diversity of Indonesian culture. Therefore, the interpretation of a candidate's appearance is not just from gestures and physical expressions, but must consider the social and cultural capital attached to these political actors. Social and cultural capital includes associations, life experiences, portfolios, careers, and cultural values that are carried, including mastery of science (*olah pikir*); technology, arts, and customs such as ethics and manners (*olah rasa*); and language (*olah tutur*). The whole process produces a culture that reflects the distinctive character of Indonesianness.

Based on the results and discussion of this research, it can be concluded that the Ganjar-Mahfud pair represents a leadership character that combines assertiveness, authority, and inclusiveness. Ganjar displays the image of a leader who is familiar with the culture of the community, emotionally responsive, and able to build symbolic closeness with the public. Mahfud, on the other hand, shows an intellectual figure who is based on order and at the same time has a critical attitude towards political identity by integrating intellectual cultural capital and social capital based on emotional closeness. This forms the impression of a duet of technically competent leaders while being grounded in a socio-cultural context.

On the other hand, the subjective political reality built by Ganjar-Mahfud is constructed through cultural symbols, structured verbal narratives, and communication strategies to align with the image of leadership that wants to be displayed. This subjective political reality arises from the way candidates interpret and represent themselves to the public, thus creating perceptions by` the political identity they want to build. Their performance reflects consistent impression

management between body gestures, costumes, and rhetoric. Ganjar reflects emotional closeness and connection to the culture of the community, while Mahfud presents a firm, intellectually based impression and understands legal authority. Therefore, the subjective political reality displayed combines humanist and rational dimensions in a consciously constructed "front stage", resulting in public perception that this pair is a competent leader, with integrity, and responsive to socio-cultural demands. From a communication perspective, political actors and the public (netizens) need to avoid unfounded and superficial comments by only judging or seeing someone's appearance or performance. In-depth understanding of the candidate's performative background, primarily through the reproduction of social and cultural values that he carries, is crucial in assessing objectively. It takes intelligence and maturity in argumentation so that communication does not lead to harmful personal discrediting. From an academic perspective, research with diverse methodological approaches and study objects is needed to enrich the repertoire of communication science. This aims to create a more comprehensive mutual understanding in every communication interaction, especially in the context of a society full of Indonesian cultural dynamics.

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