

## **PRABOWO SUBIYANTO'S LEGAL POLITICAL DIRECTION: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE FIRST DEBATE OF THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

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**ABSTRACT.** This article examines how presidential candidates have produced legal discourses that are used as political instruments in winning the political contestation of the Indonesian national presidential election in 2024. Through political discourse, Prabowo Subiyanto aimed to influence the public for his victory. As a result, he emerged victorious, proving that political discourse in public debates can successfully deconstruct, influence, and steer the way of thinking and can lead voters' preferences. The main argument in this article is that discourse as a political instrument is not empty, but behind the discourse is a form of political truth operation produced for certain goals. In this study, the method used is qualitative with discourse analysis to uncover the ideal of truth behind discourse. The researcher applied Van Dijk's discourse theory which uses three analyses; text, social cognition and social context. Therefore, the use of Van Dijk's critical analysis method is the author's position as a novelty in the midst of several discourse studies that emphasise more on content analysis. Based on the results of this study, the researcher found several results from the direction of legal politics, namely that it offers law as a priority, law enforcement and economic growth, independence of law enforcers, and law based on the principle of justice.

**Keywords:** discourse; discourse analysis; political discourse

### **ARAH POLITIK HUKUM PRABOWO SUBIYANTO: ANALISIS WACANA KRITIS TERKAIT PENEGAKAN HUKUM DALAM DEBAT PERTAMA PILPRES 2024**

**ABSTRAK.** Artikel ini menguraikan bagaimana calon presiden memproduksi wacana hukum yang digunakan sebagai instrumen berpolitik dalam memenangkan kontestasi politik pemilu presiden Indonesia tahun 2024. Melalui wacana politik, Prabowo Subiyanto mencoba mempengaruhi publik demi kemenangannya. Hasilnya, ia keluar sebagai pemenangnya, dan membuktikan bahwa wacana politik pada debat publik berhasil mendekte, mempengaruhi, dan menuntun jalan pikiran serta mampu menggiring preferensi pemilih. Argumen utama dalam artikel ini bahwa wacana sebagai instrumen politik tidaklah kosong, melainkan dibalik wacana itu terdapat suatu bentuk operasi politik kebenaran yang diproduksi untuk kepentingan tertentu. Dalam penelitian ini, metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan analisis wacana untuk membongkar cita kebenaran dibalik perwacanaan. Peneliti menggunakan teori wacana ala Van Dijk yang secara metode analisisnya menggunakan tiga analisis antara lain; teks, kognisi sosial dan konteks sosial. Oleh karena itu, penggunaan metode analisis kritis ala Van Dijk inilah penulis posisi sebagai kebaruan/novelty di tengah beberapa penelitian wacana yang lebih banyak menekankan pada analisis konten. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini, peneliti menemukan beberapa hasil dari arah politik hukum yaitu ia menawarkan hukum sebagai prioritas, penegakan hukum dan pertumbuhan ekonomi, independensi penegak hukum, dan hukum yang berdasarkan pada prinsip berkeadilan.

**Kata kunci :** wacana; analisis wacana; wacana politik

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the presidential election in February 2024, the Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka pair was announced as the winner, winning 58.6% or 92,96,214,691 valid national votes. The political facts above have actually been predicted by various survey institutions that assess Prabowo's electability level as the highest compared to other competitors. The democratic party, namely the presidential election for the 2024-2029 period, had been successfully carried out directly by the Indonesian people. The politics of law and political policy is certainly different from presidential elections in the era before 2004, where the President and Vice President were elected by

the People's Consultative Assembly or MPR as the highest institution in the constitution. In the literature, democracy is simply understood as "the *rules by people*", which one of the markers of democracy is manifested in public elections or elections. or *national election* to elected their leaders either at the regional or central level.

The reasoning above is in line with Schumpeter's conceptualisation of democracy as *the democratic method* (Schumpeter, 2003; 250). This is affirmed by Fukuyama (1992) in the book "*the history and the last man*" have concluded that liberal democracy is the final form of governance for modern mankind. Democracy presupposes that power is in the capable hands of the people. The people are in

charge of determining the direction of the country's development (Sorensen, 2008). Democracy is coherent with the principles of liberalism and democracy emphasises the procedural-mechanistic dimension (Gyorfi, 2013; Pereira, 2000).

As a space for discourse contestation, democracy is a space for making meaning and influence with the aim of being capitalised on for the electoral interests of political contestants, such as the Indonesian presidential election in 2024. This is because it needs to be understood that every discourse is never neutral, but every discourse has the ideals of justice, goals and intentions of the person producing the discourse. From here the urgency of this research is carried out to provide new knowledge that political power is not always related to formal power, but the power of discourse is actually very influential on political choices in the future. In other words, whoever is able to master the discourse will be the winner in the political contest in the future. Therefore, for post-structuralists, this is called the power of discourse which is hidden behind discourse.

As a space for discourse struggle, democracy is often considered skeptical (Weale, 1999), not only because it is a people's party, but also because of the costs that must be incurred by the contestants. In Indonesia, direct elections or "direct democracy" which have been implemented since 2005 are a manifestation of the democratic format with all its advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, the advantage of democracy is that everybody is guaranteed to participate as a political contestant, including Prabowo Subianto, who has always been a presidential or vice-presidential candidate since 2004. From here, Prabowo is a person who has been very consistent in political competition in the last 20 years since 2004 until 2024.

On the political track record, since leaving the Golongan Karya (Golkar) party in 2004, Prabowo founded a new party, the Great Indonesia Movement (Gerindra) in 2008. In terms of family background, Prabowo is the son of a renowned Indonesian intellectual and economist. General TNI (Purn.) H. Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo was born on 17 October 1951. His father Soemitro Djojohadikusumo from Kebumen, Central Java, was an economist and politician of the Indonesian Socialist Party who had just finished serving as Minister of Industry in the Natsir Cabinet in April 1952. Prabowo himself has the educational background as well as a career in the military of more than 28 years. In a sense, Prabowo's scientific reputation and career grew in a military environment that is well known for its courage, firmness and discipline, including strong nationalism to the nation and state.

As a candidate who has always been a political contender, Prabowo Subianto has started to promote issues related to the self-reliance of the state, including law and human rights. In his political career, in the 2004 general election, Prabowo ran as a candidate for president of Indonesia from the Golkar Party at the Golkar presidential candidate convention in 2004, but he lost the vote to presidential candidate Wiranto. After losing the Golkar convention, on 6 February 2008, together with activists and colleagues, Prabowo established the Great Indonesia Movement Party, or Gerindra. A nationalist party, it successfully led Prabowo Subianto to become the 8th president of Indonesia for the period 2024-2029.

As a newly formed party, on 9 May 2008 Gerindra Party expressed its desire to nominate Prabowo as a presidential candidate in the 2009 elections. However, after observing the ongoing political dynamics, Prabowo eventually agreed to become the presidential candidate of incumbent Megawati Soekarnoputri, despite losing the 2004 election to SBY-Boediyono.

Following the 2014 presidential election, Prabowo again ran as Indonesia's presidential candidate from Gerindra and its coalition. Prabowo paired up with former SBY-era minister Hatta rajasa as his vice-presidential candidate. However, in the 2014 election, Prabowo-Hatta was narrowly defeated by the Jokowi-Yusuf Kalla pair from PDIP. In the 2019 presidential election, Prabowo ran again with Sandiaga Uno as his vice president. However, Prabowo again lost the contest against the incumbent Jokowi-Makruf. What was interesting about the 2019 politics was Prabowo's willingness to join the Jokowi-ma'ruf cabinet as a minister for the 2019-2024 period. He was deployed in a field that he had been rumoured to be in, namely the security sector. From this position, Prabowo was then imaged by the public as a person who has persistence in fighting for his political interests, until he is elected president in 2024.

In the 2024 presidential election, Prabowo also offered various discourses, including law enforcement through the eradication of corruption, which has been the pathology of the government bureaucracy so far. In several political speeches in the 2024 election, Prabowo Subianto stated that he wanted law enforcement to be the main pillar in the government for the 2024-2029 period. Prabowo himself has been held hostage to political discourse related to human rights since 1998. He has always been accused in the case of the disappearance of 1998 pro-reform activists, and he has been sanctioned with a career dismissal from the TNI. Therefore, political

speeches regarding law enforcement seemed to be an annual issue when he advanced as a political contestant from 2009 to 2024.

The dynamics of politics, however, changed when Prabowo was included in President Jokowi Widodo's cabinet for the second period of 2019-2024, where President Jokowi has found a match with Prabowo as the 2019-2024 Indonesian Minister of Defence. In the 2024 presidential election is a chance to come out as the winner, especially since President Jokowi in every event always invites Prabowo on working visits in various regions. This shows Jokowi's support that the next president will be Prabowo. With President Jokowi's full support, Gerindra party established itself to re-nominate Prabowo as a presidential candidate for 2024-2029. After going through various dynamics and political intrigues, Prabowo has partnered with the mayor of Solo, Gibran Rakabumingraka, who is the son of President Jokowi.

In this research, the researchers argue that the victory of the Prabowo-Gibran pair in the 2024 presidential election has marked the success of the discourse offered by Prabowo in convincing the public that they need to choose the Prabowo-Gibran pair as their upcoming leader. If it is analysed critically, the discourse offered by Prabowo-Gibran is implicitly a discourse produced in certain situations and conditions, precisely the political context of 2024 and Prabowo's personality cognition as a person created in a certain environment. Thus, statements offered by Prabowo Subianto are nothing more than what is actually constructed not only from Prabowo himself as a former military man, but also in the midst of the regime of truth that dominated the social life of the people at that time.

Therefore, this research will reveal the direction of legal politics offered by Prabowo in the 2024 political contestation if elected as president 2024-2029. As a political or legal instrument, discourse always holds certain goals, including the goal of gaining political power, and this is in line with Lasswell (1936) political theorisation (1936) which understands politics as 'who gets what, when, how, where politics presupposes that every autonomous individual has the right to contest, and maintain power (position), at all levels of organisational life (Peters, 2004). According to the above understanding, the meaning of politics is in the interest of obtaining certain positions or power, in various ways including the use of political discourse related to law enforcement and others.

In other words, modern political struggle or contestation is a discourse struggle that takes

place in a certain political stage to gain power. Thus, politics is no longer understood normatively through campaigns, attending declarations and so on, but politics through this discourse struggle is what becomes the political stake in the future. Because, through discourse, power forces the public to participate precisely in full awareness and public willingness to follow a certain political discourse.

In the post-structuralist rationality, discourse is understood as a statement that has the goal of truth, and truth always creates power. In this sense, Foucault says discourse is understood as what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority (Foucault, 1972), and A discourse is a regulated set of statements which combine with others in predictable ways. Discourse is regulated by a set of rules which lead to the distribution and circulation of certain utterances and statements (Mills, 2003, p. 54). Discourse is understood as political talk, which is produced in various political forums, such as political campaigns, party manifestos, inaugural speeches and attempts to change the social constellation (Gee, 1999; Sharndama, 2015) to seize and oppose power (Chilton, 2004, p. 03) and of course intertwined into power and knowledge (Byram, 2010, p. 26). From here, discourse can be produced by those who are not in the political domain, but have the potential to become political discourse because of its function as an instrument of truth, and truth is power. A text that tends to marginalize the position of women, for example, is born because of the cognition or mental awareness of society that tends to degrade women in the social structure (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 221). In other words, discourse is present or produced in a certain context and space, so that to know the meaning of discourse, we must reveal its social context and cognition.

During this time, research on the discourses is mostly done at the level of content analysis of existing texts, and very few critically analyse the discourse of the text as a form of representation of certain interests of the discourse producers. Despite there are studies with critical discourse analysis models, such as Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, they do not use van Dijk (1995) as the author's research.

First, research conducted by Kuntarto (2018) entitled "Language and Political Power of the Opposition in Indonesia: Critical Discourse Analysis." He used the Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis method which is more ideological than the social cognition of the actors who produce the text. The main finding of this study is that there is a close relationship between language and politics, language

and power. The practice of using language in political discourse is motivated by ideology and distinctive philosophy.

Second, research by Iskandar (2020). Entitled "Political Discourse Analysis of Public Debates of Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates for the Republic of Indonesia." In his research, he used the William L. Benoit discourse analysis method which does not explore discourse critically, so that it loses its articulatory power. The main finding of this study is that all presidential and vice presidential candidates direct their political discourse more towards policy formation than bringing out the character of each candidate, but in conveying their political messages it is still considered less good in both verbal and nonverbal aspects.

Third, research by Hartinah & Kindi (2020). Titled "Political Discourse Analysis of Presidential Candidates Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 Presidential Election Debate." Using discourse analysis that focuses on the content of the speech text, so that it only describes the language style of the other contestants. The results of this study enrich the understanding of speech in political discourse that has a special characteristic of the use of diction and language styles that are distinguishing from speech in other discourses.

Fourth, research by Ramdan et al. (2023). Titled "Comparative Analysis of Political Communication of Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan Through the Video '3 Bacapres Bicara Konsep' on Najwa Shihab's YouTube Channel." Using a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis, this study reveals that each candidate has a different communication style. The main findings in this study were to find differences in communication of ideas, body language, and video effectiveness. Anies Baswedan used a relaxed style and easy-to-understand arguments in conveying his ideas, while Ganjar Pranowo used PowerPoint and relaxed language. Prabowo Subianto combined elements of both.

The result of the literature review above shows that so far, text discourse research has focused more on content analysis, not on the critical dimension of text discourse that has emerged and produced by actors or discourse producers. Accordingly, the research position or state of the art in this research is the use of a different method, namely Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) method, which is used to reveal and dismantle why the text discourse appears as it does, produced for certain purposes. Thus, in this research, it is hoped that the political direction of law that will be used as the commander

in Prabowo Subianto's government for the 2024-2029 period can be found or uncovered. In this case, the relevance of this research is relevant to be conducting in order to reveal the truth behind the discourse produced by the candidates in the 2024 presidential election yesterday.

Accordingly, the researchers used Teun Van Dijk's discourse theory to uncover and reveal how discourse is produced as a political instrument, and can influence the public because behind the discourse are the interests, goals and intentions of each discourse offered, including the legal discourse offered by Prabowo Subianto and Gibran in the first debate of the 2024 presidential election.

To identify the direction of legal politics from the discourses offered by Prabowo, the researchers then asked several main questions as below : How does Prabowo Subianto's legal discourse in the 2024 presidential election debate reflect his legal political agenda, based on Van Dijk's text-context cognition framework?

## METHOD

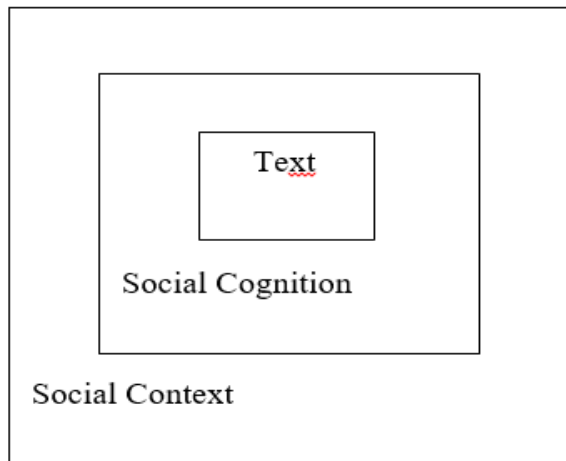
This research employed a qualitative method using Teun van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) with an interpretive research approach. This approach is used to understand meaning, and shape action based on certain beliefs and preferences (Bevir & Rhodes, 2002; Marsh & Stoker, 2002). In this discourse, the interpretive approach aims to understand the meaning behind the discourse in Prabowo Subianto's speech text discourse in the first debate of the 2024 Presidential election related to legal discourse. Therefore, this critical method is expected to be able to uncover and reveal the direction of legal politics promoted by Prabowo Subianto.

In this study, the author collected primary data by transcribing Prabowo's political speech in the 2024 presidential election debate. Meanwhile, secondary data, the author collected data from biographies and career paths both in the military and politics, especially in the Gerindra party. To increase data validity, researchers use triangulation techniques through various data sources including theory. The data collected was in the form of Prabowo's political speech text in the first debate of the Presidential Election. Thus, the data taken from the Youtube channel was then transcribed and analyzed using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis method.

In general, the principle of van Dijk (2002) critical discourse analysis method, or CDA, has three dimensions: first, the text level that will reveal the macro structure, superstructure and micro structure

of the text itself. Second, the level of social cognition that will uncover the knowledge regime behind the discourse author, and third, the level of social context to reveal the context that dominates the public space when the text is produced by the author.

The three dimensions are then analysed by combining them into a unified analysis, as shown in the following figure 1.



Source : Teun v Dijk (1995)

**Figure 1. Model Critical Discourse Analysis**

Based on the three levels of analysis, this research will reveal why the discourse was produced, used for the political interests of Prabowo to gain power or position.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This article fully utilised discourse theory with Teun van Dijk's critical discourse analysis method that operates through three levels of analysis: text, social cognition and social context. The three levels of analysis can therefore reveal that the legal discourse promoted by Prabowo can be unpacked, and outlined in more detail the direction of legal politics that he runs during the government of the 2024-2029 period.

In the view of psychological theory that personality refers to long-lasting and important characteristics within an individual, ones that continue to exert a strong influence on behavior (Ewen, 2014). From here, Prabowo's personality refers to the characteristics that have been forged, especially in the military environment and are deeply rooted in him, thus having a strong influence on Prabowo's behavior in his socio-political life so far, especially in the 2024 Presidential election campaign.

The method of discourse analysis is very close to linguistic analysis, so it requires analysis of the microstructure (syntax and metaphor) and analysis of the macrostructure of discourse. From the results of the analysis and discussion, several findings were found in this study, including:

### Offering the Law as a Priority

In the 2024 presidential election, the candidates conducted what became known as a public debate. The intent was clearly to influence the public through discourse in the form of texts delivered orally by the candidates. The discourse is produced and disseminated into the public space to image themselves as prospective leaders who are worthy of leading Indonesia in the future. Therefore, one of the contestants is the former General of the Compass General (Purn) Prabowo Subiyanto, who is the chairman of the Gerindra party.

In his first debate, Prabowo outlined his vision and mission : “..Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.. Assalamua’laikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Peace be upon all of us. Shalom, om swastiastu, namo buddhaya, greetings of righteousness. Thank you for the opportunity to present our vision and mission. Placing the rule of law, improving government services, eradicating corruption, and protecting all groups in society are very important. Therefore, in our vision and mission, these things are placed at the very highest...” (YouTube January 15th 2025).

From the text above, syntactically it is quite clear that placing the law, improving services, eradicating corruption and protecting all groups are the objects of Prabowo's entire attention in his speech. In fact, metaphorically, he tries to give a broad meaning with the discourse of placing the law higher than others. In general, Proowo understands the ethics of giving a speech by saying greetings to all religious believers. He understands very well that Indonesians are very religious and hold tightly to their ancestral culture, especially public ethics.

Therefore, he used the phrase...’ Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Peace be upon all of us. Shalom, om swastiastu, namo buddhaya, greetings of virtue...’ instead of using other sentences in opening his maiden speech. For example, he used the word or sentence ‘good night’ and others which would certainly bring negative responses from the public. In its global meaning, the opening sentence above is actually him seeking the sympathy of a heterogeneous and plural public. He understands that since 2014, he has always been imaged as a candidate who is close to radical groups (Islamism) in every presidential election event.

In his vision and mission, he put the law as the statement in the first speech. Even in his final speech, he said “something very important...” and “..put in the top...”. From this, he really tries to elevate the issue of law enforcement from other issues, even though they are both placed in the top priority. However, it

is clear that he is trying to make law enforcement the main dimension to portray himself as worthy and appropriate to be the leader of Indonesia. This can be seen in the words 'put on top', and not the words 'put in the middle, or under ...' which certainly has a bad value in the public's eyes.

The texts above appear because cognitively, Prabowo is a TNI soldier. He was quite aware of the diversity and diversity of society. As a soldier, he received real national education through various military operations that were enough to make him a very nationalist figure. In a sense, his nationalism grew and developed in a militaristic world, especially since he is the son-in-law of the longest-serving president (New Order). However, what is interesting is that he puts law on the priority scale of his vision and mission. This cannot be separated from the social context where the issue of violence, especially human rights and law, which often surrounds him after the 1998 activist abduction case, is prominent in every political event where Prabowo is the contestant. He seems to be trying to delegitimise the issue or discourse of legal violence that has been embedded since 1998 by offering the highest level of law enforcement in his vision as a Presidential candidate. That means, he was trying to eliminate his legal footprints, by offering new law enforcement in his leadership.

### **Legal Enforcement and Economic Growth**

On another issue, the discourse of the ongoing violence in Papua is Prabowo's political challenge. The public understood that Papua was one of the regions that needed serious attention from state institutions. In this case, Prabowo tried to place the Papua issue in a historical dimension, he said in his speech at the first debate of the 2024 presidential election. In his speech Prabowo said: '...The Papua matter is complicated because there has been a separatism movement, and we have been following this separatism movement for a long time. We see foreign interference there, and we see that certain forces always want Indonesia to disintegrate and break up.

For this reason, the issue of human rights is something that we must prioritise. Among other things, we must protect the entire Papuan people, because there terrorist groups are now attacking the Papuan people themselves - innocent people, women, the elderly, unarmed children are being terrorised by separatist terrorist groups. So, my plan, firstly, is to enforce the law, strengthen the authorities there, and also accelerate economic development. President Joko Widodo is the president of the Republic of Indonesia who has been to Papua the most - if I'm not

mistaken, to date he has been to Papua more than 19 times, and the increase in economic growth under Mr Widodo's government is the most rapid, the highest in the history of the Republic of Indonesia. So, what I said, I would continue. We must provide economic progress, the best social services for the Papuan people, protect the Papua region from terrorists, and guarantee the enforcement of human rights. Thank you...." (YouTube January 15th 2025)

No different from the opening speech text, that from the text above, syntactically also makes enforcing the law, strengthening the apparatus there, and also accelerating economic development as objects that will be worked on during Prabowo's administration if elected in the election. This is quite metaphorical, because he places the object of his vision and mission through previous leadership. From here, Prabowo tries to offer better hope especially regarding the supremacy of law in Papua.

From the text above, there are several words that have a very clear explanation, such as the words '...We see that there is foreign interference there.'. These sentences or words show that Prabowo believes other parties are trying to interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs. This can be seen with the belief in the word 'interference' instead of using the word 'intervention' which is more diplomatic in its global meaning. The sentence above arises because cognitively, Prabowo is a soldier who has spent more than 20 years of his career in the world of patriotism. The public knows that since becoming part of the army, he has often held important mandates within the TNI. For example, he has served as a military commander and Kopasus Danjen, an elite entity within the army. Therefore, he believes that what is happening in relation to Papua is the interference of other countries to create an atmosphere that is not conducive to the life of the Indonesian state. Prabowo knows that Timor Leste's independence was a result of interference from other parties in supporting or assisting the country's independence.

In the social context, the 2024 election was an election full of stakes between the contestants, where there were civilian and military candidates. Legal and human rights issues became hegemonic issues in the midst of political dynamics that were quite harsh in society. The legal discourse was particularly intense when the public questioned the appropriateness of Prabowo's candidacy in the political constellation since 2014. The public had always associated him with issues that always arose due to unclear legal decisions. To this day, the public are still questioning who are the intellectual actors of the 1998 activists' disappearance.

From here, it is very natural that the public space is crammed with questions about legal and human rights issues, including in the first public debate of the 2024 presidential election yesterday. What is clear is that during the 2024 presidential election, the public space is being crammed with discourses, issues and debates about legal settlements both in Papua and also the 1998 tragedy case which until now has not found signs of resolution.

### **Independence of Law Enforcement Officers**

Under the Constitution, judicial power must be exercised independently. Thus, judicial practice is able to address public issues related to intervention or outside influences that can affect ongoing judicial decisions. When Prabowo was asked about the current judicial power that tends to be intervened by other branches of power. Prabowo gave a speech “...I absolutely agree that the judiciary must be independent. The judiciary must be judicial, it must be strong, and it must not be interfered with by power. I strongly agree with that, and I am committed to strengthening it. If I receive a mandate from the people, I will improve the quality of life of all judges in the Republic of Indonesia, all workers around the courts, and all law enforcers. I will improve their salaries so that they cannot be interfered with, cannot be bribed and cannot be corrupted. That is my commitment to the people of Indonesia. Thank you...” (YouTube January 15th 2025)

As a discourse, the speech text above shows syntactically that the objects that are Prabowo’s vision include the quality of life of judges and all workers in the judicial environment. When viewed from a metaphorical perspective, the word quality of life shows how Prabowo compares the quality of life of judges today. This means that Prabowo wants judges and the people around them to be much more prosperous, so that they are not easily intervened by other parties.

The speech text above shows how Prabowo was actually producing the truth of a better judiciary. Prabowo’s words such as ‘...the judiciary must be independent...’ are a sign that the situation and condition of the judiciary so far has not been fully independent. It is then that the word ‘independent’ should be discussed instead of other words such as ‘independent’ or the word ‘better’. This is because the word independent as a term means more or less a situation that runs without coercion from outside intervention. Thus, the word ‘independent’ becomes the judicial power that Prabowo will exercise. However, cognitively, the word actually arises from Prabowo’s personal character, which is very autonomous, and not easily influenced by others.

For example, how Prabowo chivalrously left Golkar and founded Gerindra in 2008 amidst his popularity as a former Kopasus Danjen and President Soeharto’s son-in-law. In that sense, independence and responsibility have been Prabowo’s attitude and behaviour all along. However, the sentence above is also inseparable from Prabowo’s efforts to try to show himself as a person who is free from the shadow of the sandalwood as a political force that he needs to consider. As a democratic country, in its context, legal issues in Indonesia are indeed experiencing a worrying condition, where many law enforcers are directly involved in legal cases themselves. Therefore, for Prabowo, the judges must be given sufficient rights so that they work in accordance with the prevailing regulations.

Furthermore, Prabowo also expressed words such as ‘...I will improve the quality of life of all the judges...’. This is a very clear sentence that Prabowo wants to show his commitment in terms of the welfare of judges. The words ‘quality of life’ are words that in a global sense indicate efforts to improve the economy of judges who have been allegedly easy to bribe and others. Cognitively, the words above are actually a manifestation of Prabowo trying to image himself as a firm figure, while at the same time being very concerned about the welfare of judges. In fact, the public understands that many judges have been proven to have resisted the law. The text above is also inseparable from the dimensions of the social context in the 2024 presidential election where as many as 206 judges with various accompanying cases. From here, the texts are produced by Prabowo who seems to want to create himself as a figure who is firm, but also caring.

As the writer described above, that throughout 2024 was full of practices of legal resistance by the legal apparatus itself. The law seems to be only limited to the law, not in terms of positive articulation by the law enforcers themselves. Therefore, Prabowo is trying to convince the public as voters in the 2024 presidential election that he will uphold the law as well as possible. Prabowo said... “...I guess regarding the Constitutional Court, the rules are clear, we are also not small children. Our people also understand. If we look at it first, we know, Mas Ganjar, we know how the process is, yes. Who intervened, who was intervened. But the point is that we uphold the constitution, we uphold the law, we fix what is not perfect, and we adhere to the commitment of the law itself. So I think that, and I agree with what Mr Anies said in this case...” (YouTube January 15th 2025)



According to the text above, Prabowo used the sentence ‘we uphold the constitution’ instead of using other sentences or words such as ‘enforce’. This indicates that the word ‘uphold’ is a word that has a meaning of firmness in terms of the rule of law / state constitution that applies. Prabowo’s utilised words or sentences above not only show a choice of words that represent firmness, but are also born from Prabowo’s personal cognition that he has been born and raised in an environment that has created him as a figure and person who is firm and straightforward in dealing with certain situations. Therefore, the choice of words above clearly marks Prabowo’s attempt to show his favour to the rule of law. As the author has outlined above, during 2024 more than 200 judges, who are in fact the upholders of justice themselves, became actors in their own legal resistance. In this context, the public sphere is filled with ironic judicial practices. In fact, there is a term ‘the chicken is missing, but the cow is gone’. In a sense, what is stolen is a chicken, but to take care of it in court will cost a lot of money, and is illustrated as a cow.

As such, apart from wanting to uphold the law or the constitution, Prabowo also wants to improve the welfare of judges. The reason is clear, for Prabowo, many judges can still be intervened by other parties to change the judge’s decision. Thus, the discourse on law enforcement on the one hand seeks to assert its firmness, but on the other hand is a manifestation and effort by Prabowo to image himself as a figure who cares about law enforcement itself.

### **The Law of Justice**

Indonesia is a nation of laws, and power must be based on the laws that govern it. Prabowo seems to want the law to be the commander, not momentary interests when managing the country. He understands that colonisation in many parts of the world, including Indonesia, is due to the fact that the law is not the commander-in-chief, instead it has become an instrument of international politics to oppress weak countries and small people. Therefore, Prabowo wants to uphold the law in a fair manner in the midst of this ongoing democratic situation.

Prabowo said; “..Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. We must always remember that this independence was gained through a very long process and hard struggle. Our nation has faced various challenges from other countries that came to oppress us. The law of history shows that the strong will oppress the weak. We are grateful to have built a democratic country with all its flaws. All leaders have helped drive our progress, and we want to progress further, be more just, eliminate poverty, and eradicate

corruption. Indonesia is a very rich country, and our wealth is tremendous. We are ready to continue the foundation that our predecessors have built. We are confident that Indonesia will leap into a great, advanced, prosperous and just country. However, the condition is that we must get along well, unite, and not be divided. We must not incite or divide the nation for the sake of momentary interests. Only with harmony, cleanliness of spirit, and sincere love of the land, Indonesia will advance to become a great and rightful country...” (YouTube January 15th 2025).

From the discourse above, syntactically, sentence by sentence actually shows good grammar. In the text above, the main object in Prabowo’s speech is to encourage our progress, and we want to be more advanced, more just, eliminate poverty, and eradicate corruption. Therefore, the main object also marks how Prabowo offers broader hopes from the legal problems that have been going on so far. In the sense, Prabowo tries to give high hopes to the public to be optimistic in terms of law enforcement and eradicating corruption.

Looking at the text above, Prabowo’s choice of words seems desperate when looking at the facts of the law, where the powerful always oppress the weak. We already know that the law often defends the strong and discriminates against those who are categorised as weak, especially the economically weak. The word or sentence ‘...the strong will oppress the weak’ by not producing or using other sentences seems like Prabowo is trying to use words or sentences that are simple and easy to digest by the general public, especially the oppressed / weak. So globally, the words or sentences above show that there is an irony in the practice of law that has been applied so far, including in Indonesia. Therefore, cognitively, the sentence chosen by Prabowo above marks his alignment with the people or the weak. He wants all humans to get justice regardless of identity and ethnicity. The law must be positively articulated to fulfil social justice for all humans. The sentence above shows a certain context, where political and legal struggles in the public sphere are increasingly intense, especially ahead of the 2024 political competition or presidential election. At that time, the public is filled with various legal practices that often delegitimise the rule of law.

The 2024 election is an election in the era of an onslaught of legal discourse for those who have acted against the law. In other words, Prabowo seems quite argumentative in his discourse. In fact, he also has to counter public issues that link him to legal issues such as the accusation of eliminating the 1998 reform activists. Clearly, Prabowo is trying



to counter the issues that have always surfaced through the phrase ‘the strong oppress the weak’. Consequently, the public would understand that what Prabowo produced in the sentence above was actually produced more because he wanted to signify that he was a defender of the oppressed. He wants to try to delegitimise the legal issues that have always surrounded him when he has been part of the political contestants in Indonesia since 2009.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the description above, the researcher came to the conclusion that the discourse produced by Prabowo Subianto on the one hand became a political instrument in political competition to gain public sympathy, on the other hand the legal discourse produced was actually a form of Prabowo’s efforts to try to delegitimize legal issues that have always emerged in every presidential election event since 2009 until 2024. In other words, the direction of legal politics is marked by legal discourse whose production emerged from Prabowo’s social context and cognition by trying to get out of the legal issues that have surrounded him so far.

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