

Political Leadership and Organizational Communication in the Film Tepatilah Janji: A Barthesian Semiotic Analysis

Suhaily Amri Hasibuan¹, Ahmad Sofian², Anang Anas Azhar³, Elfi Yanti Ritonga⁴
Zhila Jannati⁵ dan Muhammad Randicha Hamandia⁵

^{1, 2, 3, 4} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

^{5, 6} Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia

suhaily4004253001@uinsu.ac.id, ahmad4004253002@uinsu.ac.id,

ananganas@uinsu.ac.id, elfoyantiritonga@uinsu.ac.id,

zhila_jannati10@radenfatah.ac.id, mranchahamandia_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

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Correspondence

Address:

[zhila_jannati10_uin@
radenfatah.ac.id](mailto:zhila_jannati10_uin@radenfatah.ac.id)

Abstract: This article analyzes how *Tepatilah Janji* (2024) represents organizational communication and political leadership within Indonesian party politics. The study is guided by two questions: how does the film construct party communication, leadership performance, and political promises as cinematic signs; and what myths of populist leadership are normalized through these signs. Methodologically, the research is positioned as qualitative film-text analysis using Roland Barthes' semiotics, supported by a literature review on political communication, leadership, and Islamic communication ethics. The analysis maps selected scene units into signifier, signified, denotation, connotation, and myth, then interprets them through the ethical principles of *shiddiq* and *al-wafa bi al-'ahd*. The findings show that campaign performances, repeated diction such as *rakyat*, *kesejahteraan*, and *pengabdian*, and the visual contrast between elite political spaces and ordinary citizens construct a dramaturgy of leadership in which promises appear as moral commitments but operate as negotiable political commodities. Specifically, the film juxtaposes populist public speech with backstage elite bargaining, exposing a gap between political image and organizational integrity. This study affirms that semiotic analysis of broadcasting media is important for strengthening political literacy and criticizing the ethical crisis of party communication in contemporary Indonesia within Indonesia's evolving democratic and religious public sphere today.

Keyword: Organizational Communication; Political Leadership; Library Research; Semiotics; *Tepatilah Janji* Film

Introduction

The development of communication technology in the era of media convergence has driven a mediatization process that has transformed political communication practices from conventional campaign spaces to public spaces that are increasingly controlled by media logic and popular cultural products, so that the representation of political parties and political actors is more often constructed through symbolic and audiovisual narratives that have a strong influence on public perception.¹ Film as a product of audiovisual technology has the ability to construct and represent socio-political reality through a system of signs and cinematic narratives that not only function as a means of entertainment, but also as an effective ideological apparatus in constructing political meaning, spreading propaganda symbolically, and forming collective perceptions and images of political actors and organizations in the public sphere.²

In a hyperconnected society, political representations produced by the media often operate as simulacra detached from empirical reality, so that political images, narratives, and symbols circulating in digital space no longer merely reflect reality, but rather create a hyperreality that makes it difficult for the public to distinguish between objective facts and media constructions that have been symbolically engineered.³ Under these conditions, organizational communication within political parties, essentially a rational and structured system of interaction, is simulated to appear ideal, democratic, and pro-populist. However, this image is often deliberately created solely to mask the reality of the party's backstage, which is filled with pragmatic negotiations, factionalism, and oligarchy of the political elite.

The post-reform political reality in Indonesia demonstrates the institutional paradox of political parties. While parties are normatively expected to fulfill their functions of representation, interest aggregation, and political education as pillars of democracy, in practice they often face issues of internal oligarchy, patronage, weak intra-party

¹ Erik P. Bucy and Heather K. Evans, "Media-Centric and Politics-Centric Views of Media and Democracy: A Longitudinal Analysis of Political Communication and the *International Journal of Press/Politics*," *Political Communication* 39, no. 2 (2022): 254–265, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2021.1966595>; Katherine Dommett and Peter J. Verovšek, "Promoting Democracy in the Digital Public Sphere: Applying Theoretical Ideals to Online Political Communication," *Javnost – The Public* 28, no. 4 (2021): 358–374, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2021.1955206>; Armin Schäfer, "Digital Heuristics: How Parties Strategize Political Communication in Hybrid Media Environments," *New Media & Society* 25, no. 3 (2023): 661–679, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211012101>

² İsmail Dalkılıç, "Beyond the 'Joker' Movie: Cinema as a Politainment Agent," *CINEJ Cinema Journal* 11, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.5195/cinej.2023.606>; Liam O'Sullivan, "Theoretical Projections: Cinematic Experience and Political Thinking," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 28, no. 2 (2023): 278–296, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2021.1966933>; Ahmed Shehab, "Film as a Tool of Ideology," *Hermes Journal* 12, no. 1 (2023): 31–63, <https://doi.org/10.21608/herms.2023.354093>

³ Dedy Hariyanto et al., "The Hyperreality of Identity Politics on Social Media," *Communicatus: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.15575/cjik.v8i1.28356>; Jeremy Morris, "Simulacra in the Age of Social Media: Baudrillard as the Prophet of Fake News," *The American Sociologist* 52, no. 4 (2021): 319–336, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0196859920977154>; Cathy van Kessel, Juan D. Manriquez, and Kevin Kline, "Baudrillard, Hyperreality, and the 'Problematic' of (Mis/Dis)Information in Social Media," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 53, no. 2 (2025): 249–271, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2024.2439302>

democracy, and a tendency toward transactional pragmatism, which has implications for the declining quality of representation and public trust in political institutions.⁴

In the contemporary era of electoral democracy, political parties are increasingly showing their character as market-oriented organizations and electoral competition, where ideology tends to be reduced to a political marketing instrument, while organizational communication, cadre formation, and campaign strategies are more directed at professionalization, image, and maximizing the acquisition of power rather than strengthening the functions of representation and political education.⁵ This situation has given rise to what has been called a crisis of communication representation, where the collective image of the people and promises of prosperity, massively constructed through campaigns and broadcast media technology, clash diametrically with the actual behavior of the political elite, who are elitist and distant from their constituents.

From an organizational communication perspective, the collective image of a political organization is not a spontaneous phenomenon, but rather the result of a strategic communication and impression management process systematically designed to build, maintain, and control public perception through the management of symbols, narratives, organizational identity, and communication strategies aimed at various stakeholders.⁶

Referring to Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, contemporary political communication can be understood as a front stage management process that displays an image of unity, integrity, and partisanship towards the people through various media channels, while negotiations of interests, internal conflicts, and strategic decision-making processes often take place on the back stage which are not fully accessible to the public,

⁴ Jazim Ghafur, "Demokratisasi Internal Partai Politik Era Reformasi: Antara *Das Sollen* dan *Das Sein*," *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 30, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol30.iss1.art1>; Hendra Kristiyanto, S. Arinanto, and H. S. Ghafur, "Institutionalization and Party Resilience in Indonesian Electoral Democracy," *Heliyon* 9, no. 12 (2023): e22919, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22919>; Agus L. Prianto, "Political Party Governance as an Institutional Challenge to the Democratic Regression in Indonesia," *Journal of Governance and Local Politics* 6, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.47650/jglp.v6i1.1304>.

⁵ Nadeem Ahmad, "What Drive Marketization and Professionalization of Campaigning of Political Parties in the Emerging Democracy? Evidence from Indonesia in the Post-Soeharto New Order," *Journal of Political Marketing* 23, no. 1 (2024): 26–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2021.1910610>; Joost Koedam, "A Change of Heart? Analysing Stability and Change in European Party Positions," *West European Politics* 44, no. 4 (2021): 693–715, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1915659>; Hendra Kristiyanto, S. Arinanto, and H. S. Ghafur, "Institutionalization and Party Resilience in Indonesian Electoral Democracy," *Heliyon* 9, no. 12 (2023): e22919, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22919>

⁶ Pierpaolo G. Audia, H. E. Rousseau, and M. K. Stimmler, "Public Opinion and Impression Management in the Communication of Performance during the Second Iraq War," *Organization Science* 34, no. 2 (2023): 777–800, <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1598>; Kai Lamertz, "Brewing a Craft Impression: A Multilevel Study about the Orchestration of Organizational Impression Management through Authenticity," *Group & Organization Management* 47, no. 1 (2022): 3–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011211009392>; Donghun Lee, "Managing Bureaucratic Reputation in the Face of Crises: An Experimental Examination of the Effect of Strategic Communication," *Public Administration Review* 82, no. 6 (2022): 1124–1137, <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13520>; Ji Sun Lim and Hua Jiang, "Linking Authenticity in CSR Communication to Organization-Public Relationship Outcomes: Integrating Theories of Impression Management and Relationship Management," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 33, no. 6 (2022): 464–486, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2022.2048953>

even though digital technology simultaneously strengthens the mechanisms of transparency and accountability for the political performance displayed.⁷

From the perspective of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, political communication and public leadership must be based on prophetic ethics that demand harmony between words and actions, so that the principles of *shiddiq* (honesty), *amanah*, transparency, and *al-wafā' bi al-'ahd* (keeping promises) become the moral foundations that must be realized in organizational communication practices, while information manipulation, disinformation, hypocrisy, and broken promises are seen as violations of the values of the Qur'an and Sunnah that can damage legitimacy and public trust.⁸

The legitimacy of political leadership is not determined by the success of building an image through media technology, but rather by the consistency of the values of *shiddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and moral spiritual accountability in the entire organizational communication process, so that the practice of manipulating information, exploiting political promises, and creating false hopes in order to maintain power is a form of deviation from the ethics of prophetic communication that damages public trust (*hablum minannas*) and is contrary to the principles of honesty, responsibility, and welfare taught by Islam.⁹

The film *Tepatilah Janji* (2024) by Garin Nugroho can be understood as an audiovisual text that not only functions as a medium for entertainment and political literacy, but also as a representation of social criticism of leadership practices, political communication, and the dynamics of power organizations in Indonesia, so that the film plays a role as a medium for democratic reflection that builds public awareness regarding the relationship between political promises, accountability, and the interests of society.¹⁰

⁷ Pierpaolo G. Audia, H. E. Rousseau, and M. K. Stimmler, "Public Opinion and Impression Management in the Communication of Performance during the Second Iraq War"; Eva Campos-Domínguez and María Díez-Garrido, "Digital Transparency and Political Communication," *Profesional de la Información* 32, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.ene.04>; Jazim Ghafur, "Demokratisasi Internal Partai Politik Era Reformasi: Antara *Das Sollen* dan *Das Sein*," *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 30, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol30.iss1.art1>

⁸ Taufik Rahman, Anis Indriati, and M. K. Ridwan, "Prophetic Communication in Historical and Axiological Review," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 18, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v18i1.7976>; Tasbih and Syamsul Alam Hafid, "The Importance of Prophetic Communication Principles: A Critical Study of the Hadith of Communication," *Al-Ulum* 23, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i2.3315>; Wahyuddin Tasbih and Syamsul Alam Hafid, "From Strategic Communication to Public Ethics: Prophetic Honesty in Contemporary Moral Discourse," *Al-Irsyad Al-Nafs* 12, no. 2 (2025): 29–42.

⁹ Hamdan Abu Bakar and Stacey L. Connaughton, "Ethical Leadership Communications Scale: Development and Validation of a Measure and Multi-Level Test," *Journal of International Communication* 51, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/03063070231170702>; Ahmed A. Afifi, "The Controlled Tongue Prevents Verbal Misdeeds, Slander, Hatred, Bullying, Incivility, Extremism and Radicalism: Islamic Perspective on Ethical Communication," *Perwakilan: Journal of Good Governance, Diplomacy, Customary Institutionalization and Social Networks* 2, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.58764/j.prwkl.2024.2.70>

¹⁰ Nur Fadhillah and Dwi Nurmalisa, "Symbol of Democratic Leadership in the Film *Tepatilah Janji* Director Garin Nugroho," *EduInovasi: Journal of Basic Educational Studies* 5, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.47467/edu.v5i2.8209>; Rina S. Lestari and Ahriani, "Analisis Wacana Kritis dalam Film Dokumenter *Dirty Vote*," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 4, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.47945/al-hikmah.v4i2.2426>; Jan Van Belle, Georgia Aitaki, and Mats Jansson, "Audiovisual Fiction and Democracy: A

However, previous studies on *Tepatilah Janji* and similar political films have generally emphasized moral messages, democratic leadership symbols, or voter education, while the relationship between party organizational communication, political dramaturgy, language commodification, and prophetic communication ethics has not been examined in an integrated semiotic framework. Therefore, this study fills the gap by asking three research questions: (1) how are organizational communication and political leadership denoted in selected scenes of *Tepatilah Janji*? (2) what connotative meanings are produced through dialogue, camera angle, spatial setting, and repeated political diction? and (3) what myths of populist leadership and political promise are naturalized by the film, and how can these myths be critiqued through the Islamic political communication principles of *shiddiq* and *al-wafa bi al-'ahd*?¹¹

Research Method

a. Paradigms and Types of Library Research

The interpretive-constructivist paradigm is based on the assumption that social reality is the result of the construction of meaning formed through language, symbols, discourse, and social interaction, so that qualitative research is directed at understanding how this reality is produced, negotiated, and interpreted in a particular context through a process of in-depth interpretation of texts and social experiences.¹²

From the perspective of interpretivism and social constructionism, the representation of political leadership in films is understood as a construction of meaning produced through symbols, narratives, discourse, and representational practices. Political images in the film are therefore not treated as direct reflections of empirical reality, but as cultural constructions that are produced, exchanged, and interpreted within a particular political context.¹³

Library research in this article is used as a supporting procedure to collect and examine books, journal articles, and relevant documents that explain political communication, organizational leadership, semiotics, and Islamic communication ethics. It

Systematic Literature Review,” *Nordicom Review* 46, suppl. 1 (2025): 55–83, <https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2025-0008>

¹¹ Nur Fadhillah and Dwi Nurmalisa, “Symbol of Democratic Leadership in the Film *Tepatilah Janji* Director Garin Nugroho”; Rina S. Lestari and Ahriani, “Analisis Wacana Kritis dalam Film Dokumenter *Dirty Vote*”; Jan Van Belle, Georgia Aitaki, and Mats Jansson, “Audiovisual Fiction and Democracy: A Systematic Literature Review”; Tasbih and Syamsul Alam Hafid, “The Importance of Prophetic Communication Principles: A Critical Study of the Hadith of Communication,” *Al-Ulum* 23, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i2.3315>; Taufik Rahman, Anis Indriati, and M. K. Ridwan, “Prophetic Communication in Historical and Axiological Review,” *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 18, no. 1 (2024),

¹² Michael J. Phillips, “Towards a Social Constructionist, Criticalist, Foucauldian-Informed Qualitative Research Approach: Opportunities and Challenges,” *SN Social Sciences* 3, no. 11 (2023): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-023-00774-9>

¹³ H. Morgan, “Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis,” *The Qualitative Report* 27, no. 1 (2022): 64–77, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>; Michael J. Phillips, “Towards a Social Constructionist, Criticalist, Foucauldian-Informed Qualitative Research Approach: Opportunities and Challenges.”

is not positioned as the sole research design, because the main empirical object of this study is an audiovisual film text.¹⁴

Thus, the methodological position of this study is qualitative film-text analysis supported by library review. *Tepatilah Janji* is treated as the primary audiovisual corpus because it contains visual, verbal, and narrative signs that can be repeatedly observed and interpreted. Theoretical literature functions as secondary data used to sharpen interpretation, not to replace the semiotic reading of the film. This clarification prevents a contradiction between the terms library research and film semiotic analysis.¹⁵

b. Material Objects and the Ontological Status of Audiovisual Data

Films as social and cultural artifacts contain traces of meaning, representation, and construction of social reality that are born from particular historical and political contexts. Therefore, *Tepatilah Janji* can be used as a valid documentary source for analyzing political representation, provided that the analysis is directed at its audiovisual signs rather than treated as a transparent copy of social reality.¹⁶

As sources of research evidence, documents and films possess the methodological advantage of data stability, allowing for in-depth, repeated examination. While the validity of their interpretations depends on the researcher's ability to identify the context, production goals, and biases underlying the document's construction.¹⁷ Therefore, the study of this film through the library method relies on tracing documentary evidence in the form of visual representations of instructional communication and negotiations of political elites hidden behind the arrangement of scenes and shots.

c. Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

In library research, primary data can be in the form of documents or audiovisual texts that are the main objects of analysis, while secondary data is obtained from relevant scientific literature; the interpretation process is highly dependent on the researcher as the main instrument who reflectively reads, interprets, and constructs meaning from various data sources.¹⁸

¹⁴ E. Haryono et al., "New Paradigm Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan (*Library Research*) di Perguruan Tinggi," *An-Nuur* 14, no. 1 (2023): 35–42, <https://doi.org/10.58403/annuur.v14i1.391>; H. Morgan, "Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis."

¹⁵ E. Haryono et al., "New Paradigm Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan (*Library Research*) di Perguruan Tinggi"; H. Morgan, "Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis."

¹⁶ S. Fazeli, J. Sabetti, and M. Ferrari, "Performing Qualitative Content Analysis of Video Data in Social Sciences and Medicine: The Visual-Verbal Video Analysis Method," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231185452>; Jan Van Belle, Georgia Aitaki, and Mats Jansson, "Audiovisual Fiction and Democracy: A Systematic Literature Review," *Nordicom Review* 46, suppl. 1 (2025): 55–83, <https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2025-0008>

¹⁷ S. Fazeli, J. Sabetti, and M. Ferrari, "Performing Qualitative Content Analysis of Video Data in Social Sciences and Medicine: The Visual-Verbal Video Analysis Method"; N. Sankofa, "Critical Method of Document Analysis," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 26, no. 6 (2023): 745–757, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2022.2113664>

¹⁸ H. Morgan, "Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis," *The Qualitative Report* 27, no. 1 (2022): 64–77, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>; B. Yoon and C. Uliassi, "Researcher-as-Instrument in Qualitative Research: The Complexities of the Educational Researcher's Identities," *The Qualitative Report* 27, no. 4 (2022): 1088–1102, <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5074>

The documentation method is a data collection technique carried out through searching and analyzing various documents, archives, transcripts, notes, texts, and audiovisual materials that are already available, thus enabling researchers to obtain relevant information systematically without having to produce data through direct interaction with research participants. Documentation practices in this research are operationalized through repeated text observation (repeated viewing), recording crucial scenes (scene logging), transcription of dialogues containing negotiations and political promises, and taking screen captures of frames that present the visual structure of party organizational communication.¹⁹

d. Validity, Data Validity, and Analysis Techniques

To ensure the rigor of the analysis of films as a data source, each observation category and semiotic indicator used must have adequate content validity, namely being able to comprehensively represent the conceptual dimensions to be studied so that the resulting interpretation is not speculative, but rather based on the suitability between empirical data and the theoretical construction used.²⁰

The validity of interpretation in qualitative research can be strengthened through triangulation of various theoretical sources, while analysis of media texts needs to be directed not only at the meanings that appear on the surface, but also at the latent structures that reproduce ideologies, power relations, and social constructions hidden behind media representations.²¹

Roland Barthes's semiotic approach is used as the primary interpretive tool. The analysis follows two orders of signification: denotation, namely the literal meaning of visible actions, dialogue, setting, and camera composition; connotation, namely the cultural and political meanings attached to those signs; and myth, namely the ideological naturalization that makes a constructed political image appear normal, moral, and self-evident. Before conducting the Barthesian semiotic reading, the audiovisual data were organized through preliminary coding. In this study, open, axial, and selective coding are not used to build a grounded theory; they function only as a data-management bridge for indexing scene units, grouping recurring signs, and selecting the most relevant units for semiotic interpretation. This limited use is coherent because coding organizes the corpus, while Barthes' denotation connotation myth model remains the main analytical procedure.²²

¹⁹ H. Morgan, "Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis"; S. Fazeli, J. Sabetti, and M. Ferrari, "Performing Qualitative Content Analysis of Video Data in Social Sciences and Medicine: The Visual-Verbal Video Analysis Method," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231185452>

²⁰ J. P. Zapata-Ospina and J. García-Valencia, "Validity Based on Content: A Challenge in Health Measurement Scales," *Journal of Health Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2022): 229–238, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105320953477>

²¹ U. Flick, "Triangulation in Data Collection," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design*, ed. U. Flick (London: SAGE Publications, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529770278>

²² S. Fazeli, J. Sabetti, and M. Ferrari, "Performing Qualitative Content Analysis of Video Data in Social Sciences and Medicine: The Visual-Verbal Video Analysis Method," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231185452>

Operationally, open coding identifies recurring visual and verbal units such as public speeches, private elite meetings, promise rhetoric, crowd framing, and leader-citizen proximity. Axial coding connects those units to larger categories, including front-stage image, backstage negotiation, symbolic hierarchy, and promise commodification. Selective coding then determines the central theme: the myth of populist leadership and the ethical crisis of political promise. The selected scene units are presented in the corpus table before the discussion to make the evidence traceable.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Semiotic corpus of selected scene units in *Tepatilah Janji*

Code	Scene evidence	Signifier	Signified	Denotation	Connotation and myth
S1	Public campaign or village gathering where leaders address residents and repeat the diction of “rakyat,” “kesejahteraan,” and “pengabdian.”	Campaign speech, crowd, public setting, promise language.	Closeness to the people; service orientation.	A political actor delivers promises in front of citizens.	Populist rhetoric transforms welfare into an image of moral leadership; the myth produced is the leader as the natural representative of the people.
S2	Closed party or elite negotiation space where support, succession, or campaign direction is discussed pragmatically.	Private room, controlled seating, elite conversation, strategic tone.	Backstage control and elite bargaining.	Party actors coordinate strategy and negotiate interests.	Organizational communication becomes impression management; the myth of party unity conceals transactional negotiation.
S3	Visual contrast between dominant elite framing and wider or higher-angle framing of supporters/citizens.	Low-angle or dominant framing of elites; high-angle/wide framing of the masses.	Authority versus subordination.	The camera differentiates elite power from the collective crowd.	Visual hierarchy naturalizes unequal power relations; the myth is that political authority appears larger and more legitimate than the public it claims to represent.
S4	Scenes of leaders appearing simple, informal, and physically close to ordinary people or marginalized groups.	Modest appearance, informal space, body proximity, local symbols.	Humility, authenticity, and empathy.	A leader is represented as close to citizens.	Simplicity is converted into symbolic capital; the myth of authentic closeness substitutes for programmatic accountability.
S5	Scenes or dialogues that problematize campaign promises as commitments that may be postponed, negotiated, or manipulated.	Promise diction, tension over commitment, moral appeal.	Promise as public contract.	A political promise is spoken, questioned, or reinterpreted.	Political promise becomes a negotiable commodity; the myth of accountability is weakened when words are separated from fulfillment.

Note. Scene codes function as traceable units of analysis; if the journal requires exact time-codes or screenshots, they can be inserted from the researcher’s final viewing log without changing the semiotic categories.

a. The Order of Denotation and Connotation: The Dramaturgy of Organizational Communication and the Alienation of the Political Stage

At a denotative level, the film *Precise Promise* displays various message exchange activities that take place in formal and informal communication. At the denotative level, *Tepatilah Janji* displays message exchange activities in public campaign spaces, village gatherings, and closed party conversations. These scene units show organizational

communication as coordination among actors who attempt to manage uncertainty, build consensus, control information, and direct collective political action.²³ networks of political parties, which conceptually reflects organizational communication as a mechanism for coordinating relations between actors to manage uncertainty, build consensus, and direct the collective actions of political organizations.

At the connotative level, the dualism of communication space displayed in the film *Tepatilah Janji* represents the practice of political dramaturgy, where the front stage functions as an arena for public image and legitimacy, while the back stage becomes a hidden space for designing strategies, managing impressions, and negotiating political interests that are not fully accessible to the audience.²⁴ At the connotative level, the film *Tepatilah Janji* shows the contradiction between populist rhetoric shown to the public and internal political practices that are full of negotiation of interests, so that political communication appears as an instrument of image and legitimacy that is not always in line with the dynamics of power that occur behind the scenes.²⁵

The communication relationship shown in the film *Tepatilah Janji* shows the dominance of strategic actions over communicative actions, because the decision-making process is determined more by authority, elite interests, and control of information than by rational dialogue that allows for the free and equal achievement of consensus among members of the organization.²⁶

b. The Commodification of Language and Symbolic Violence in Political Party Negotiations

As shown in scene units S1 and S5, the repetition of terms such as “*rakyat*,” “*kesejahteraan*,” and “*pengabdian*” in *Tepatilah Janji* can be interpreted as symbolic power that uses political language to build legitimacy, direct public perception, and normalize elite interests through discourse that appears natural but is embedded in relations of domination.²⁷

The representation of party elites in scene unit S2 shows that claims regarding the “interests of the people” function as a discursive legitimation device. Political actors with

²³ Dennis K. Mumby, “Organizational Communication,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.140>.

²⁴ Olaf Hoffjann, “The Politician as a Player: Political Strategic Communication as a Play,” *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 49, no. 3 (2021): 247–264, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0196859920977123>; Andrea Whittle, Andrew Gilchrist, Frank Mueller, and Paul Lenney, “The Art of Stage-Craft: A Dramaturgical Perspective on Strategic Change,” *Journal of Change Management* 21, no. 4 (2021): 321–343, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127020914225>

²⁵ Ruth Amossy, “Constructing Political Legitimacy and Authority in Discourse,” *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours* 28 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.4000/aad.6398>.

²⁶ A. E. F. A. da Silva, J. R. Pereira, and L. F. Felizardo, “Science Popularization from the Perspective of the Theory of Communicative Action,” *Global Media and China* 7, no. 2 (2022): 193–209, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20966083221088041>; Gordon Mackin, “The Aesthetic Habermas: Communicative Power and Judgment,” *Political Theory* 50, no. 5 (2022): 760–786, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00905917221092412>

²⁷ Johan Lindell, “Symbolic Violence and the Social Space: Self-Imposing the Mark of Disgrace?” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 25, no. 3 (2022): 835–852, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17499755221082375>

organizational authority gain power through their ability to define social reality and construct knowledge that is accepted as truth by party members and constituents.²⁸ Scene unit S3 gives textual evidence for the visual claim: elite figures are framed through dominant camera composition, while supporters and ordinary citizens are shown as a collective mass. This contrast can be interpreted as a visual representation strategy that symbolically constructs power relations, because camera angle and framing shape the audience's perception of authority, dominance, and subordination in political communication.²⁹

At the connotative level, scene units S2 and S5 depict political parties moving away from their deliberative function as channels of public representation and operating more as closed organizations that manage their image through populist narratives, political euphemisms, and ambiguous language that disguises transactional interests and weakens accountability to constituents.³⁰ From a cultural semiotic perspective, connotations that are continuously reproduced through narratives, dialogues, and visual representations ultimately form social myths that present ideological constructions as something natural, so that the audience accepts certain political values and practices as if they were natural truths and did not need to be questioned.³¹

c. The Myth of Leadership and the Simulacra of Political Hyperconnectivity

In scene unit S4, the repeated representation of leaders who appear simple, speak the language of the people, and are present among ordinary citizens forms a political myth about authentic closeness to the people. Leadership legitimacy is therefore built through emotional symbols that are naturalized as social truth rather than through rational assessment of political programs and performance.³²

²⁸ Ruth Amossy, "Constructing Political Legitimacy and Authority in Discourse," *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours* 28 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.4000/aad.6398>; Mark Haugaard, "Foucault and Power: A Critique and Retheorization," *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society* 34, nos. 3–4 (2022): 341–371, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2022.2133803>

²⁹ K. M. McCullough and J. N. Lester, "Beyond Talk and Text: Visuality and Critical Discursive Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 20, no. 1 (2023): 74–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2022.2090468>; M. Merkt, A.-L. Weingärtner, and S. Schwan, "Digital Images Are Hard to Resist: Teaching Viewers about the Effects of Camera Angle Does Not Reduce the Camera Angle's Impact on Power Judgments," *Acta Psychologica* 229 (2022): 103687, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103687>

³⁰ Jazim Ghafur, "Demokratisasi Internal Partai Politik Era Reformasi: Antara *Das Sollen* dan *Das Sein*," *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 30, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol30.iss1.art1>; Heidar and Jupskås, [sesuai data bibliografi dalam daftar referensi Anda]; Hendra Kristiyanto, S. Arinanto, and H. S. Ghafur, "Institutionalization and Party Resilience in Indonesian Electoral Democracy," *Heliyon* 9, no. 12 (2023): e22919, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22919>

³¹ A. M. Orekhov and A. R. Poluboyarinov, "General Characterization of Ideological Semiology Based on Roland Barthes' Semiological Theory," *Sociopolitical Sciences* 14, no. 4 (2024): 213–219, <https://doi.org/10.33693/2223-0092-2024-14-4-213-219>; O. N. Strel'nik, "On the Demarcation of Mythological Messages in the Communicative Space of Contemporary Culture: An Interdisciplinary Approach," *RUDN Journal of Sociology* 21, no. 4 (2021): 711–721, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2272-2021-21-4-711-721>

³² A. M. Orekhov and A. R. Poluboyarinov, "General Characterization of Ideological Semiology Based on Roland Barthes' Semiological Theory," *Sociopolitical Sciences* 14, no. 4 (2024): 213–219, <https://doi.org/10.33693/2223-0092-2024-14-4-213-219>

Semiotic analysis of political representation in the film shows that the reproduction of signs, images, and narratives through media culture can create a hyperreality condition that shifts political legitimacy from empirical performance to symbolic imagery. In a post-truth context, political reality is increasingly determined by media simulations and identity commodification that circulate through digital communication networks.³³

d. Critique of the Epistemology of Islamic Communication Ethics: Deconstructing Hypocrisy through *Shiddiq* and *Al-Wafa bi Al-'Ahd*

In the perspective of Islamic political ethics, organizational communication and political leadership are seen as a mandate that demands harmony between intentions, words, and actions (*shiddiq*), so that the practice of image manipulation, broken promises, and misleading communication as visualized in *Tepatilah Janji* is a form of violation of the basic principles of Islamic leadership which make moral integrity, honesty, and public responsibility the main sources of legitimacy of power.

In the perspective of Islamic communication and politics, the post-truth phenomenon that strengthens the spread of information manipulation through digital technology further emphasizes the urgency of implementing *qaulan sadidan* as a principle of correct, responsible, and integrity-based communication, while political promises made to the public must be understood as a mandate as well as a moral contract that binds leaders to realize their commitments, so that breaking these promises not only harms social trust but also violates the ethical and religious responsibilities of Islamic leadership.

Thus, the fundamental problem of political organizational communication lies not only in the effectiveness of message delivery, but also in the moral integrity that supports the message. In the Islamic paradigm, leadership legitimacy does not arise from image domination or rhetorical success, but from conformity between words, actions, and mandates that are realized for public benefit.³⁴

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the film *Tepatilah Janji* (2024) functions not only as an audiovisual entertainment product but also as a cultural text that represents the dynamics of organizational communication, political image strategies, and the ethical crisis

³³ M. Stocchetti, "Post-Truth and the 'Great Transformation' of Political Reality in the Digital Age," *European Journal of Communication* 37, no. 2 (2022): 216–221, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231221089623>; Cathy van Kessel, Juan D. Manriquez, and Kevin Kline, "Baudrillard, Hyperreality, and the 'Problematic' of (Mis/Dis)Information in Social Media," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 53, no. 2 (2025): 249–271, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2024.2439302>

³⁴ Ahmed A. Afifi, "The Controlled Tongue Prevents Verbal Misdeeds, Slander, Hatred, Bullying, Incivility, Extremism and Radicalism: Islamic Perspective on Ethical Communication," *Perwakilan: Journal of Good Governance, Diplomacy, Customary Institutionalization and Social Networks* 2, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.58764/j.prwkl.2024.2.70>; Taufik Rahman, Anis Indriati, and M. K. Ridwan, "Prophetic Communication in Historical and Axiological Review," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 18, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v18i1.7976>; Wahyuddin Tasbih and Syamsul Alam Hafid, "From Strategic Communication to Public Ethics: Prophetic Honesty in Contemporary Moral Discourse," *Al-Irsyad Al-Nafs* 12, no. 2 (2025): 29–42.

of leadership within Indonesian political parties. Through a library research approach and Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis, it was found that at the denotative level, the film depicts the formal and informal communication processes that occur within political organizations. At the connotative level, this communication reflects the practice of political dramaturgy that contrasts public image with the organization's internal reality. At the mythical level, the film dismantles the construction of populist leadership built through the reproduction of populist symbols, the rhetoric of prosperity, and image strategies that are continuously reproduced through media and broadcasting technology.

The research findings also show that political party organizational communication in the film tends to be dominated by pragmatic interests, impression management, and the commodification of political language, transforming terms such as "people," "devotion," and "welfare" into instruments of legitimizing power. In the context of hyperconnectivity and post-truth culture, the reproduction of political images through the media no longer simply represents reality, but rather creates a hyperreality that causes political legitimacy to be determined more by the power of symbols and media simulations than by actual empirical performance. From the perspective of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, this representation demonstrates a deviation from prophetic communication ethics, particularly *shiddiq* (truthfulness) and *al-wafa bi al-'ahd* (commitment to fulfilling promises). The film reveals that the primary problem of political communication lies not merely in technical message delivery, but in the weak moral integrity underlying the communication itself. Information manipulation, exploitation of popular symbols, and broken political promises constitute an ethical crisis that can damage public trust, weaken social solidarity (*'ashabiyah*), and erode the legitimacy of political organizations

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