



Conceptual Metaphors of Politics in Indonesian Online Mass Media: A Corpus-Based Analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the source domain of the target domain of POLITICS, the nuances of its meaning in Indonesian online mass media, and its distribution. It employs a qualitative research method to investigate the conceptual metaphors of POLITICS using a corpus-based approach. The data were obtained from 350 Indonesian online news articles that discuss politics over a period exceeding 13 months, starting from the election campaign period to the post-election period. The total number of tokens in the entire corpus amounted to 144,852. The corpus was analyzed using the AntConc tool (version 4.2.4) by utilizing the 5L & 5R collocate feature and KWIC. The Metaphorical Identification Procedure (MIP) was applied to analyze metaphors. The findings demonstrated the conceptual metaphors with negative connotations, namely POLITICS IS A TRANSACTION, and POLITICS IS A KINGDOM, and neutral connotations, namely POLITICS IS PHYSICAL SPACE, POLITICS IS A DRAMA SHOW, and POLITICS IS LOWLAND. However, conceptual metaphors with negative connotations were significantly more prevalent in linguistic expressions, suggesting that these metaphors more accurately reflect the political realities of Indonesia during the late 2023 to 2024 period.

Keywords: Source Domain; Metaphors; Politics; Nuances of Meaning

Introduction

The period from the beginning to the end of 2024 can be described as a political period in Indonesia, as the country had two major agendas: the General Elections (Pemilu) and Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2022). During this time, online mass media extensively covered issues related to politics. As a means of conveying messages to the wider community (Cangara, 2010), online mass media utilized metaphorical terms to deliver political news. The metaphorical expression serves as a means to simplify the inherently complex nature of political concepts while also functioning as a persuasive and

rhetoical tool in constructing public understanding (Charteris-Black, 2011). Consequently, as noted by Aliurridha & Efendi (2021), politics and metaphor are two interconnected components.

In this context, metaphors are not merely rhetorical tools but reflections of the realities experienced and perceived by individuals in their lives (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Evans & Green (2006) suggests that metaphors represent a way of thinking, allowing individuals to interpret concepts based on their experiences. From this perspective, metaphor can be understood as a manifestation of the world experienced by speakers through their sensory perceptions.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) categorize metaphors into two aspects: visible and invisible aspects. The visible aspect refers to a linguistic expression that contains metaphor, known as linguistic metaphor, while the invisible aspect pertains to the associative meaning within metaphor. These associative meanings reside within the human conceptual system, structurally linking one concept to another. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) term these as conceptual metaphors. Linguistic metaphors, therefore, are expressions that manifest conceptual metaphors (Rajeg & Rajeg, 2020). Similarly, Arimi (2015) emphasizes that linguistic forms or expressions reflect the workings of the minds. Linguistic metaphors, as such, are linguistic representations of underlying conceptual metaphors. Thus, tracing linguistic expressions in linguistic metaphors is a method for uncovering conceptual metaphors.

In Indonesian online mass media, conceptual metaphors of politics are mostly manifested in the linguistic metaphors of money politics and political dynasties. In these expressions, politics is associated with various concepts rather than a singular one. Basically, politics refers to the knowledge of state administration, including governance systems and foundational principles (KBBI VI Online, 2016). However, in the expressions found in Indonesian online mass media, the concept of POLITICS is associated with the concept of MONEY, which implies a transactional nature, and the concept of DYNASTY, which signifies kingdom. Referring to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), who argue that metaphors reflect reality, these metaphorical expressions depict the current governmental system in Indonesia as transactional and monarchical. Thus, the complexity of the concept of POLITICS is constructed through associations with more concrete concepts rooted in real-life experiences.

This explanation requires further elaboration to obtain valid results that accurately represent the political reality in Indonesia. To ensure data validity, this research employed corpus-based analysis. In line with conceptual metaphor, corpus-based linguistic analysis is rooted in an empirical paradigm and relies on authentic data (McEnery & Hardie, 2012; Stefanowitsch, 2020). In addition, the study of metaphor using corpus-based linguistic analysis involves utilizing relatively large electronic linguistic data (Stefanowitsch & Gries, 2007).

In line with this approach, this research draws on a substantial volume of linguistic data derived from 350 political news articles from Indonesian online

mass media. The media outlets referenced in this study—Detik.com, Kompas.com, and Tribunnews—are among the most accessed platforms in Indonesia, according to the Reuters Institute (Santika, 2024; Tim tvonenews.com, 2024). These media are popular and widely trusted due to the effectiveness and timeliness of their news delivery, which facilitates public access to the latest information (Putri, 2021; Sumadiria, 2005).

The study of conceptual metaphors of politics has received increasing attention, with research exploring how they shape political realities across different cultural and linguistic contexts. Key studies in this area, such as those by Surip et al. (2023), Suwandee & Meekrua-iam (2023), and Stojan & Mijić (2019), have provided valuable insights into the conceptualization of POLITICS through various source domains.

Surip et al. (2023) examined conceptual metaphors of politics in Indonesian mass media, identifying four key source domains—WAR, AGE, MYSTIC, and ANIMALS. These domains reflect how society in Medan perceives politicians. However, the study's reliance on only 15 articles from local media limits the generalizability of its findings to the broader Indonesian context. Similarly, Suwandee & Meekrua-iam (2023) investigated political debates in Thailand, uncovering a broader range of source domains, including WAR, COMPETITION, BUSINESS, and FAMILY. Their study also explored the metaphors' functions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—though the limited linguistic evidence presented raises questions about the objectivity of their findings. Expanding the scope to a cross-cultural comparison, Stojan & Mijić (2019) analyzed political metaphors in Croatia, the United States, and Italy. They found consistent mappings of POLITICS to SPORT, WAR, TRAVEL, and GAMES. While their findings highlight similarities across these countries, they provide limited explanation for why these conceptualizations vary in specific cultural and political contexts.

In addition to these studies, research on conceptual metaphors in political discourse has explored a broader spectrum of political themes. It is important to distinguish between conceptual metaphors in politics and conceptual metaphors in political discourse. The conceptual metaphors of politics focus specifically on how individuals conceptualize the meaning of politics. In contrast, conceptual metaphors in political discourse address broader issues such as government, state, and political parties. For example, Aliurridha & Efendi (2021) identified target domains like LEADER, GOOD, CHILD, and HUMAN, while Pipit & Maili (2023) mapped domains such as COALITION, GOVERNMENT, and PARTY. These studies provide more diverse metaphorical data but lack a specific focus on how the concept of POLITICS itself is constructed. On the other hand, Chahbane & Zrizi (2023) analyzed the types of conceptual metaphors in political discourse using Critical Discourse Analysis. However, their study did not specify target or source domains, limiting its ability to contribute to understanding the conceptualization of politics.

Despite these contributions, research on the conceptual metaphors of politics in Indonesian online mass media remains underdeveloped, particularly from a corpus-based perspective. This gap is significant because such studies can encourage critical reflection on Indonesia's political realities while providing an empirical basis for collective evaluation. A corpus-based approach, as advocated by Gries & Stefanowitsch (2008) and Stefanowitsch (2020), ensures objectivity and data-driven insights, offering a robust framework to explore how language shapes political understanding.

This study aims to investigate the source domains of the target domain POLITICS within a specialized corpus derived from Indonesian online mass media. Additionally, the study explores the nuances of meaning to understand how metaphors function in shaping thought. Furthermore, the study examines the distribution of source domains over time and their representation across different media. To guide this analysis, the authors employ the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which differentiates between the target and source domains. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) define the target domain as an abstract concept one seeks to understand through the source domain, a more concrete concept grounded in sensory experience. To validate the conceptual connections between target and source domains, the authors utilize conceptual mappings proposed by Kövecses (2002).

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research method to examine the conceptual metaphors of politics using a corpus-based method. The use of corpus method to analyze conceptual metaphors is commonly employed by international scholars as it enables them to comprehensively analyze data in the form of language and real-life contexts (Lindquist in Rasool et al., 2021).

The data for this study were obtained from 350 Indonesian online news articles discussing politics over a period of more than 13 months, starting from the election campaign period (November 28, 2023) to the post-election phase (December 31, 2024). This period marked an intense focus by Indonesian online media on political coverage, as politics was a highly relevant and widely discussed issue. Among the 350 news articles, 115 were obtained from Detik.com, 115 from Kompas.com, and 120 from Tribunnews. The total number of tokens in the entire corpus amounted to 144,852. The selection of 350 sample articles was based on data saturation. The collected data sufficiently demonstrated a variety of metaphors, and adding more data did not yield significant additional insights for the analysis.

For data collection, the authors first compiled 350 links to political online news web pages into Microsoft Excel. Subsequently, web scraping was conducted by importing the Excel file into the OpenRefine online application. During this process, a 'source' column was added to load the HTML of the collected links. From

the HTML column, another column was created to extract the text of the news articles by inserting 'value.parseHtml().select"p".replace(/<[^>]*>/,*)' into the expression column. After extracting the article text, the 'source' column was deleted, and the media content was carefully reviewed to identify and remove unnecessary words and symbols, such as "profile", "kirim images", "logout", "masuk ke akun Anda", "daftar akun", "privacy policy", "hubungi kami", "download tribun" and " ". The 'find and replace' feature was used to remove these unwanted elements. To detect duplicate content, the 'facet' feature was applied to the column containing the article text, followed by selecting 'customize facets' and 'duplicate facets.' Duplicates were addressed by clicking 'edit' on one of the duplicate rows and deleting it. After this, the 'all' option was selected, followed by 'edit rows' and 'remove matching rows'. The cleaned data were first exported in .xls format for review and then saved in .txt format using Notepad after the cleaning process was completed. The data was categorized by the media source, with file names corresponding to each source, such as *data detik*, *data kompas*, and *data tribun*.

The corpus was then processed using the AntConc tool (version 4.2.4) by utilizing the collocate and KWIC (Keyword in Context) features. The collocate feature was utilized to determine the collocation frequency based on political keywords, while the KWIC feature provided insight into the contextual usage of words (Anthony, 2023). Collocation frequencies were examined within five tokens to the left (5L) and five tokens to the right (5R) of the keywords. MIP (Metaphorical Identification Procedure) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) was employed to analyze the indication of metaphor in each collocate of political words. To determine the metaphors, the authors conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to reach a consensus. Each author independently noted potential metaphors derived from the corpus data. The notes were then thoroughly discussed during the FGD, and a collective agreement on the metaphors was reached.

Results

Based on corpus data sourced from Detik.com, Kompas.com, dan Tribunnews, ten words were identified as the most frequent collocates of the word *politics*.

Table 1. Collocates Words for Politics

Rating	Word	5L & 5R Frequency	Likelihood
1	<i>Uang</i> (Money)	279	447.663
2	<i>Dinasti</i> (Dynasty)	190	391.018
3	<i>Partai</i> (Party)	382	225.068
4	<i>Kiai</i> (Expert in Islam)	57	131.486
5	<i>Praktik</i> (Practice)	79	99.844
6	<i>Dunia</i> (World)	79	82.379

7	<i>Terjun</i> (Plunge)	44	72.044
8	<i>Panggung</i> (Stage)	46	71.824
9	<i>Pengamat</i> (Observer)	41	62.330
10	<i>Keamanan</i> (Security)	35	51.033

This ranking is based on the likelihood or probability of the words occurring as collocates of the word *politics*. In their role as collocates of the word *politics*, these ten words each have both literal and contextual meanings. Words which contextual meanings differ from their literal meanings are considered indicative of metaphors (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). From this analysis, the words *uang* (*money*), *dinasti* (*dynasty*), *dunia* (*world*), *terjun* (*plunge*), and *panggung* (*stage*) are identified as metaphors. Evidence supporting these metaphorical indications is detailed through linguistic expressions, as discussed in subsequent sections.

To ensure that the differences in frequency for the five collocates identified as metaphors did not occur by chance, statistical significance tests were conducted using Pearson's formula (as cited in He & Zhang, 2024).

$$X^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$$

In the formula, X^2 represents the chi-square value, $\sum$ represents the sum of all the values that follow, O is the observed frequency, and E is the expected frequency. The calculated X^2 value is then compared with the critical value from the chi-square distribution table, based on the degrees of freedom (df), which is determined by the formula: $df = (N_{\text{rows}} - 1) \times (N_{\text{columns}} - 1)$. Here, N_{rows} refers to the number of rows in the contingency table and N_{columns} refers to the number of columns. A distribution is considered statistically significant if the calculated X^2 value exceeds the critical value. Conversely, if the X^2 value is less than the critical value, the distribution is considered insignificant, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected. According to statistical convention, the significance level (α) used to evaluate H_0 is 0.05 (5%) (Robbit, 2018; Turney, 2022). The results of the statistical significance tests are detailed in the following table and explanation.

Table 2. Observed and Expected Frequency

	Detik.com		Kompas.com		Tribunnews	
	O	E	O	E	O	E
<i>Uang</i> (money)	50	74.34169	121	92.27116	108	112.3871
<i>Dinasti</i> (dynasty)	67	50.62696	75	62.83699	48	76.53605
<i>Dunia</i> (world)	31	21.05016	10	26.12696	38	31.82288
<i>Panggung</i> (stage)	2	12.25705	3	15.21317	41	18.52978

<i>Terjun</i> (plunge)	20	11.72414	2	14.55172	22	17.72414
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Table 3. Calculation Results $(O_i - E_i)^2/E_i$

	Detik.com	Kompas.com	Tribunnews
<i>Uang</i> (money)	7.970197955	8.944791158	0.171256787
<i>Dinasti</i> (dynasty)	5.295132622	2.35432659	10.63951114
<i>Dunia</i> (world)	4.703023456	9.954423403	1.19903532
<i>Panggung</i> (stage)	8.583396003	9.804758973	27.24860987
<i>Terjun</i> (plunge)	5.84178499	10.82660565	1.031530927

The chi-square value (X^2) derived from the calculations in Table 3 is 114.5684. This value is then compared to the critical value, determined for $df = 8$ using the formula $(5-1) \times (3-1)$. According to the chi-square distribution table (Robbit, 2018; Turney, 2022), the critical value at a significance level of 0.05 for $df=8$ is 15.507. Since the calculated X^2 value (114,5684) is greater than the critical value (15.507), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This result confirms that the frequency of the five collocates identified as metaphors is statistically significant.

To further enhance the analysis, the frequency ranking of the collocate feature was expanded to identify additional collocates that intersect with the initial five metaphorical terms. This step was undertaken to obtain more comprehensive and robust data. It revealed additional collocates intersecting with *money* (e.g., cost and fare), *dynasty* (e.g., power), *world* (e.g., map), and *stage* (e.g., actors and games). However, no additional collocates were identified for *plunge*. Despite this, its frequent occurrence strongly indicates metaphorical usage.

In line with the study's objectives, meaning associations were identified to concretize the concept of POLITICS. Within conceptual metaphor, these more concrete associations of are referred to as source domains. Based on the frequency of linguistic expressions, the most prominent source domains identified are TRANSACTION (*TRANSAKSI*), KINGDOM (*KERAJAAN*), PHYSICAL SPACE (*RUANG FISIK*), DRAMA SHOW (*PERTUNJUKAN DRAMA*), and LOWLAND (*DATARAN RENDAH*) in figure 1. Among these, the source domain with the highest frequency of linguistic expressions is considered the most significant in representing political reality in Indonesia, as it is supported by more dominant linguistic evidence.

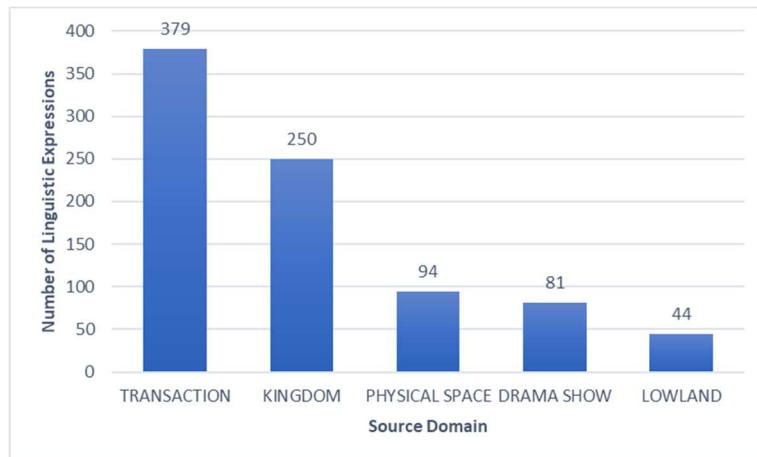


Figure 1. Source Domains and the Number of Linguistic Expressions

To analyze the distribution of source domains over time, the authors categorized four key periods from late 2023 to late 2024: the campaign period and the General Election period, the post-general election period, the campaign period regional head elections period, and the post-regional head election period. The following is the distribution graph.

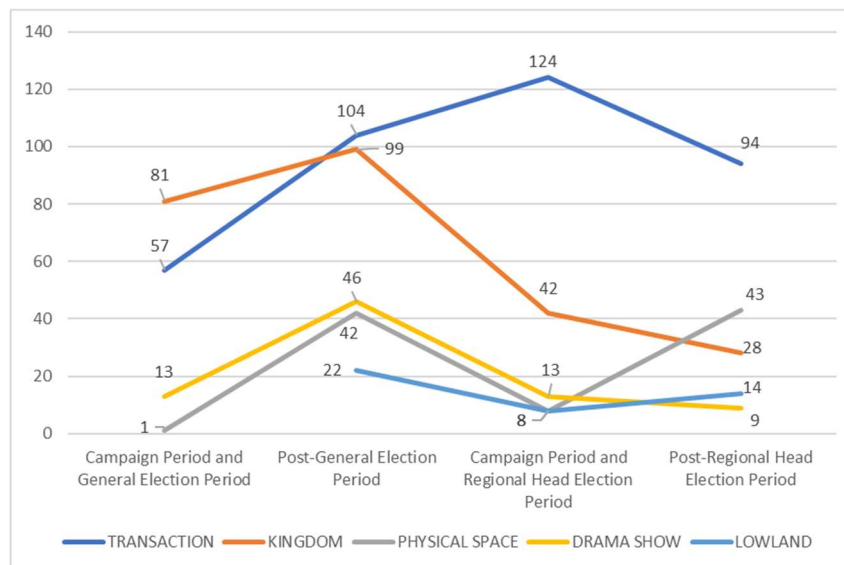


Figure 2. Source Domain Distribution Chart from the Campaign Period and General Election Period to Post-Regional Head Election Period

In the distribution map of source domains across Indonesian online mass media, the findings are as follows: 1) Detik.com: The KINGDOM source domain appeared in 96 linguistic expressions, TRANSACTION in 89, PHYSICAL SPACE in 32, LOWLAND in 20, and DRAMA SHOW in 15; 2) Kompas.com: The TRANSACTION

source domain appeared in 152 linguistic expressions, KINGDOM in 86, DRAMA SHOW in 22, PHYSICAL SPACE in 20, and LOWLAND in 2; 3) Tribunnews: The TRANSACTION source domain appeared in 138 linguistic expressions, KINGDOM in 68, DRAMA SHOW in 44, PHYSICAL SPACE in 42, and LOWLAND in 22. The detailed distribution is illustrated in the diagram below.

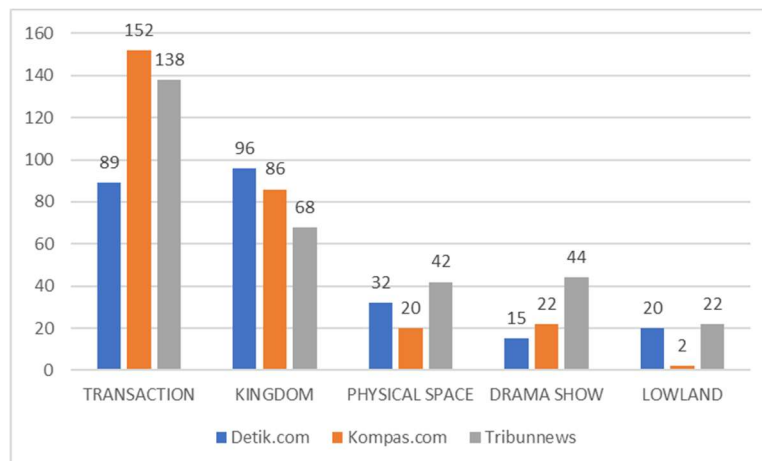


Figure 3. Map of Source Domain Distribution Across Media

Discussion

Source Domain Variations and Nuances of Meaning

Source Domain TRANSACTION (TRANSAKSI)

The source domain of TRANSACTION (TRANSAKSI) is reflected through the presence of the words *uang* (money), *money*, *biaya* (cost), and *ongkos* (fare) as collocates of the word *politics*. As the source domain with the most dominant linguistic expression, the concept of TRANSACTION is manifested in 379 linguistic expressions. Selected examples are presented below.

1. ... tersangka dan barang bukti atau tahap II kasus dugaan **politik uang** yang terjadi di Kapanewon Minggir. Proses tahap II itu (data detik, December 2024)
... Suspects and evidence or stage II of the alleged money politics case that occurred in Kapanewon Minggir. The stage II process is...
2. ... ke Polresta Sleman. Hal ini terkait dengan kasus dugaan **politik uang** yang terjadi di Kalurahan Sendangmulyo, Minggir pada proses Pilkada 2024. (data detik, December)
... to Sleman police office. This is related to the case of alleged **money politics** that occurred in Sendangmulyo, Minggir, during the 2024 regional election process.
3. ... terang terjadi pada Pemilu 2024. Bahkan, dia menemukan langsung praktik **politik uang** yang dilakukan salah satu partai politik di kampungnya, (data tribun, March 2024)

- ... Clearly occurred in the 2024 elections. In fact, he directly found the practice of **money politics** carried out by one of the political parties in his village ...
4. ... Yulion, dalam praktiknya, pemilihan langsung telah menciptakan celah terjadinya praktik **money politik** secara masif. "Mulai dari vote buying, hingga berbagai (data tribun, December 2024)
... Yulion, in practice, direct elections have created loopholes for massive **money politics**. "Starting from vote buying, to various...
5. ... kepala daerah yang diusung PDIP. Adian menyebut, pihaknya memantau mahalnnya **biaya politik** untuk mengalahkan PDIP. Di mana, terjadi 'banjir' bantuan (data tribun, November 2024)
... regional heads carried by PDIP (a party). Adian said that his party monitored the high **political costs** of defeating PDIP. Where, there was a "flood" of assistance...
6. ... lazim dilakukan. Apalagi, biasanya suatu pasangan calon juga harus menyiapkan **ongkos politik** atau menyerahkan mahar kepada partai politik demi mendapat (data kompas, September 2024)
... is commonly practiced. Moreover, usually the candidates must also prepare **political fare** or submit dowries to political parties in order to get ...

Based on these examples, the words *uang* (money), *money*, *biaya* (cost), and *ongkos* (fare) construct the meaning of *politics* as a transactional practice. The word *uang* and *money* (both referred to money), which literally mean legal tender in the transaction process, and *biaya* (cost) and *ongkos* (fare), which refers to expenditure to achieve a specific purpose, are contextually transformed into the idea of practices that transactionally control political decisions. These collocates embed the concept of POLITICS within the framework of TRANSACTION.

The conceptual relationship between POLITICS and TRANSACTION is illustrated through interrelated aspects. The concept of TRANSACTION involves roles such as "buyer", "seller", "medium of exchange", and "good/service (products). When applied to POLITICS, the buyer corresponds to political elites or candidates, the seller is represented by the community or people, the medium of exchange is money, and the product is the people's vote. The interrelations reflect the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS TRANSACTION. The concept mapping is summarized in the table below.

Table 4. Concept Mapping of the Source Domain TRANSACTION and the Target Domain POLITICS

Source Domain TRANSACTION		Target Domain POLITICS
Buyer	→	Elit politik (political elites)
Seller	→	Masyarakat (people)

Medium of exchange/money	→	<i>Uang</i> (money)
Product	→	<i>Dukungan Masyarakat</i> (people's vote)

The conceptual metaphor *POLITIC IS TRANSACTION* conveys a negative connotation, as this framework portrays the political process as unethical and damaging to the democratic ideal (Prasetyo, 2020; Wahid, 2021). Elections, whether general or regional, which should prioritize debates over candidates' visions and missions, are distorted by political elites who resort to transactional shortcuts to secure public support (Faqthuri in Prasetyo, 2020). Such transactional political practices are often regarded as corrupt, falling within the category of bribery (Abdussamad et al., 2023; ACLC KPK, 2023; Rassat, 2023). Consequently, this study's findings reflect a distorted and problematic political reality.

Source Domain KINGDOM (KERAJAAN)

The source domain of *KINGDOM (KERAJAAN)* represents the second most prominent source domain, with 250 linguistic expressions identified. Some examples of these expressions are as follows.

7. *Kahfi mulanya mengatakan banyak masyarakat mengeluhkan eksistensi **dinasti politik** di daerahnya. Sebagai contoh, kata Kahfi, adanya keluhan* (data tribun, June 2024)
Kahfi initially said that many people complained about the existence of **political dynasties** in his area. For example, said Kahfi, there were complaints ...
8. *... kerap menuding **dinasti politik** mendapat kekalahan pada pilpres. "Saya pikir **dinasti politik** itu kan didaur ulang terus ya. Dari kemarin* (data tribun, July 2024)
... often accuse political dynasties of being responsible for losing the presidential election. "I believe **political dynasties** are continuously recycled, as they have been for years
9. *... muncul berbagai langkah-langkah dari seorang yang menjadi induk dari **dinasti politik** itu untuk melakukan kemenangan atas **dinastinya** sendiri,* (data detik, December 2023)
... there are various steps from a person who is the parent of the **political dynasty** to win over his own dynasty ...
10. *... sehat di setiap pesta demokrasi. Akan ada **dinasti politik** melawan **dinasti politik** yang lain, yang tentunya akan disokong oleh para* (data kompas, October 2024)
... healthy in every democratic party. There will be a **political dynasty** against another **political dynasty**, which of course will be supported by the ...

11. ... terkooptasi **dinasti politik** menjadi locus korupsi. Beberapa kasus korupsi bermuatan **dinasti politik** yang sempat mencuat di ruang publik di antaranya (data kompas, November 2024)
 ... co-opted by **political dynasties** becomes a locus of corruption. Some cases of corruption charged **with political dynasties** that have surfaced in the public space include ...
12. Pertama, hukum akan lebih banyak ditundukkan oleh **kekuasaan politik dan politik kekuasaan**. "Kedua, hukum akan dijadikan sebagai sandera (data tribun, July 2024)
 First, the law will be more subdued by **political power** and **politics of power**. "Second, the law will be used as a hostage ...

The linguistic expressions in examples 7 through 12 demonstrate that the words *dinasti* (*dynasty*) and *kekuasaan* (*power*) share similar contexts when used as collocates of the word *politics*. These terms construct the meaning of *politics* within the framework of a *kingdom*. Literally, dynasty refers to “power passed down through lineage and practiced within monarchical systems,” while power denotes “the ability of individuals or groups to control others”. Contextually, the meanings of *dynasty* and *power* in these expressions reflect a system of governance ruled across generations by a single family. This divergence between literal and contextual meanings indicates that *dynasty* and *power* function metaphorically, forming the conceptual metaphor of KINGDOM.

Thus, in these expressions, the concept of POLITICS is associated with the concept of KINGDOM, characterized by elements such as “a king who leads”, “children or offspring who continue leadership”, “people who are governed”, and “a defined territory”. The conceptual metaphor that emerges is POLITICS IS KINGDOM. To illustrate the connections between the target domain and the source domain, the conceptual mapping is presented in the table below.

Table 5. Concept Mapping of the Source Domain KINGDOM and the Target Domain POLITICS

Source Domain KINGDOM	Target Domain POLITICS
The king	→ Pemangku jabatan (official)
Children/offspring who continue the leadership in the kingdom	→ Keturunan/saudara yang menjadi penerus pemangku jabatan (offsprings/relatives who succeed the official)
The people	→ Masyarakat yang dipimpin/diorganisasi (the people/society)
Territory of power	→ Wilayah otoritas (territory of authority)

The conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS KINGDOM generally carries negative connotations, as this metaphor highlights how it restricts opportunities for ordinary people (those without familial ties to government positions) to attain strategic roles within government institutions (Wiryoно & Rastika, 2024). Positions that competent individuals should fill are instead occupied by family members of officials. This reality aligns with the situation in Indonesia, where dynastic politics is prevalent across government institutions, including the legislative, judicial, and executive sectors (Muhid et al., 2024; Susilo, 2023; Wiryoно & Rastika, 2024). Although the Constitutional Court lifted the ban on dynastic politics in 2015, the practice remains controversial due to its perceived tendency to benefit specific groups (Wiryoно & Rastika, 2024).

Source Domain PHYSICAL SPACE (RUANG FISIK)

The source domain of PHYSICAL SPACE (RUANG FISIK) was identified through 94 linguistic expressions. Examples include the following.

13. *Asila menilai bahwa masuknya sang ayah ke **dunia politik** bukan hanya dengan embel-embel artis saja.* (data tribun, December 2024)
Asila believes that her father's involvement in the **world of politics** is not merely linked to his status as an artist.
14. *... di Indonesia. Telaah tentang eksistensi oligarki dan bagaimana pengaruhnya ke **dunia politik** dan sebaliknya memang kebanyakan publik tidak semua paham* (data detik, August 2024)
In Indonesia, an analysis of oligarchy and its impact on **political world**—and vice versa—reveals that most of the public lacks a clear understanding.
15. *... pemerintah daerah. Negara wajib memenuhi, melindungi, dan menghormati haknya. Andai **dunia politik** kita terus gaduh, lantas sampai kapan hak-hak* (data kompas, January 2024)
... local governments are obligated to fulfill, protect, and respect citizens' rights. If our **political world** remains chaotic, how long can these rights be maintained?
16. *Syaikhu menyatakan, pembatalan ini terjadi karena PKS bersikap realistis melihat **peta politik** menjelang Pilkada Jakarta.* (data kompas, June 2024)
Syaiḵhu explained that the cancellation occurred because PKS (a party) adopted a pragmatic stance on **the political landscape** ahead of the Jakarta elections.
17. *... partai lain yang lebih tua. Hal itu menunjukkan adanya pergeseran **peta politik** yang signifikan di Sulsel. Perubahan tersebut, kata Adi,* (data tribun, December 2024)
... another longstanding party. This marks a significant shift in **the political landscape** of South Sulawesi, according to Adi.

Linguistic expressions 13 to 17 highlight the words *dunia* (world) and *peta*

(here is referred as landscape instead of its literal translation *map*) as collocates of the word *politics*. The word *world* literally refers to a physical reality encompassing the universe, while *map* (or landscape in the context of example) denotes a representation of geographic locations. Within the context of these expressions, *world* and *map* analogize politics as a human domain with tangible characteristics. Consequently, the concept of POLITICS is associated with PHYSICAL SPACE, encompassing elements such as territory, living beings, and cultural systems. This conceptual association is reflected in the metaphor POLITICS IS PHYSICAL SPACE. The relationships between the target domain POLITICS and the source domain PHYSICAL SPACE are summarized in the following table.

Table 6. Concept Mapping of the Source Domain PHYSICAL SPACE and the Target Domain POLITICS

Source Domain PHYSICAL SPACE	Target Domain POLITICS
Region	→ <i>Wilayah teritori</i> (territory)
Living beings	→ <i>Elit politik dan Masyarakat</i> (political elites and society)
Cultural system	→ <i>Sistem politik</i> (political system)

The conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS PHYSICAL SPACE conveys a neutral connotation. It represents the reality of politics as a distinct domain with specific boundaries that differentiate it from other fields. For instance, linguistic expression 13 describes a celebrity transitioning from the entertainment industry into the political arena, thereby illustrating politics as a domain with its own defined space.

Source Domain DRAMA SHOW (*PERTUNJUKAN DRAMA*)

The source domain of DRAMA SHOW (*PERTUNJUKAN DRAMA*) is represented by the linguistic units *panggung* (*stage*), *aktor* (*actors*), and *gimik* (*gimmicks*). This study identified 81 linguistic expressions reflecting this source domain, including the following examples.

18. ... *civil society masuk partai atau membuat partai agar punya **panggung-panggung politik** ke depan,* (data tribun, August 2024).
... Civil society joins political parties or establishes their own to secure a **political stage** for the future ...
19. *Model Angelina Sondakh menegaskan tidak akan kembali ke **panggung politik** setelah dibebaskan.* (data tribun, April 2024)
Model Angelina Sondakh has firmly stated that she will not return to the **political stage** following her release.

20. ... yaitu perbaikan pada sistem politik, institusi politik, dan perilaku **aktor-aktor politik** secara menyeluruh. (data Kompas, July 2024)
... includes improvements to the political system, political institutions, and the overall behavior of **political actors**.
21. Hal itu terjadi karena peran **aktor politik** di negara dengan sistem demokrasi hampir mirip (data detik, August 2024)
This occurs because the roles of **political actors** in countries with democratic systems are often quite similar ...
22. Di sisi lain, Pilkada 2024 hanya sekadar **politik gimik** dan pencitraan politisi daerah untuk meraih kekuasaan daerah. (data Kompas, July 2024)
On the other hand, the 2024 elections are merely **political gimmick** and branding efforts by regional politicians to gain power.
23. ... masyarakat sadar dalam mengonsumsi informasi **politik** yang sarat hiburan dan **gimik**, namun miskin gagasan dan substansi. (data Kompas, October 2024)
... the public is aware that **political** information is often filled with entertainment and **gimmicks** but lacks meaningful ideas and substance.

The words *panggung* (stage), *aktor* (actor), and *gimik* (gimmicks) are closely associated with the world of drama. Literally, stage refers to “a platform for performances,” actor means “a performer in a play,” and gimmick refers to “behavior intended to attract attention or portray a character”. In the context of examples 18 to 23, these words construct the meaning of *politics* as a drama show. The concept of DRAMA SHOW includes elements such as “stage,” “actor,” “gimmick,” “audience,” and “script/scenario”. In relation to politics, these correspond to “political arena,” “politician,” “political image/branding,” “society,” and “political scenario,” respectively. This relation establishes the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A DRAMA SHOW. The conceptual aspects of this metaphor are summarized in the table below.

Table 7. Concept Mapping of the Source Domain DRAMA SHOW and the Target Domain POLITICS

Source Domain DRAMA SHOW	Target Domain POLITICS
Stage	→ Arena politik (political arena)
Actor	→ Politisi (politicians)
Gimmick	→ Citra politik (political image)
Audience	→ Masyarakat (society)
Script/Scenario	→ Skenario politik (political scenario)

The conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A DRAMA SHOW carries a neutral

nuance. As Arimi (2015) explains, the WORLD itself can be understood as a STAGE. Consequently, viewing politics through the lens of a drama is a reasonable and normalized perspective.

Source Domain LOWLAND (DATARAN RENDAH)

The source domain of LOWLAND (DATARAN RENDAH) is reflected in the use of the word *plunge* as a collocate of the word *politics*. From 350 articles in Indonesian online mass media, the word *plunge* appeared in 44 linguistic expressions, including the following examples.

1. Annisa juga menegaskan bahwa perempuan perlu **terjun ke politik** karena mereka membawa perspektif dan pengalaman (data detik, August 2024)
Annisa emphasized that women need to engage (**plunge** themselves) in **politics** because they bring unique perspectives and experiences.
2. ... Raffi Ahmad juga mendorong komika Marshel Widiyanto **terjun ke politik** dan bergabung menjadi kader Gerindra. (data tribun, September 2024)
... Raffi Ahmad encouraged comedian Marshel Widiyanto to **plunge into politics** and join the Gerindra party.
3. ... Sule mengaku banyak dapat tawaran untuk **terjun ke politik**. Namun, Sule mengaku ogah. (data detik, September 2024)
... Sule admitted that he had received many offers to join (**plunge** himself into) **politics** but stated that he was not interested.
4. Raffi juga gencar mempromosikan keluarga atau teman yang akan **terjun ke politik**. (data detik, Juli 2024)
Raffi is also enthusiastic about promoting family members or friends **who are going to join politics**.

Literally, *terjun (plunge)* refers to “a movement from a higher to a lower position”. Contextually, in examples 24 to 27, *plunge* describes the act of entering the political field. By referring to its literal meaning, politics is metaphorically understood as a lower place. Consequently, the concept of POLITICS is associated with the source domain LOWLAND.

The concept of LOWLAND includes associations such as “hotter temperatures”, “faster regional changes”, and “the presence of biodiversity”. These aspects correspond to the political domain through “contentious situations”, “more dynamic conditions”, and “ideological diversity”. This connection establishes the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS LOWLAND, as summarized in the table below.

Table 8. Concept Mapping of the Source Domain LOWLAND and the Target Domain POLITICS

Source Domain LOWLAND	Target Domain POLITICS
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Hotter temperatures	→ <i>Situasi yang sarat dengan perselisihan</i> (Contentious situations)
Faster regional changes	→ <i>Kondisi yang lebih dinamis</i> (more dynamic conditions)
Presence of biodiversity	→ <i>Adanya keragaman ideologi</i> (Ideological diversity)

The conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS LOWLAND also carries a neutral nuance. It represents individuals transitioning into the political field, as depicted in examples 24 to 27. This metaphor is rooted in the dichotomy between the political field and other fields, presenting politics as a distinct and separate realm.

Dominance of Source Domains with Negative Nuances

Referring to figure 2, the TRANSACTION and KINGDOM source domains are the two most dominant in distribution compared to others. The TRANSACTION source domain shows a consistently high distribution over time. While it ranked second during the campaign period and the General Election period (November 28, 2023 – February 14, 2024), its distribution increased during the post-election period (February 15, 2024–September 24, 2024) and the campaign period and Regional Head Elections period (September 25, 2024–November 27, 2024).

Although its distribution decreased in the post-Regional Head Election period (November 28, 2024 – December 31, 2024), the decline was not significant, and the TRANSACTION source domain remained the most dominant overall since the post-election period. The high distribution of the TRANSACTION source domain reflects the prevalence of money politics in Indonesia. Despite being considered unethical and classified as corrupt behavior, this practice persists. Several news articles reported frequent instances of money politics in various regions of Indonesia, particularly approaching the regional head election period (Anas & Gonsaga, 2024; Himawan & Hardiyanto, 2024).

The KINGDOM source domain also exhibited high distribution, especially during the campaign period and the General Election period, with an increase in the post-election period. This rise is largely attributed to the entry of several members of Joko Widodo's family (President of Indonesia, 2014–2024) into Indonesian politics, particularly his eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, who ran as a Vice-Presidential Candidate. Many citizens and political figures argued that Gibran's candidacy violated constitutional norms and was overly forced, as he was not yet of eligible age to run for Vice President at that time (Anggainsy, 2023; Prayoga, 2023).

Instead of disqualifying Gibran, the Constitutional Court, chaired by Gibran's uncle, approved a sudden amendment to the minimum age requirement for Vice Presidential candidates. This abrupt change was criticized as politically motivated

to ensure Gibran's candidacy. This phenomenon drew significant public attention, especially with the political involvement of other family members, such as Kaesang Pangarep (Joko Widodo's youngest son), who became the chairman of a political party, and Bobby Nasution (Joko Widodo's son-in-law), who serves as the Mayor of Medan, North Sumatera.

These events led to public criticism that Joko Widodo was consolidating power by positioning his children and in-laws within the government system (Sucipto, 2023; Tempo, 2024). Moreover, reports of other officials engaging in dynastic politics contributed to the consistently high distribution of the KINGDOM source domain through the post-general election period. The dominance of these source domains highlights both differences and similarities between this study's findings and those of previous research on political conceptual metaphors.

In the context of Indonesian political conceptual metaphors, Surip et al. (2023) identified POLITICS as being associated with concepts such as WAR, AGE, MYSTICISM, and ANIMALS. Unlike their study, which relied on smaller datasets, this research utilized a larger and more specific dataset, covering the period from the General Election campaign to the post-regional head election period. Consequently, the metaphors identified in this study more accurately reflect the political situation during that time, offering a clearer depiction of the political landscape.

However, the nuances of meaning in these conceptual political metaphors consistently indicate negative nuances. Similarly, negative nuances were found in the research by Suwandee & Meekruea-iam (2023) which explored conceptual metaphors of politics in Thai political debates. Their findings showed that one's own political group was conceptualized as FAMILY, while the opposition was associated with WAR and COMPETITION, constructing a dichotomy between two conflicting groups within the nation.

Additionally, they identified the BUSINESS source domain, framing politics as transactional. These findings align with the negative nuances observed in the conceptual political metaphors of both Indonesia and Thailand, two ASEAN countries. By contrast, studies on European and American countries, such as Croatia, the US, and Italy, revealed more balanced conceptual metaphors for POLITICS, including SPORT, WAR, TRAVEL, and GAMES (Stojan & Mijić, 2019). This difference is attributed to the political context of ASEAN countries, which often rank lower on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (Transparency International, 2025) and tend to limit public political participation.

According to Freedom House data (2024b, 2024a), Indonesia is categorized as "partly free" with a score of 57/100, while Thailand scores 36/100. These indicators reflect relatively high levels of corruption and limited democratic freedoms, contributing to a predominantly negative perception of politics in ASEAN countries.

Distinctive Distribution of Source Domains Across Media

In the distribution of source domains across media, Kompas.com and Tribunnews predominantly emphasized political reporting using the TRANSACTION metaphor. Although the KINGDOM source domain also showed a relatively high distribution (86 for Kompas.com and 68 for Tribunnews), the TRANSACTION source domain was significantly more dominant, with 152 occurrences for Kompas.com and 138 for Tribunnews. This pattern indicates that both Kompas.com and Tribunnews were particularly critical in highlighting cases of money politics in Indonesia.

This similarity is likely not coincidental, as both media are owned by Kompas Gramedia (KG), resulting in a shared prioritization of issues in their reporting. In contrast, Detik.com exhibited a more balanced approach in distributing the TRANSACTION and KINGDOM source domains. Although the KINGDOM source domain had a slightly higher distribution (96 occurrences), the TRANSACTION source domain was not far behind, with 89 occurrences. This approach reflects Detik.com's effort to maintain balance in reporting controversial political issues, ensuring that no single issue is overly emphasized at the expense of others.

The distinctive distribution patterns of source domains reveal media biases in metaphor usage. The tendencies observed in Kompas.com and Tribunnews demonstrate their shared ownership under Kompas Gramedia, while Detik.com, with its unique distribution pattern, operates independently of this media group.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the dominance of conceptual metaphors in politics with negative connotations, specifically, POLITICS IS TRANSACTION, and POLITICS IS KINGDOM. These conceptual metaphors are manifested through linguistic expressions that significantly exceed those associated with neutral metaphors. This prevalence reflects the political realities in Indonesia between late 2023 and late 2024, a period marked by frequent cases of money politics and political dynasties. The results of this study align with previous research which also indicates that the concept of POLITICS often carries negative connotations. Consequently, these findings should prompt collective reflection, particularly among policymakers, to ensure that political actions remain educational and constructive for the public.

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