



Social Critique in 1 Kings 12:1–24: A Contextual Theological Interpretation for the GMIM Moria Girian Indah Congregation through Bourdieu’s Structuration Perspective

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| | | Abstract |
| Received: Revised: Accepted: | 07 July 2025 16 July 2025 23 July 2025 | <i>This article analyses 1 Kings 12:1–24 through the theoretical lens of Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of structuration and Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of social critique. Employing a qualitative-descriptive approach with a critical case study method, data were gathered through literature review, observation, and interviews conducted within the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation. The findings reveal that the conflict between Rehoboam and Jeroboam was not merely a matter of personal failure but rather part of a broader struggle over capital within the arena of power. Rehoboam’s downfall stemmed from his inability to manage cultural and social capital effectively, whereas Jeroboam succeeded through prophetic legitimacy and popular support. The congregation’s reading of the biblical text is shaped by their respective habitus, reflecting their socio-economic dynamics and daily lived experiences. The biblical passage thus functions as a social mirror and a tool for critical reflection on the contemporary realities of the congregation.</i> |
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INTRODUCTION

The Bible is not merely a theological document, but also a source of social history that reflects the dynamics of power, class conflict, and intergroup tensions within ancient societies. The account in 1 Kings 12:1–24 presents a critical narrative of the division of the kingdom of Israel following Solomon’s death—a political crisis that is often oversimplified as a personal failure on Rehoboam’s part in managing the succession of royal authority. However, this text contains a deeper structural complexity, revealing social inequality and historical tensions between the centre (Judah) and the periphery (Northern Israel).

Historically, the event occurred against a backdrop of increasing burdens from forced labour and taxation during Solomon’s reign, coupled with the emergence of Jeroboam as a figure of opposition. This tension was not merely a political incident, but rather an expression of socially structured power relations. As such, purely theological or historical readings are insufficient for uncovering the full social dynamics embedded in the text. An interdisciplinary approach is required—one that bridges structural forces and individual agency—as provided by Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social structuration.

This study seeks to address the central research question: How can the dynamics of power in 1 Kings 12:1–24 be analysed through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu’s structuration theory, and how is such an understanding relevant to the contemporary social context of the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) Moria Girian Indah, Bitung, North Sulawesi congregation? To answer this, the study aims to uncover the underlying social structures within the text using Bourdieu’s key concepts of *habitus*, *capital*, and *field*, and to explore their contextual significance within the present-day life of the Church.

The research adopts a qualitative-descriptive approach, utilising library research and critical discourse analysis grounded in social theory. The primary data comprise the biblical text of 1 Kings 12:1–24, analysed hermeneutically through Bourdieu’s conceptual framework. Secondary sources—including theological literature, sociology of religion, and social biblical studies—serve as the conceptual and dialogical foundation for building the argument.

The findings demonstrate that the actions of Rehoboam and Jeroboam reflect social practices shaped by their respective historical *habitus*, the power relations within the political field of ancient Israel, and the unequal distribution of symbolic and cultural capital. The conflict narrated in the text is not merely a leadership issue, but the consequence of social stratification and the contestation of legitimacy within a field of power. Reflecting on these findings reveals that the structures of socio-religious inequality remain pertinent today, including within the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation, which faces challenges of leadership, congregational participation, and social justice in ecclesial life.

The novelty of this study lies in its systematic application of Bourdieu’s structuration theory to the analysis of a biblical narrative text—an approach that remains relatively underexplored within Indonesian contextual theological studies. Consequently, this research not only enriches the corpus of critical biblical interpretation but also fosters dialogue between Scripture and the social realities of the faith community. Its significance lies in offering a transformative hermeneutic—one that not only interprets the text theologically and historically but also actualises its social implications for the life of believers today.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach, oriented towards a deep understanding of meaning and social structures within the biblical text. The primary focus lies in exploring power relations and social dynamics revealed in the narrative of 1 Kings 12:1–24, using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social structuration as the principal analytical framework. A critical case study methodology is adopted, as it enables the researcher to uncover layers of domination and social inequality embedded in the text, while also linking them to the present-day context of the congregation.

In this research, 1 Kings 12:1–24 is treated as both a theological and social representation, containing practices of power within ancient Israelite society. The narrative is read as a social construction that reflects the interplay between

agency, capital, and field, as articulated in Bourdieu's theoretical model. Simultaneously, the text is approached contextually, engaging with the interpretive perspectives of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation, thereby opening space for contextual reflection and relevance.

The data utilised in this study consists of two main sources: primary data in the form of the biblical text (1 Kings 12:1–24), and secondary data including exegetical literature, theological texts, scholarly journals, the works of Pierre Bourdieu, and literature in the field of biblical sociology. In addition, field data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observation of selected members of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation. These participants were chosen purposively based on their active involvement in church life and their reflective capacity to interpret social realities through the lens of faith.

In the course of this study, data were collected through a combination of qualitative methods designed to ensure both theoretical depth and contextual sensitivity. Firstly, library research formed the foundational basis for constructing the theoretical and conceptual framework. This involved a critical review of relevant literature, including biblical commentaries, theological treatises, and sociological theories—particularly those of Pierre Bourdieu and Paul Ricoeur—which informed the analytical lens of the research.

Secondly, participatory observation was employed to gain an immersive understanding of the social and spiritual dynamics within the congregation. This method allowed the researcher to observe congregational interactions, liturgical practices, and everyday expressions of faith within their natural setting, thereby capturing the lived realities of the community in a nuanced and contextually grounded manner.

Thirdly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected members of the congregation. These interviews were designed not merely to extract factual information, but to explore the participants' interpretive engagement with the biblical text—specifically 1 Kings 12:1–24—and how they perceived its relevance to their personal and communal lives. The semi-structured format allowed for both thematic consistency and the flexibility to probe deeper into individual perspectives and theological reflections, thus enriching the empirical dimension of the study.

All data collected were analysed using a hermeneutics of social critique, rooted in the thought of Paul Ricoeur and integrated with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of structuration. The analysis began with identifying the social structures within the text to map the power field and the roles of agency as embodied by Rehoboam and Jeroboam. A narrative interpretation was then developed to uncover the socio-political dynamics underlying the passage. This approach was further employed to examine the distribution of capital—economic, cultural, social, and symbolic—that shaped the power configuration within the text. The interaction between structure and agency was critically analysed to reveal how these tensions ultimately contributed to the division of the kingdom.

Finally, critical reflection on the field data was undertaken to understand how the *habitus* of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation influences their interpretation of the text. This reflection opened a pathway towards a theologically relevant meaning, rooted in the contemporary ecclesial context. This approach enables the research to move beyond historical or textual exegesis alone, offering instead a reflective, transformative, and contextually engaged reading for the faith community today.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Structuration: Power Relations and the Social Production of Meaning

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was a prominent French sociologist renowned for his efforts to overcome the classical dichotomy between social structure and individual agency. Born in Denguin, in the Béarn region of France, Bourdieu was initially trained in philosophy before turning to anthropology and sociology. His theoretical outlook was significantly shaped by his fieldwork in colonial Algeria, which informed his critique of symbolic domination, institutional power, and social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977; Swartz, 1997).

In developing his theory, Bourdieu introduced three interrelated key concepts—*habitus*, *capital*, and *field*—which together form the foundation of social structuration. *Habitus* refers to the system of cognitive and affective dispositions shaped by an individual's historical experiences and social environment (Bourdieu, 1990). It is not a rigid structure, but a dynamic pattern of tendencies that orient action within particular limits. *Capital* encompasses all forms of socially valued resources within a given context. Bourdieu distinguishes four main types of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1986). Meanwhile, *field* denotes the social space in which individuals or groups compete for control over these forms of capital. Each field operates under specific rules and norms (*doxa*) that define the positions and legitimacy of actors within it (Grenfell, 2012).

Employing this framework, Bourdieu offers an analytical perspective that views both texts and social phenomena as arenas of symbolic struggle, which are never ideologically neutral. In the context of this study, Bourdieu's approach is applied to uncover the structured dynamics of power embedded in the narrative of 1 Kings 12:1–24. The relationship between Rehoboam and Jeroboam is understood not merely as a personal political conflict, but as a clash of *habitus* and the distribution of capital within the power field of ancient Israel. Accordingly, the text is not simply read through a historical lens, but also as a reflection of complex and structured social realities (Harker et al., 1990).

Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of Social Critique: The Dialectic of Meaning and Ideology

Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) was a French philosopher of hermeneutics and ethics, renowned for his ability to integrate diverse philosophical traditions—from existentialism to phenomenology—into a distinctive approach to textual

interpretation. Throughout his intellectual journey, Ricoeur sought to transcend the limitations of both subjective hermeneutics (which emphasises personal meaning) and objective hermeneutics (which focuses on linguistic structures), aiming instead for a mode of interpretation that opens critical engagement with social reality (Ricoeur, 1976; 1981).

Ricoeur's hermeneutical method is grounded in three principal stages: *prefiguration* (mimesis I), *configuration* (mimesis II), and *refiguration* or *appropriation of meaning* (mimesis III) (Ricoeur, 1984). However, within the framework of social critique, he introduces a pivotal additional dimension: the *hermeneutics of suspicion*. This approach highlights how texts—whether religious or secular—may contain hidden ideologies that serve to reproduce systems of power and domination (Ricoeur, 1970; Thompson, 1981). Ricoeur's perspective inspires critical readings of sacred texts by urging suspicion toward explicit meanings and uncovering those suppressed or concealed by dominant structures.

In the present study, Ricoeur's framework provides a methodological foundation for a hermeneutical analysis that is both reflective and critical. The text of 1 Kings 12:1–24 is approached not merely as a religious-historical narrative, but also as an ideological terrain in which power interests are embedded. Social critique is conducted through a deconstruction of the narrative structure and a mapping of hidden power relations, while simultaneously opening space for the appropriation of meaning by contemporary ecclesial communities. By synthesising Ricoeur's hermeneutics with Bourdieu's social theory, this research adopts a dual-analytical lens—one that enables theological openness while maintaining sensitivity to socio-political realities.

Theoretical Synergy: Reading the Text as a Multi-Layered Social Space

The integration of Bourdieu's theory of structuration with Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique yields an analytical approach that is not merely interpretative but also transformative. The biblical text is understood as a social product situated within the network of *habitus*, *capital*, and *field*, while simultaneously serving as a narrative open to critique and re-interpretation through the lived experiences of contemporary readers (Thiselton, 1992; Schneiders, 1991). Within this framework, reading 1 Kings 12:1–24 becomes a means of exposing practices of domination, both historical and ecclesial, and of fostering a theological consciousness more attuned to social justice.

The Struggle for Capital and Dynamics of Power in a Socio-Narrative Interpretation

The text of 1 Kings 12:1–24 offers more than a historical account of political succession after Solomon. It is a theologically rich narrative saturated with socio-political dynamics. In traditional interpretations, Rehoboam is often portrayed as a failed heir unable to preserve the unity of the kingdom, while Jeroboam is cast as a rebel who capitalised on popular discontent. However, a socio-critical reading—framed by Pierre Bourdieu's structuration theory and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion—reveals deeper layers of meaning,

positioning the narrative as a field of capital contestation within an invisible yet determinative structure of power.

The Arena of Shechem: A Representation of the Social Field of Power

Within the framework of Bourdieu's theory, the event at Shechem can be understood as a *field*—a social arena in which various agents compete for capital and legitimacy in structuring power relations. Rehoboam and Jeroboam emerge as two principal agents entering this field, each possessing distinct forms and distributions of capital.

Rehoboam entered the field bearing symbolic capital in the form of his genealogical status as the son of Solomon and grandson of David—a royal lineage institutionally recognised as the legal embodiment of Israel's monarchical authority (Bourdieu, 1986). He also held economic capital through his access to state wealth, the royal court, and administrative resources. These two forms of capital initially positioned him dominantly within the formal structure of power.

However, Rehoboam's dominance proved fragile due to a deficit in cultural capital. He lacked the political wisdom traditionally transmitted informally by the elders of Israel. His decision to reject the counsel of the senior advisers (1 Kgs. 12:8), opting instead for a coercive approach by threatening to chastise the people "with scorpions", reveals his failure to grasp the *doxa*—the tacit norms of Israel's political culture, which valued deliberation, distributive justice, and the voice of the people (Bourdieu, 1990). This strategic misstep also reflects his inability to build social capital—trust and solidarity within the community he sought to lead.

In contrast, Jeroboam entered the political arena from a structurally subordinate position, yet he brought with him significant cultural and social capital. His legitimacy did not stem from dynastic lineage, but from religious authority: he had received a prophetic oracle from Ahijah declaring that God had chosen him to lead the ten tribes of Israel (1 Kgs. 11:29–39). In ancient Israel's deeply theocentric society, such divine prophecy functioned as potent symbolic cultural capital, often surpassing hereditary claims (Gottwald, 1993).

Jeroboam also possessed strong social capital, including broad support from the ten northern tribes who felt oppressed by Solomon's economic policies. His popular charisma, rhetorical competence, and external network—including political asylum in Egypt—further strengthened his position in the field, despite his comparative lack of economic and symbolic capital. Jeroboam adopted a subversive strategy by shifting the basis of legitimacy from dynastic inheritance to popular will and divine mandate—an act that illustrates the improvisational agency within his embedded *habitus*.

In this arena, Rehoboam failed to capitalise on his symbolic and economic advantages due to a lack of political *habitus* attuned to the social realities of his time. Jeroboam, by contrast, successfully reconfigured the field through the internalisation of prevailing religious and social values, and by deploying contextually effective forms of cultural capital. This outcome aligns with Bourdieu's principle that social practice emerges from the interaction of *habitus*,

capital, and the structure of the field (Grenfell, 2012). The result of this struggle was Jeroboam's triumph and the division of the kingdom—demonstrating that, within certain social contexts, cultural and social capital can indeed surpass formal symbolic and economic power.

Interpreting the Text through a Hermeneutics of Social Critique

Within Paul Ricoeur's framework of hermeneutics of social critique, the text of 1 Kings 12 may be understood as a narrative product that embodies specific ideological interests. Ricoeur warns that every text—including sacred scripture—is value-laden and may contain mechanisms that reproduce certain forms of domination (Ricoeur, 1976; 1981). Through the hermeneutics of suspicion, readers are encouraged to question the official narrative that glorifies dynastic authority, and instead to give voice to alternative perspectives potentially silenced by symbolic power.

From this perspective, Jeroboam's response to economic oppression and social inequality may be interpreted as a legitimate form of resistance against hegemonic power. The account of the kingdom's division should not merely be read as a political tragedy but also as a social expression of structural demands for justice. In this light, Ricoeur's third hermeneutical stage—*appropriative hermeneutics* (Ricoeur, 1984)—becomes particularly relevant, enabling contemporary congregations to reflect upon the text as a mirror of their own social realities.

Habitus, Social Transformation, and Critical Congregational Consciousness

From Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, *habitus* refers to a system of dispositions shaped by historical and social experience, which influences how individuals act, think, and assess situations within particular social spaces (Bourdieu, 1990). *Habitus* is not merely reproductive of existing structures, but also possesses a transformative potential, particularly when faced with crises or imbalances in the distribution of capital. Within the narrative of 1 Kings 12:1–24, the transformation of Israel's political structure was determined not only by the capitals possessed by Rehoboam and Jeroboam, but also by the collective response of the people—whose shared experiences had shaped a *habitus* of resistance against exploitative and authoritarian rule.

Applying the concept of *habitus* within the context of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation enables a deeper exploration of the Church's internal dynamics—such as leadership patterns, authority distribution, and lay participation—which have been historically formed through institutional development and the congregation's collective experiences. A *habitus* shaped by passive submission to hierarchical structures without critical reflection may inadvertently reproduce inequalities or exclusivist tendencies in ministry. This highlights the vital role of theological education that is both transformative and participatory—not merely doctrinal in content, but aimed at cultivating new forms of *habitus* that are sensitive to injustice, open to dialogue, and active in building an inclusive and egalitarian faith community (Grenfell, 2012).

Furthermore, Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique serves as a vital tool in facilitating the development of critical consciousness in contextual biblical interpretation. By inviting congregants to question the ideological structures embedded in Scripture (via the hermeneutics of suspicion) and simultaneously to reclaim liberating meanings (via appropriative hermeneutics), the interpretive process becomes active and reflective, rather than merely normative and passive. This process strengthens the capacity of congregational *habitus* to function as a transformative agent within social change—both within the ecclesial setting and the broader society.

Thus, the integration of Bourdieu's structuration theory and Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique offers a comprehensive and incisive theoretical framework. It not only elucidates the dynamics of power within the biblical text, but also equips local churches—such as GMIM Moria Girian Indah—to engage in reflective, contextual, and socially relevant critique. In doing so, the church is empowered to cultivate a faith community that is both just and transformative.

Contextual Relevance for the GMIM Moria Girian Indah Congregation

The dynamics of capital struggle within this text resonate with the lived realities of contemporary congregations, including GMIM Moria Girian Indah, which exists within a socio-religious context marked by ongoing issues related to power relations, congregational participation, and the governance of ecclesial authority. Through the lens of Bourdieu's structuration theory, the congregation is invited to recognise latent structures of domination within church life—such as forms of ministerial exclusivism, the hegemony of particular social classes, or inequities in access to ecclesiastical resources.

Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach, meanwhile, enables a critical engagement with the text that does not abandon faith, but rather encourages a transformative appropriation of meaning. The biblical text is thus not merely read as an artefact of the past, but as an ethical summons to construct a church community that is just, inclusive, and dialogically engaged with the social realities it inhabits.

The Congregation's *Habitus* in Interpreting the Text

Applying Bourdieu's structuration theory and Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique within the context of GMIM Moria Girian Indah reveals that the interpretative process of 1 Kings 12:1–24 unfolds within the framework of social experience and historical disposition which form each individual's *habitus*. In Bourdieu's conception, *habitus* is a system of dispositions internalised through social experience and surrounding objective structures, which in turn shape modes of thinking, feeling, and acting (Bourdieu, 1990). This *habitus* is neither neutral nor universal—it is classed, historicised, and highly contextual. Consequently, biblical interpretation is inextricably linked to the social positioning and lived history of the interpreter. Within this framework, each social category within the congregation exhibits interpretive responses reflective of the capital structures and *habitus* that constitute their collective consciousness.

For instance, an elder with a background as a retired civil servant exhibits a tendency to interpret the text through the lens of seniority and institutional order, internalised during decades of bureaucratic service. To him, Rehoboam's principal failure lay in his dismissal of the elders' counsel—a transgression against traditional wisdom and the cultural norm of age-based hierarchy still deeply embedded in both local society and church governance. He interprets legitimacy not merely in terms of symbolic status or dynastic inheritance, but as contingent upon one's ability to manage social capital, particularly the support of senior communal figures. This perspective reframes power structures within the text through the experiential logic of institutional order and the social value of age-based legitimacy.

By contrast, a housewife who supports her family through small-scale trading approaches the text with a reading shaped by economic *habitus* and a pronounced sensitivity to social injustice. She emotionally identifies with the people burdened by oppressive economic policies in the narrative. Rehoboam, in her view, embodies leadership devoid of empathy, whereas Jeroboam represents a figure attuned to the aspirations of the common people. Her reading, though seemingly simple, articulates a deeply rooted cultural capital of empathy, informed by material hardship and the daily praxis of economic precarity. It is not merely an emotional reaction, but a contextual theological response grounded in lived structural injustice.

In another category, an honorary teacher demonstrates a highly critical and reflective interpretive posture. His educational *habitus* shapes his perception of authority, public ethics, and political communication. He identifies Rehoboam's language as a form of symbolic violence—calling it “thuggish language” inappropriate for a leader. He also refrains from uncritically accepting the narrative of Jeroboam as a heroic figure, instead suspecting hidden motives behind his political manoeuvres. This hermeneutic suspicion echoes Ricoeur's methodological stance (Ricoeur, 1976), which urges interpreters to look beyond dominant narratives and to uncover embedded structures of power or ideological interest within the text. In this frame, the biblical account is no longer a simple moral tale, but a discursive battlefield where domination and resistance intersect within a complex socio-political context.

A different reading emerges from a university student, whose interpretive lens is shaped by his idealism and commitment to social justice, fostered through involvement in student organisations, theological discussions, and exposure to contemporary socio-political issues. He reads the text in binary terms: Rehoboam as a symbol of tyranny and oppression, and Jeroboam as a champion of the oppressed. Although this interpretation tends to simplify the text's political complexity, it represents an appropriative hermeneutic (Ricoeur, 1981), wherein the reader integrates the meaning of the text into his own value framework and existential orientation—using it as a moral and theological impetus for ethical and transformative action within his social reality.

These varied readings suggest that the interpretation of 1 Kings 12:1–24 among members of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation is dynamically shaped by the interaction between social position, educational background, life experiences, and the embedded values constitutive of their individual and collective *habitus*. The text thus becomes a reflective medium, capable of evoking latent conflicts and aspirations that persist in the congregation's lived experience. In other words, the structure of the text and the structure of the reader's society interact within a hermeneutical space that is historical, social, and cultural.

Transformation of Faith Consciousness: Contextual Interpretation as an Emancipatory Practice in Congregational Life

The analysis of 1 Kings 12:1–24 through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's structuration theory and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique—when integrated with the socio-religious context of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation—leads to a significant synthesis: that contextual biblical interpretation is not merely an intellectual or liturgical endeavour, but a social practice possessing transformative power within ecclesial life. Such interpretive engagement, undertaken with critical awareness of domination structures and the distribution of capital within the social arena, opens avenues for both spiritual and social liberation from hegemonic, oppressive narratives.

From Bourdieu's perspective, social structures are not static but are continuously constituted and sustained through social practices, including religious expression and textual interpretation. When congregants reinterpret the text in light of their lived experiences—as exemplified in the responses of the elder, the housewife, the honorary teacher, and the student—they are in effect articulating their *habitus* within the interpretive arena. This *habitus*, shaped by biographical experiences and socio-economic positionings, enables readers to apprehend the meaning of the text contextually, thereby engendering awareness of injustice embedded in everyday realities.

At this juncture, Ricoeur's hermeneutical framework deepens the theological significance of this interpretive process. His hermeneutics of social critique not only encourages suspicion towards official narratives that reproduce domination, but also guides readers toward the appropriation of meanings relevant to their own socio-historical situations. In the case of the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation, the interpretive responses manifest the text not as a mere historical document, but as a contested site of meaning—a space in which the voices of the marginalised find expression and spiritual legitimacy.

Such transformation of faith consciousness emerges when congregants come to realise that the story of Rehoboam and Jeroboam is not solely a record of ancient political failure but a mirror reflecting ongoing dynamics of power within contemporary social and ecclesial relations. When Rehoboam is understood as an authority figure who failed to cultivate social capital, and Jeroboam as a symbol of popular agency articulating social discontent through strategic resistance, the text becomes an arena of emancipation rather than a tool for legitimising power.

Thus, contextual interpretation becomes an emancipatory practice insofar as it facilitates a re-articulation of faith that is conscious, critical, and transformative. It shifts the centre of authority from dominant narratives to the concrete experiences of the people—from monologue to dialogue, from domination to participatory engagement. In this light, the Church ceases to function merely as a proclaimer of normative truths and instead becomes a dialectical space wherein faith and social justice converge. This is an expression of praxis-oriented faith which does not end with textual comprehension, but advances towards lived transformation: the construction of a community marked by justice, equality, and solidarity.

Such a transformation is particularly pertinent for GMIM Moria Girian Indah amid a shifting social landscape marked by tension between power structures and congregational participation. Through critical and reflective interpretation, the congregation learns not only to read the text but also to read their social reality—and in doing so, they cultivate a faith consciousness that is both emancipatory and fruitful.

CONCLUSION

This study of 1 Kings 12:1–24, employing the theoretical frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu's structuration theory and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique, reveals that the passage contains not only historical and theological significance but also complex socio-political dynamics. By positioning the text as a product of symbolic capital contestation within a field of power—and as a narrative construction open to contextual interpretation—this research uncovers its latent dimension of social critique, relevant to contemporary congregational life.

Through Bourdieu's lens, the narrative of Rehoboam and Jeroboam is understood as the manifestation of conflict between agents carrying divergent symbolic, economic, cultural, and social capital. Rehoboam inherits formal power structures but fails to manage cultural and social capital, whereas Jeroboam mobilises prophetic capital and popular support as subversive strategies to challenge established legitimacy. In this framework, power structures are not exclusively determined by formal authority but are also constituted by reflective and creative agency—central tenets of structuration theory.

Simultaneously, Ricoeur's hermeneutics of social critique fortifies the emancipatory potential of biblical interpretation. Scripture is not viewed as ideologically sterile but as an open text subject to reinterpretation through hermeneutics of suspicion and appropriation. This perspective equips readers to uncover embedded ideologies within dominant narratives while affirming liberative meanings for marginalised communities. Hence, the division of Israel is not merely a political failure but can be read as a response to structural injustice.

Field observations in the GMIM Moria Girian Indah congregation reveal that contextual interpretation is already taking place organically within the congregation's lived reality. Their social *habitus*, shaped by concrete life

experiences, frames their interpretive approaches in reflective, critical, and practical terms. Elders, housewives, honorary teachers, and students alike interpret the text not simply as sacred history but as a tangible reflection of their present social conditions. Through this process arises a new awareness: the text is not merely an object of study, but a mirror of life and a call to faith in action.

In conclusion, this research affirms that contextual biblical interpretation, when guided by social theory and hermeneutics of critique, becomes an emancipatory practice that connects faith with social justice. The congregation is not only encouraged to understand the text but also empowered to develop critical awareness of domination structures within their ecclesial and social life. Thus, biblical reading becomes an integral part of community transformation—towards a more just, inclusive, and solidaristic existence, consistent with the prophetic spirit and the ethical vision of the Kingdom of God, which lies at the heart of Christian faith.

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