

IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN DEMOCRACY: EXAMINING THE POLICIES OF PARTAI KEADILAN SEJAHTERA ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 20-06-2026

Revised : 29-07-2026

Accepted : 31-07-2026

KEYWORDS

Contemporary Issues;
Islam and Democracy;
Partai Keadilan
Sejahtera; Political
Policy

ABSTRACT

Indonesia's post-Reformasi democratic transition has created broader political opportunities for parties representing diverse ideological orientations, including those grounded in Islamic values. Within this context, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) has positioned itself as an Islamic-based political party that seeks to integrate Islamic principles within Indonesia's constitutional democratic framework. This study aims to examine how Partai Keadilan Sejahtera responds to contemporary socio-political issues through its political positions and policy orientations, particularly in relation to social justice, public welfare, governance, and pluralism in a democratic society. This research employed a qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were collected from official party documents, including policy platforms and political manifestos, as well as relevant scholarly books and journal articles. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically to explore the relationship between Islamic values as the ideological foundation of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera and the party's political practices. The findings indicate that Partai Keadilan Sejahtera seeks to operationalize Islamic principles, such as justice, integrity, and consultation (shūrā), within contemporary democratic institutions and political processes. Nevertheless, the implementation of these values is frequently shaped by political pragmatism and the dynamics of electoral competition. This study concludes that Partai Keadilan Sejahtera represents a contextual, adaptive, and pragmatic model of Islamic political engagement within Indonesia's democratic system.

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a form of government in which all citizens have equal rights in decision-making that can change their lives. Democracy provides space for citizens to participate in the formulation of laws and policies, either directly or through representatives, and reflects a set of principles of political freedom that enable equal participation in economic, social, and cultural life (Siregar et al., 2023). Democracy implies an appreciation for and respect of human dignity and worth. The success of democracy depends on many factors, and its progress can stall, slow down, or even reverse at any stage (Pratiwi, 2025).

In the post-Reform era, Indonesia's political space has become increasingly open, enabling political parties to play a strategic role as a bridge between public aspirations and the state's policymaking process, although democratic consolidation still faces challenges such as social inequality, weak governance, corruption, and issues related to the well-being of urban communities (Akbar et al., 2023). Therefore, an analysis of political parties' policy orientations in addressing these issues has become increasingly relevant, particularly for parties that incorporate a religious ideological foundation into their political practices (Pamungkas et al., 2020).

As an Islamic party, PKS has consistently articulated the values of justice, trustworthiness, and the welfare of the Muslim community in national politics by integrating normative Islamic principles with democratic mechanisms through electoral participation and legislation that emphasizes the state's role in protecting vulnerable groups and realizing social justice. However, in the political practice that unfolds within a competitive multiparty system, efforts to translate these ideological values into concrete policies often face the realities of political pragmatism and complex dynamics of interest (Akbar et al., 2023).

Previous research on Islamic parties in Indonesia has generally focused on ideology, electoral strategies, or the parties' positions within the national political system. Nevertheless, studies specifically examining how Islamic values are operationalized in party policies at the local level—particularly in addressing contemporary social issues in urban areas—remain relatively limited. In fact, local contexts possess distinct social, economic, and political characteristics, thereby requiring policy responses that cannot always be standardized with policies at the national level. As a major city with high levels of urbanization, Medan reflects the complexity of urban issues such as poverty, the dominance of the informal sector, weak protections for small businesses, and scrutiny of local governance; consequently, the ability of political parties—including PKS—to formulate policies that are contextually relevant to the real needs of the community is put to the test.

Given these conditions, this study aims to examine the implementation of Islamic values in the policies of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in addressing contemporary “ ” issues in Indonesia, using the city of Medan as the context for empirical analysis. The research focuses on PKS's stances and policies regarding social justice, the welfare of the Muslim community, clean governance, and the management of pluralism in democratic life. Through this approach, this study offers a novel perspective on efforts to link the ideology of an Islamic party with policy practices at the local level. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of research on the role of Islamic parties in the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian democracy, particularly in an urban context.

METHOD

This *study* employs a qualitative research method using a literature *review* approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to analyze the relationship between Islamic values and democracy, as well as their implementation in the ideological orientation and policies of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), through an examination of various written sources. Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of political phenomena through the interpretation of concepts, ideas, and practices of Islamic politics within the context

of Indonesian democracy. Research data sources were obtained from books, scholarly articles, reputable journals, laws and regulations, official party documents such as the Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART), political manifestos, the PKS development platform, as well as various literature discussing democracy, Islamic politics, and the development of the Indonesian political system (Adlini et al., 2022; Rachman et al., 2024).

Data collection was conducted through documentation by selecting, identifying, and reviewing various sources relevant to the research focus. All data obtained were then classified by theme, including the concept of democracy from an Islamic perspective, PKS's ideological orientation, the implementation of Islamic values in political policies, PKS's responses to contemporary issues, and the consistency between Islamic values and the party's political practices. The data collection process was conducted systematically, prioritizing sources that are credible, up-to-date, and academically valid so as to provide a comprehensive picture of the research subject.

Data analysis employed *content analysis* techniques combined with descriptive-qualitative analysis. The stages of analysis included data reduction, data presentation, interpretation, and inductive conclusion-drawing. The analysis focused on identifying Islamic values—such as *al-musāwah*, *al-hurriyyah*, *al-'adālah*, *al-syūrā*, and *amānah*—and then relating them to the policies, political strategies, and democratic practices implemented by PKS within the context of Indonesia's political system. Through this approach, the study is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of the consistency between Islamic ideological foundations and the PKS's political implementation within Indonesia's democratic system.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Islam and Democracy

Social life enriched by a democratic atmosphere is something desired by people; therefore, democracy must be applied to the life of the state. The increasingly widespread use of the term “democracy” has fostered the understanding that there is an obligation or necessity to implement democracy in political life. Individual freedom refers to the capacity of every human being, as an autonomous individual, to make independent decisions regarding the actions they will take in their lives (Hidayah et al., 2023). With this freedom, a person can take the initiative to pursue the best course of action for their own development and that of their nation's society. Social freedom can be understood as a framework that enables individuals to express and exercise their personal freedom within societal life. Strict restrictions imposed by government or military institutions on the lives of citizens can undermine individual freedom. Nevertheless, freedom is not unlimited, as individual rights always intersect with those of others. Therefore, in efforts to maintain and shape a democratic social order, everyone is required to recognize and respect the rights of others, based on intellectual, moral, and social maturity (Hidayah et al., 2022).

Juan Linz states that a political system can be categorized as a democracy if it meets several criteria, namely: (1) it guarantees freedom for the public to formulate and express their political preferences; (2) it provides opportunities for citizens to compete periodically through peaceful mechanisms; and (3) it does not prohibit anyone from vying for available political office. The administration of government is based on legal provisions that limit authority and is operated through mechanisms of *checks and balances* among institutions (Hidayat, 2025). This concept is necessary to prevent the emergence of violence from various interest groups, particularly the government. Based on this conceptual framework, at least two key characteristics of democracy can be identified: public participation in governance and the existence of harmonious electoral mechanisms. Additionally, other important elements are often emphasized, such as respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and social justice (Nurhayati, 2023).

Over the past three years, Indonesia's path toward a democratic system has evolved at such a rapid pace, and the process of political transformation has unfolded in a highly dramatic manner—even as it has placed Indonesia among the nations with the most established democracies in the world. This shift in dynamics is linked to the global wave of democratization, in which the spread of democracy worldwide has gained significant international

momentum. There are fundamental differences in the culture and society of Indonesia that make democracy in Indonesia distinct from Western democracy (Izzati & Karima, 2023).

John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori argue that the concept of democracy and the dynamics of the democratization process are intensely debated issues within the Muslim world; statements by a number of regimes claiming to be moving toward democracy have actually fueled doubts regarding the extent to which Islam and democracy are compatible, particularly since democracy is understood to be based on secularism while Islam is grounded in faith in God (1991). Judith Miller, for example, points out that although militant Islamic groups express support for democracy and pluralism in public discourse, in reality they reject both principles. In fact, according to her, for the majority of Muslims and Arab societies today, democracy is understood as the rule of the majority with almost no regard for the rights of minorities—which are an essential component of liberal democracy (Satria et al., 2024).

When discussing Islamic political thought, the topics of Islam and democracy are two vast and inexhaustible subjects that consistently spark debates in which thinkers and political scientists struggle to reach a consensus. First, the sources of reference regarding Islam and democracy are extremely diverse. Spanning the history of Islam, which has lasted for approximately fifteen centuries—from the practices carried out by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in Medina to developments in the present day. Second, this issue is highly complex, leading researchers to analyze it through more focused and detailed approaches to avoid oversimplification that would obscure its complexity. Third, there is a tendency for ideological perspectives to emerge from various groups within Muslim society, so that the issue of the relationship between Islam and democracy is often interpreted through specific ideological frameworks rooted in Islamic understanding—which means this issue is never fully resolved and remains a timely and compelling topic throughout the ages (Erviana et al., 2024; Jalil, 2020).

Ultimately, the relationship between Islam and democracy can be understood through the principles inherent in the practice of democracy itself. A number of values in Islamic teachings—such as justice (*‘Adl*), consultation to reach consensus (*Syūrā*), equality (*Musāwah*), responsibility and trust (*Amānah*), and freedom (*hurriyah*)—are fundamentally reflected in the foundational values of democracy (Nasrodin & Ramiati, 2022). Several studies indicate that Islamic values are present within democracy, such as:

1. *Al-Musāwah* represents the principle of equality, which affirms that every human being has equal value in terms of dignity, status, and position. From an Islamic perspective, there is no distinction based on social status, race, or gender; rather, a person’s nobility is determined by the degree of their piety toward Allah. The principle of *Al-Musawah* (equality) emphasizes the value of *unity in diversity*. Unity in diversity does not mean merging different colors into one, but rather how different colors can collaborate with one another. In the Qur’an, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, Allah, Subhanahu wa Ta’ala, states:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“Wahai manusia, sesungguhnya Kami telah menciptakan kamu dari seorang laki-laki dan perempuan. Kemudian, Kami menjadikan kamu berbangsa-bangsa dan bersuku-suku agar kamu saling mengenal. Sesungguhnya yang paling mulia di antara kamu di sisi Allah adalah orang yang paling bertakwa. Sesungguhnya Allah Maha Mengetahui lagi Maha Teliti.”

2. *Al-Hurriyyah* refers to the concept of freedom grounded in moral responsibility and legal provisions, both in this world and in the Hereafter. This principle is based on respect for human values, which view human beings as dignified creatures endowed with the freedom to make choices. Every individual has the right to make decisions independently without external pressure.

3. *Al-‘Adâlah* is the principle of justice that emphasizes the fulfillment of every human being’s rights, both in their capacity as individuals and as part of society.
4. *Al-Syûrâ* is the principle of consultation that provides space for every member of society to participate in public affairs concerning the common good. The implementation of democratic values within the concept of *Syûrâ* is historically reflected in the deliberations that took place at Balai Sa’idah (Medina) shortly after the passing of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. At that time, Abu Bakr, who was elected as the first caliph, delivered his inaugural address, in which he accepted the mandate from the people to implement the Qur’an and the Sunnah.
5. *Amanah* refers to the position of human beings as creatures entrusted with responsibility (*mukallaf*). This form of entrustment (*taklif*) encompasses both rights and obligations that must be fulfilled. Every responsibility entrusted to human beings must be carried out as an *amanah* (Asna et al., 2026; Cintya et al., 2023).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ٧٢

“*Sesungguhnya Kami telah menawarkan amanat kepada langit, bumi, dan gunung-gunung; tetapi semuanya enggan untuk memikul amanat itu dan mereka khawatir tidak akan melaksanakannya. Lalu, dipikullah amanat itu oleh manusia. Sesungguhnya ia (manusia) sangat zalim lagi sangat bodoh*”.

6. Doctrinally, Islam and democracy are two distinct concepts; however, substantively, there are democratic principles that align with Islamic teachings. Islam not only governs theological relationships but also provides ethical principles for social and political life, such as human equality without discrimination, respect for individual freedom, justice (*‘adl*) in the enforcement of law, and equal rights for citizens—which are historically reflected in the Constitution of Medina through the principles of consultation, the rule of law, the protection of rights, and the recognition of pluralism (Gunawan, 2022).

Ibn Taimiyah argued that governing the affairs of the community is indeed one of the most important religious obligations, but this does not mean that religion cannot exist without the state. In his view, human well-being within a social order can only be realized when every individual lives in a relationship of mutual need and interdependence; thus, the presence of a leader is necessary to manage and organize this communal life. Ibn Taimiyah states that the establishment of *imamah* is not part of the fundamental principles of religion, but rather a practical necessity. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that the existence of the state plays a crucial role in supporting and safeguarding religion (Suhartono et al., 2024).

Ibn Taimiyah rejected the idea of appointing a state leader through the mechanism of *ahl al-hall wa al-‘aqd* within the framework of Sunni caliphate theory, as this mechanism was deemed susceptible to being exploited as a tool to legitimize the political interests of rulers; instead, he proposed the concept of *ahl al-syawkah*—an influential cross-sectoral group respected by society and authorized to select and pledge allegiance to a leader. Unlike the concept of *ahl al-hall wa al-‘aqd*, *ahl al-syawkah* is understood as a more authentic embodiment of the people’s aspirations, as its existence grows from and for the people, rather than being the result of formation or appointment by the ruling authorities. As a way of life, the essence of a democratic system is empirically closely tied to the dynamics of the relationship between the state or government and its people—or conversely, the relationship between the people and the state or government—in a state of *equilibrium* and mutual *checks and balances* (Su’adah & Royhan, 2024).

The journey of Indonesian democracy has evolved dynamically from anti-colonial political consciousness toward a post-independence parliamentary system; however, political instability led to the emergence of a guided democracy with power concentrated in the presidency. During the New Order era, the system remained grounded in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution but was implemented under strong state control, resulting in the people’s sovereignty not being fully realized. Normatively, this system aims to refine the practice of democracy; however, in

reality, the scope for public political participation remains limited. Democracy is largely practiced procedurally through general elections, while political freedoms and checks on power have not developed optimally. A democratic state, of course, recognizes the existence of political parties as pillars of democracy or the exercise of popular sovereignty.

The primary goal of Pancasila democracy is to realize a just, humane, and democratic social order based on the values of Pancasila. Although various challenges remain, Indonesia remains committed to strengthening its democratic system, developing democratic principles, and protecting human rights as the foundation for the administration of the state and government in this country. As part of the effort to realize democracy in Indonesia, one form of freedom of association is the existence of political parties. Conceptually, political parties play a vital role as intermediaries between the aspirations of the people and state authorities, thereby serving as a bridge between the public and the government. Therefore, as a nation that adheres to democratic principles, political parties in Indonesia are required to fulfill their roles in accordance with applicable laws so that democratic values can be fully realized.

The Ideological and Political Orientation of the Prosperous Justice Party

PKS emerged from a social movement called Tarbiyah, which later evolved into a political party. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), founded in Jakarta on April 20, 2002 (9 Jumadil Awwal), is based on Islam and is characterized as a da'wah party (PKS Articles of Association, 2009: 25). The party positions itself as a clean and professional political organization, committed to realizing the objectives set forth in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution through the establishment of a just and prosperous civil society within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Martoyo et al., 2025). Referring to its Articles of Association and Bylaws, PKS has set the goal of realizing a just and prosperous civil society that seeks Allah's pleasure within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), while upholding the nation's diversity—understood as a civilized society grounded in the values of faith, law, morality, democratic principles, and the spirit of mutual cooperation.

PKS's concept of a civil society is integrated with Indonesia's diversity through *ukhuwah Islamiyyah*, *wathaniyyah*, and *basyariyyah* within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which guarantees freedom of religion. This concept is rooted in the Justice Party (July 20, 1998), which emerged from the Tarbiyah movement inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, so that public attention is focused not only on the success of cadre development and electoral campaigns but also on the Islamic ideological orientation that underpins its political struggle. The party consciously practices the struggle doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood (IM) (Nurmayani et al., 2025).

As a da'wah party oriented toward building a civil society, PKS has developed an Islamic political framework that positions Islamic teachings not merely as an ideological identity but as an instrument of struggle and a solution for the nation, while strengthening its national presence through the formation of a structured and systematic social network divided into three main patterns. PKS not only promotes Islamic da'wah in its political strategy but also tends to utilize populist issues, such as "clean party" and "anti-corruption party" (Yasin, 2025).

In national politics, PKS does not rely solely on electoral strength but also aligns central and regional strategies through a territorial approach and political marketing by raising issues closely tied to public needs—such as a lifetime driver's license, vehicle tax exemptions, the elimination of income tax for low-income earners, and the protection of religious scholars—to ensure its campaigns remain relevant to the social dynamics of society. Formulating campaign strategies requires a careful analysis of ever-changing social dynamics so that every planned step remains relevant and is able to respond appropriately to the concrete needs of the public. The campaign strategy that PKS has long employed—from its inception in 1998 to the present—has remained unchanged and is maintained because it is considered to have a significant impact on the results achieved in general elections (Ema et al., 2024).

The founding of the Prosperous Justice Party is closely linked to the historical legacy of the Justice Party, which served as its precursor. This assertion has a clear empirical basis, as evidenced by the results of the 1999 General Election, in which the Justice Party secured seventh place out of a total of 48 political parties competing in that election. This result was insufficient to meet the *electoral threshold*, so the party could not participate in the 2004 general election unless it changed its name and logo (Siregar et al., 2023).

The lack of support in the 1999 elections prompted the Justice Party to transform into the PKS after Van Zorge criticized it as a “*modernist-exclusivist*” party that was too closed-off, thereby hindering development and potentially conflicting with the inclusive national character—though he also assessed the party as reformist, unique, and sufficiently open to compromise in the face of political dynamics. “*The Justice Party has demonstrated a willingness in the past to compromise and work within the confines of political realities,*” said Van Zorge. The transformation of the PK into the PKS opened up opportunities for the development of a more inclusive orientation, as emphasized by R. William Liddle, who noted that inclusive parties tend to be more independent because they are not dominated by any particular social force and are more adaptive in facing political dynamics without being bound by narrow commitments that limit the expansion of their support base. Moreover, as long as there are “free, fair, and transparent” elections, inclusive parties are continually incentivized to expand their base by incorporating new groups, thereby becoming even more inclusive.

PKS’s commitment to inclusivity is evident in its recruitment policies, which provide opportunities for individuals outside the tarbiyah circle—including by fielding more than 30 non-Muslim legislative candidates in the 2004 elections and accommodating the participation of non-Muslim members within its organizational structure. This is reflected in the ratification of the Pinjai Justice Party’s Regional Representative Council (DPD) on June 5, 2002, whose executive board members are predominantly Christian.

Implementation of Islamic Values in PKS Policy

As a party often referred to as a “da’wah party,” PKS implements the *Khuthūṭ Al-‘Ariḍah* strategy for social change through a cultural movement involving horizontal mobilization (*Ta’bī’ah Al-Afaqiyah*) to disseminate the concepts of Islamic methodology and politics across various segments of society, as well as a structural movement through vertical mobilization (*Ta’bī’ah Al-‘Amūdiyyah*) by placing cadres in strategic institutions serving as decision-making centers (*Maṣādir Al-Qarār*) to integrate Islamic values into public policy. PKS views politics as an integral part of da’wah (Islamic outreach), thus positioning itself as the historical continuation of the campus activist movement as well as an experiment in Islamic politics. It employs a strategy of horizontal mobilization by placing cadres across various social strata to drive participatory change, and has demonstrated a relatively significant role compared to other new parties in the national political arena. One prominent issue that has garnered widespread attention is the push for a clean parliament and a commitment to the public interest. In addition, PKS frequently raises moral issues (Pratiwi, 2025).

Through this movement, PKS cadres are involved both individually and through various social institutions, with an emphasis on community-based empowerment efforts in the social, economic, cultural, environmental, population, and women’s sectors, as well as in poverty alleviation. Consequently, cross-sectoral professional competence has become a primary requirement to ensure the sustainability of contributions to development and the improvement of the public’s quality of life. The structural movement refers to the placement and distribution of cadres within the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, as well as across various sectors of public service, development, and state governance through constitutional procedures, such as political party participation in elections and the enhancement of cadre professionalism (Pamungkas et al., 2020).

PKS occupies a relatively prominent position compared to other new parties in the national political arena. This is reflected in the strong resonance of the issue of a clean parliament and its attention to public aspirations. In addition, PKS has consistently raised various issues related to moral values. Islamic values in PKS's policies are reflected in its political orientation, which emphasizes social justice as the state's responsibility to guarantee the basic rights of citizens—especially vulnerable groups—through support for social protection, the strengthening of the people's economy, and the development of MSMEs as the foundation of welfare. In addition to social justice, the values of trustworthiness, accountability, and deliberation also serve as important foundations in PKS's political practices. Its commitment to good governance

A commitment to integrity and the rejection of policies that undermine the anti-corruption agenda reflect PKS's view that corruption is both a moral and structural issue, while its involvement in representative democracy through electoral and legislative channels demonstrates an effort to actualize the principles of consultation and public participation as means of substantively incorporating Islamic values into state policy.

PKS Policies on Contemporary Issues

PKS regards social justice as a fundamental principle that is integrated with Islamic values and Indonesia's constitutional framework, as affirmed in its Articles of Association and Bylaws, viewing it not merely as the result of economic processes, but as the state's active responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of citizens' basic rights in a fair and dignified manner. Therefore, the welfare of the people is defined broadly, encompassing the fulfillment of needs in education, health, and social protection, which is viewed as aligned with the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* as the ethical foundation of public policy (Akbar et al., 2023).

Through policy implementation, PKS tends to advocate for a strong role of the state in ensuring the welfare of vulnerable groups through support for public subsidies, the strengthening of the people's economy, and the protection of MSMEs in the legislative and budgeting processes, while simultaneously positioning clean governance as a key pillar of the social justice agenda. Corruption is viewed as a structural factor that deepens inequality and hinders the distribution of welfare, as emphasized in the PKS Political Manifesto. Thus, the PKS's approach to social justice and the welfare of the people is not merely normative but is also linked to accountable and responsible governance practices (Hidayah et al., 2023).

PKS addresses welfare issues by prioritizing economically vulnerable groups through a focus on targeted subsidies, strengthening MSMEs, and an active role for the state, as outlined in its Development Platform. This aligns with its orientation toward distributive justice, reflected in the PKS Faction's support for social assistance programs and economic recovery policies during crises. In the city of Medan, the issues of urban poverty, the dominance of the informal sector, and the weak resilience of SMEs in the post-pandemic period make PKS's focus on strengthening a people-centered economy a contextually appropriate response through targeted subsidies and SME empowerment, as outlined in the party's Development Platform. This approach is relevant to Medan's economic structure, which relies heavily on small businesses and the informal sector, and is reinforced by PKS's support for social assistance and the economic recovery agenda as a form of solidarity with the groups most vulnerable to the crisis.

For PKS, combating corruption is a strategic priority because it is viewed as a structural problem that undermines social justice and policy effectiveness, as reflected in the PKS Faction's rejection of the 2019 KPK Law revision—a demonstration of its commitment that clean governance is a key prerequisite for public welfare. Public scrutiny of corruption cases in North Sumatra—which have impacted public services and eroded public trust—highlights the relevance of PKS's commitment, as stated in its Political Manifesto, to view corruption as a serious obstacle to social justice and to reject the 2019 KPK Law revision. This commitment serves as a driving force to strengthen clean governance so that regional policies and budgets, including those in Medan, are not misused. From an Islamic perspective, political leadership is viewed as the foundation of state governance rooted in moral and ethical

values, where leaders are required to serve as role models in both thought and action. Therefore, it is said that a clean and ethical society will emerge only if its leaders are also clean and ethical. However, unethical leaders will only create a society with corrupt thinking and behavior (Nurhayati, 2023).

In the context of Indonesia's democracy and pluralism, the PKS—which is grounded in Islamic ideology—continues to accept democracy as a legitimate mechanism for the exercise of power and has demonstrated a more pragmatic and inclusive approach, including the nomination of non-Muslim legislative candidates since the 2004 elections as a form of adaptation to the country's diverse socio-political reality. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious city, Medan demands a form of democratic governance that is sensitive to pluralism; thus, PKS's stance of accepting democracy and becoming increasingly pragmatic—including opening the door to non-Muslim participation since the 2004 General Election—can be understood as an adaptation to a heterogeneous social reality while maintaining its ideological identity and social stability (Izzati & Karima, 2023).

PKS also addresses issues of gender and public morality; it adopts a moderate stance by supporting women's participation in politics while remaining selective regarding concepts of equality deemed too liberal, and by promoting regulations that strengthen social values and family resilience—all while striking a balance between religious idealism and the principles of constitutional pluralism in the practice of Indonesian democracy. Amid challenges regarding women's representation and protection in the city of Medan, PKS supports the involvement of female cadres in politics and the legislature but frames this within religious-moral values, while maintaining a critical stance toward liberal gender equality to balance demands for social change with the religious culture of North Sumatra's society.

PKS's cautious approach to gender and public morality issues in Medan—which addresses social problems such as crime and family resilience through value-based regulatory measures—continues to take into account the city's pluralistic character; consequently, in practice, the party often adopts a compromise position between religious idealism and the realities of local democracy.

Consistency Between Islamic Values and PKS Political Practices

PKS bases its ideology and policies on the values of justice, trustworthiness, and deliberation, which are operationalized through the acceptance of constitutional democracy as well as electoral and legislative participation; however, in its political practice, these principles are often adjusted due to coalition dynamics and pragmatic pressures, so the party's ideological consistency is contextual and remains open to criticism within contemporary democracy (Jalil, 2020; Satria et al., 2024). In a multiparty system that demands coalitions, PKS finds itself at a crossroads between maintaining the ideological purity of Islam and preserving political relevance; consequently, pragmatism is often adopted as a strategy to remain influential, even though the accompanying compromises present challenges in balancing the effectiveness of political power with the consistency of da'wah values amid the dynamics of democracy.

The presence of PKS in Indonesia's democracy demonstrates that Islamic values can be actualized through elections, legislation, and oversight functions without disregarding pluralism, while its political dynamics reflect the challenges of the relationship between religion and power—challenges that demand consistency in political ethics so that democracy can develop in a substantive, just, and morally grounded manner.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) seeks to translate Islamic principles—including justice, trustworthiness, deliberation, and concern for the welfare of the people—into political practices within Indonesia's democratic system. These efforts are evident in the PKS's policy directions and political stances on various current issues, such as social justice, the anti-corruption agenda, strengthening a people-centered economy, and efforts to promote open and accountable governance. By embracing constitutional democratic

mechanisms, PKS views democracy not as something that contradicts Islam, but rather as a strategic instrument for tangibly realizing Islamic ethical values in the public sphere and in the process of formulating state policy.

However, this study reveals that the implementation of Islamic values in PKS's political practices is also influenced by political pragmatism. Coalition dynamics, electoral demands, and the dynamics of the multiparty system necessitate political compromises that, under certain conditions, can undermine the consistency of ideological idealism. This situation has implications for the development of democracy in Indonesia, where Islamic parties such as PKS not only contribute to enriching democracy from an ethical perspective but also serve as a barometer of the extent to which democracy can balance moral values, the principle of pluralism, and the interests of power. Thus, the existence of PKS underscores that the quality of democracy is not measured solely through procedural aspects but also through the steadfastness of political ethics in responding to the challenges and needs of contemporary society.

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