

Half-Hearted Moderation of an Islamist Party: Tracing the Altering Behaviour of Indonesia's Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) Post 2014

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Research on Islamist parties in democratic or semi-democratic countries exposes a shift toward greater moderation. Less understood is how the Islamist party is unwavering in its moderation when circumstances are unfavourable for it. Analysing the alteration of the political behaviour of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) in the post-2014 Indonesia, I show that Islamist party moderation is fragile, and the party returned to its idealism when the political environment causes severe ideological inconsistencies. The detachment from political incentives has made the PKS increasingly drawn to an aggressive opponent-style, and unsurprisingly became more involved in Islamist mobilisations for its electoral-idealist ends. The alteration in PKS behaviour towards idealism augments the theoretical presumption that Islamist parties emphasise ideological doctrine, so that whatever they adapt to the democratic political system is always vulnerable to returning to its idealism. This article concludes that half-hearted moderation keeps the potency of an undemocratic insurrection, of an Islamic party, especially when institutional politics do not espouse the views of its traditional constituents, and eventually it undermines its political achievements.

Keywords: *Islam politic, moderation, Islamist party, democracy, election, Islamic activism*

Introduction

In recent decades, research on Islamic parties in democratic or semi-democratic countries shows parties shifting toward a more moderate stance. In a tight electoral competition, they eventually have abandoned the Islamist agenda and focused on gaining votes. It is believed that when the democracy is stable, voters are inclined to disfavour an Islamic agenda which drives the Islamist party to loosen its ideology (Kurzman & Naqvi, 2010). Less understood is



how the Islamist party is unwavering in its moderate position when circumstances are changing, particularly when political incentives are far-off and ideological sparring is sticking in. This article examines this problem by tracing the political behaviour of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party, PKS) in post-2014 Indonesia. PKS is a prominent example of an initially underrated, then successful, Islamist party, as they have been more flexible in using secular issues since 2004. However, the party seems to showing its purist character when the situation is challenging in post 2014: they moved as an oppositional force, battered by internal frictions, and electrified by the rise of religious tension in the political arena.

The main problem of the Islamist party, as to moderation, lies on idealistic principles that are always induced in practical life derived from its politico-religious doctrine. The Islamist party is a norm regulative institution that maintains its doctrinal practice, and it would keep the party away from an excessive electoral-pragmatic interest. Acosta (2014) asserts that the militant-supporter based party has ideals extending beyond electoral achievement, and its idealistic characteristics will regain strength if it fails to achieve sacred goals. Thus, the Islamist party contains an internal vulnerability when it comes to moderation, and it becomes an obstacle to party institutionalisation. Mainwaring & Scully (1995) also underline that the party in which its norms are bounded by identity politics will burden its institutionalisation progress, and as a consequence the party is not in a stable phase in response to political dynamics. Consequently, an unstable party does not fully accomplish the phase of becoming a mature organisation. Panebianco (1988) holds that the development of an ideologist party to a solely institutionalised one does not always involve leaving previous characteristics behind. In the phase of change, where the party still contains strong ideological values, internal struggles occur which drag the organisation back to its original features.

This article suggests that the rise of Islamic tone of PKS, post-2014, was shaped by its limited range of moderation, and as a consequence it is exposed to electoral/institutional political pressure. In showing the interplay of its half-hearted moderation with external political dynamics, this study concludes that despite electoral democracy normalising PKS from its institutionally Islamist character, its Islamic activism remains innate and holds the party from being in the centre. In developing its arguments, this article proceeds through three steps. First, I present how PKS' solid ideological doctrine predominates in the institutional base that shapes the party's idealist disposition, which builds their cadres' purist orientation. Second, I discuss how PKS ability to break through electoral contests by embracing pragmatist principles is obstructed by their thick, ideological foundation, causing in the party a vulnerable solidity. Third, to illustrate the preceding arguments, this article exposes how the PKS traditional-orthodox character is extended, when institutional incentives are detached and the political environ is overwhelmed by religious issues as in post-2014. Therefore, with

the strengthening of its idealist orientation, the party tends to fulfil the interests of the loyalist mass base which ultimately limits its electoral achievements.

Research Method

The study is built on a qualitative approach that combines unstructured interviews, a literature study, and observation. The interviews were conducted with several PKS boards at both the national and local level, several PKS politicians, and grassroots cadres. All of the informants' identities are classified, considering the sensitive information they shared. The literature studies focus on analysing the tendency of PKS moderation as portrayed within other studies. The author also observed several party activities, such as the local party's meeting with their constituents in Jakarta and Bandung, and some of grassroots cadres' social activities. The observation was directed to comprehend the discourses emerging either in the general party organisation, or day-to-day cadre activities. The study also scrutinised online news coverage about the party's decisions, politicians' comments, and survey results relevant to the topic.

Result and Discussion

The Root of PKS Islamic Activism

PKS originated in the tarbiyah movement (da'wah movement), a politico-religious movement inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which is believed to have been operating in Indonesia since the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bubalo and Fealy 2005: 66). They were actually an unformed organisation and conducted covert activities to avoid repressive measurements by the Suharto's regime that was vigilant about the rise of Islamic political movements (George 1998: 698). Nevertheless, they were still able to expand the movement through a cell system and get abundant recruits, endowed by the rise of global Islamic movements in the 1970s and 1980s. As the government banned all Islamic political activists, the tarbiyah movement used campuses as a safe ground to disseminate their ideas through student propagation groups called Dakwah Institution in Campuses (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus) (Bruinessen 2003).

In accordance with the moderate wing of Muslim Brotherhood, the tarbiyah movement believed that Islamic polity could be achieved with non-violence and gradual moves as guided by Muslim Brotherhood doctrine. The phases initialised with mihwar ta'sisi or building Islamic character, on an individual basis, through dakwah (preaching), then mihwar tandzimi, or developing a firm organisation and networks, followed by mihwar sya'bi or spreading ideas to the public to get wider support, and mihwar muasasi or a phase in which they seek the establishment of the social, political and economic systems compatible with sharia through the use of institutional means. Finally, all of those stages would lead to the realisation of mihwar dauly, a state when they occupied governmental roles to build an

Islamic state (Permata and Kailani 2010: 24). Therefore, after the global economy crisis hit Indonesia in 1997 and triggered political disruption, the tarbiyah movement saw its opportunity to appear on the surface to get wider recognition and start the path of mihwar dauly through the establishment of Partai Keadilan (Justice Party, PK) in 1998.

The Paradox of Islamist Party Moderation

As the new emerging party from the semi-clandestine congregation community, the PK did not get broad recognition. The use of rigid religious symbols was unpopular and made them appear exclusive. Unsurprisingly, they received a small vote result in the 1999 election, about 1.7 percent, and only had six seats in the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (House of Representatives or DPR). Most observers, such as Bubalo, Fealy and Mason (2012) and Permata and Kailani (2010), explain that the PK's political action in this period tended to be ideologist, due to immature democratic institutions which turned out to be less attractive among middle voters. The PK then took serious steps to build a party institution that could attract more votes. In 2003, they changed their name to PKS, as they failed to pass the Election Law No. 3/ 1999 that requires a two percent electoral threshold. The adjustment not only re-enabled them to participate in the 2004 election, but also designated a flagship toward a more flexible and electorally-oriented party.

PKS was aware that the use of a strict religious style was less successful in gaining voters. To cope with this limitation, PKS changed their campaign strategy by showing a moderate outlook and trying to get the voters by a direct approach, i.e. mobilising grassroots cadres by performing social services. With the help of hired professional political consultants, PKS began to strengthen their stance on public issues, especially on anti-corruption, clean government, and good governance. The rationality of party politics had dragged their militant resources in the electoral direction. All cadres should persuade at least ten people to vote for the party (Mujani and Liddle 2011: 582). The progressive measures on electoral strategy garnered a fruitful result. In the 2004 election, the PKS received an exceptional vote with 7.34 percent, granting them 45 seats in DPR. In the regions, PKS began to seek electoral victory in regional head races by opening a coalition to other parties and candidates outside their own group (Buehler 2013: 218). They also commenced selling nominations in local elections, seemingly as a means to raise the funds for forthcoming campaigns (Mujani and Liddle 2011: 590). In the organisational realm, the transition resulting from an electoral orientation was considered successful in providing a moderate path for PKS. Buehler noted that during 2005-2008, 114 of the 121 executive heads supported by PKS did not impose sharia-based regulations. Thus, PKS moderation not only runs at the national level but also seeps into the regions (Buehler, 2013).



Verily, the problem intensified in the 2008 PKS national meeting in Bali, when the party's secretary general, Anis Matta, announced that PKS would turn into a more open party. The party's board, dominated by progressive elites, were aware of the fact that the nationalist parties got many votes from the Muslim voters because almost all political parties appear religious when facing an election. Some conservative cadres would restrain their efforts as to broadening voter segments, including granting membership to non-Muslims. The decision was perceived as 'radical' by those who preferred a closed or exclusive party. They thought the party's elites had gone too far by bringing the usrah movement to a pragmatic, political end (Herdiansah, 2016). The discord about electoral orientation drove internal friction. Muhtadi (2012) and to some extent Bubalo, Fealy, and Mason (2012), for example, have mentioned that the emergence of factionalism among the elite is in line with an increasingly open party division. There are two factions; the justice faction that reflects conservative views and the prosperous faction which tends to be more progressive. The conservatives are composed of senior members who want the party to be careful in taking strategic steps and maintaining the tradition of the tarbiyah movement. However, the progressive group, which consists of the younger generation, believes that the party can achieve its goals efficiently if the organisation behaves more openly and flexibly. Comparatively, the factionalism with inter-elite frictions has undermined party solidity, which consequently affected the militancy of the grassroots cadres. Although friction often occurs, an organisational culture that prioritises harmony, robustness, and conformity causes these internal frictions to always be closed (Munandar, 2011).

The refusal to make PKS an open party depicts the party professionalisation as antagonistic to the usrah character, and its prominent in-groupness and ideological based solidarity. The excessive caution of the conservative faction about political incentives is in line with Acosta (2014), in that the militant organisation-based party has goals beyond electoral results. Even though the organisation had chosen to form a political party and many of its elites supported the decision, some conservative cadres fear that the party's way would weaken the strength needed to achieve their goal of building Islamic polity as guided by Islamic principles and ethics. Moreover, most cadres also have no experience so as to undergo political praxis. Therefore, they worry that the temptation of practical politics could hamper the fundamental configuration of the congregation community (jamaah). Those solicitudes are understandable since, though the tarbiyah movement has transformed into a party, the central axis is still located on its politico-religious node, represented by the usrah structure.

The friction accompanying the open orientation of the PKS is also apt to the reasoning given by Sanchez-Cuenca (2004: 326), that ideological moderation is a traumatic process, resulting in internal conflict. The inter-elite quarrel is not simply signifying the problem of discrepancy between the ideological principles as instilled in the usrah, but also the eschewing consequence of professionalising and thereby separating the party stripe from its idealist



wellspring. The internal dynamics experienced by PKS exhibit the organisational problems that ignited once they got involved in high politics which demanded professionalisation and institutionalisation efforts. This issue relates to what Lipset & Larkin (2004) call a syncretic function, an attempt to aggregate the interests or issues from diverse social bases then transcribed into governmental practices. The onset of internal conflicts regarding electoral orientation indicates that the PKS was less successful in aligning institutional strategy changes with its religious doctrine justifications. The exclusivity of the usrah system still preserved its influence, when PKS tried to expand their social base by repealing partitions that burden their traditional constituents.

PKS in the Post-2014: Reorienting the Puritanical Order

One of inevitable impacts of the less successful PKS party moderation is manifest in a struggle of the idealist faction to put its orientation as the party-political scheme. A new round of decisive contests between the factions occurred in November 2015, when PKS held the 4th National Work Meeting in Depok. At the event, the idealist faction succeeded in seizing party authority by placing Mohamad Sohibil Iman and Salim Segaf al-Jufri as the new president board and head of Dewan Syuro (Supreme Counsellor), respectively. Their triumph was also inseparable from the cadres' disappointment over the weak performance of the previous board as reflected in Lutfi's corruption case and the 2014 vote decline. With a keen perception that the pragmatist approach was responsible for heading the party in a wrong direction, the insistence of party realignment back to its idealism was unstoppable. The PKS's new leaders immediately made revisions by reinforcing the practice of halaqah, which had previously been overlooked, with restored the quality of usrah, i.e., memorising the Quran, midnight prayers, and other religious activities to all cadres without any compromise (Interview with PKS cadre, February 2016).

The new party board then restructured officials so it could be in line with the leaders' current injunction. The elites identified by the pragmatic faction were discharged from the party's strategic positions, such as Anis Matta, Fahri Hamzah, and Mahfudz Shidiq. The friction peaked when the party's board dismissed Fahri, because he did not comply with Salim Segaf's request to give the position of DPR deputy chairman to Ledia Hanifa. Instead of showing his obedience, Fahri opposed his dismissal and won an appeal in the highest court. The decision required the PKS board to restore Fahri's membership status and pay him compensation of Rp30 billion (USD2 million). The case has a severe consequence in which PKS comes to face divisive internal conflicts. At the beginning of 2018, Anis Matta conducted a political safari in the regions, to gather support for his presidential candidacy representing PKS. However, his actions received a backlash from the PKS leaders. Anis is considered insolent in carrying out the activity without any endorsement from the boards (Interview, December 2018). At the same time, Fahri travelled across cities to hold public

meetings also intended to mobilised PKS cadres and sympathisers for his subversion campaign.

Reconciliation efforts carried out by both factions have repeatedly failed. Anticipating the worst, as they could not continue political careers at PKS, Anis Matta and Fahri then declared Gerakan Arah Baru Indonesia (Indonesian New Direction Movement, Garbi), with the logo of a red crescent-star resembling the Turkish flag, in early 2018. At Garbi's various meetings in regions throughout 2018, PKS cadres and sympathisers were seen crowding halls. The central board then responded to Anis and Fahri's manoeuvres by changing some regional administrators identified as Anis and Fahri's loyalists, or what they referred to as orang sana (osan, the outgroups). In July 2018, the central board required all PKS legislative candidates to sign contracts whereby they can be dismissed at any time, to avoid defiance cases as conducted by Fahri. Many cadres were disappointed with the policy because it is equal to giving a blank check to the leaders, even though they have sacrificed much for their nomination. In some regions, such as Mojokerto, Banyumas, and Bali, the regional boards and cadres undertook mass resignations and joined Garbi. Responding to the cadres who supported Garbi, Tifatul Sembiring, a PKS Chair, then asked cadres who joined Garbi to release their PKS membership (Tribun-Medan.com, 2018).

The establishment of Garbi not only signifies the PKS elites' fragmentation but also implies the party's detachment from progressives. It would be no exaggeration if we perceived that Garbi's movement resembles the spirit of AKP establishment by Erdogan in Turkey, who departed from Ebakan's Refah Partisi that carried out a progressive political agenda, without losing its Islamist roots (Gunter & Hakan Yavuz, 2007). Fahri conveyed that PKS had an acute illness, namely institutionalisation of authoritarianism by its leaders which made the party's culture misguided. He thought that the new leaders applied the total obedience principle, and eliminated deliberation, as can be seen when they change the party structures in the regions without any compromise (Detik.com, 2018). The operation of strict discipline and dissident expulsion indicates that the PKS is not heading towards a syncretic prescript, built by the idealist and pragmatist paradigm. Instead, the domination of the idealist faction has invigorated the purist method that entrenched the party's doctrine, namely qiyadah (the total obedience to the party leader).

The revival of the PKS's purist archetype is also signified by its response to political events. The most noticeable conduct is its militancy in performing its opposition stance to the Jokowi's government. Since the beginning of the 2014 presidential race, PKS cadres and sympathisers have perceived the contest as an ideological struggle, where they put themselves representing a conservative and the contender as liberals (Kompas.com, 2014). Just after Prabowo-Hatta lost the 2014 presidential race, PKS pledged to be the opposition force albeit Jokowi persuading them to join the government (Cnnindonesia.com, 2014). The

decision was convenient for the cadres' expectation that demanded restoring the quality of usrah, by keeping the party from government positions for temporarily. PKS 'hostility' towards the Jokowi's government is also related to the discord of political 'aliran' (stream) between secular nationalist and Islamist views that has transpired throughout Indonesia's socio-political history. In the post-colonial era, the Indonesia Nationalist Party (PNI - the ancestor of PDIP), condemned the Islamist political view. Conversely, the Islamism represented by Indonesia Muslim Syuro Council (Masyumi - that inspires PKS) - decried secular political thought (King, 2000). In the PKS's usrah doctrine, secularism - as well as liberalism - is an antagonistic ideology it perceived as a source of society's depravities. Thus, when the PDIP was in power, it was painless for PKS cadres and supporters to demonise their adversary. Relations among grassroots supporters are also known to be unfriendly. Even so, the tension between them is sometimes blurred when they have similar interests, such as carrying candidates in regional elections. It is worth noticing that PKS was among the parties that supported Jokowi in the 2010 mayoral election of Solo, and Hidayat Nur Wahid was one of Jokowi's campaign speakers (Detik.com, 2012). But generally, cooperation between PKS with PDIP is rare. For example, in the 2018 simultaneous gubernatorial election held in 17 provinces, PKS joined in coalition with PDIP only in East Java.

Militant PKS opposition was invigorated by the rise of conservative Islamic forces that also opposed the Jokowi government. Since the 2014 presidential election, some conservative Islamic groups, mainly the FPI, allegedly related Jokowi to the rise of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) that brought a revenge mission to Indonesian Muslims (Tyson & Purnomo, 2017). Some Islamist websites such as arrahmah.com and Voa-Islam.com also frequently depicted Jokowi's government as connected to the PKI (Kwok, 2018). Rizieq Shihab, the leader of FPI, stated that Jokowi was the golden gate for the mean externalities (China) to dominate the country and make the Muslim slumped (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018). Interestingly, based on the Saiful Mujani Research Center (SMRC) survey in September 2017, around 37 percent of respondents who believed that the communist is rising through the Jokowi's government were identified as PKS supporters (Kompas.com, 2017a). In cyberspace, PKS supporters mingled with other conservative elements in launching scorns on Jokowi's government, as they believed that the government is a threat to Muslims. The PKS board then realised the actions of some of their supporters were outrageous. In 2015, PKS rebuked and finally dismissed a cadre who managed the blog called PKSPiyungan.com, which continued to launch inappropriate attacks on Jokowi. However, the move did not dismay its supporters' aggression towards the government, mainly on social media.

Meanwhile, the opposing conservative Muslims continued to attack Jokowi with anti-Islamic accusations. Confused by unpromising situations that threatened his chances in the 2019 election, Jokowi exercised a militant democracy strategy, criminalising opponent figures (Mietzner, 2018). In September 2017, Jonru, a PKS supporter, was eventually imprisoned for

spreading slander toward Jokowi (Kompas.com, 2017b). In December 2017, Alfian Tanjung, who had accused Jokowi as the protector of PKI, was sentenced to two years (Cnnindonesia.com, 2017). In January 2018, Rizieq Shihab fled to Saudi Arabia after the police set him as a suspect regarding obscenity. The authorities also sentenced a vocal Islamic activist, Muhammad Al-Khathath, without any trial. Furthermore, the semi-clandestine Islamist organisation, Hizbuth Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) was dissolved as Jokowi enacted a decree to regulate civil organisations (Mietzner, 2018). Nonetheless, Jokowi's repressive treatment of his opponents did not weaken the challenger's courage. Conservative Muslims are even more strongly consolidated, and have made various efforts to mobilise people's power to obstruct Jokowi's chance for a second term in office.

As a political party that struggles to obtain votes, the PKS identity-nuanced hostility towards Jokowi seems to be costly, moreover, given the fact that the majority of voters in Indonesia are in the middle. However, PKS had the opportunity to direct the rise of conservative Islamic forces into its electoral benefit, in the Jakarta 2017 governor election. PKS cooperated with the Gerindra Party to entrench Anis-Sandi. The other candidates were Ahok-Djarot supported by PDIP, Golkar Party, Nasdem Party, and Hanura Party, and Agus Yudhoyono-Silvy supported by the Democrat Party, PAN, PPP, and PKB. In the first round Agus Yudhoyono-Silvy went down. The supporter parties, PKB and PPP, then joined the Ahok-Djarot coalition, while PAN fell into the Anis-Sandi coalition. During the campaign, Ahok recklessly quoted a Koran verse, triggering mass protest from Islamic groups led by FPI. The protest campaign is called Aksi Bela Islam (Islam Defence Action, ABI). Crowds ranging from the hundreds of thousands to millions, gathered on Jakarta's streets throughout September-December 2016. The PKS' top leaders such as Salim Segaf, Sohibul Iman, and Hidayat Nur Wahid also became main orators in these actions. PKS began to re-exhibit Islamist discourse in the public sphere. For example, the PKS board affirmed the importance of the Muslim governmental leader in a Muslim-populated region (Detik.com, 2017). At the grassroots, many cadres and supporters believed that the Jakarta gubernatorial race would determine the fate of Muslims. They accused Ahok of issuing controversial policies such as the prohibition of takbir festival, and a reclamation project could harm Muslims not only in Jakarta but also Indonesia generally. The ban on the takbir festival is considered an effort to exterminate the Islamic tradition, and reclamation of the Jakarta bay would bring millions of Chinese into Jakarta (Interview, June 2017). In the midst of the protest waves, the electability of Ahok continued to decline and finally Anis-Sandi won the race with 56 percent of votes (Herdiansah et al., 2017: 63).

The victory in Jakarta signalled to PKS that the rise of conservative Islam gave positive results to their electoral achievements. PKS then continued to play its Islamic card in the 2018 West Java gubernatorial election. The province is electorally strategic. It has the greatest population of voters in Indonesia, and PKS has dominated the governor's seat for ten

years (2013-2018). In the contest, there were four paired candidates where the three of them were backed by Jokowi's coalition, and only one pair supported by Prabowo's coalition. It is believed that the candidates' configuration has been set up by the Jokowi coalition, to ensure that Prabowo's coalition could not win. PKS joined in a coalition with the Gerindra Party and PAN – which resembles the Jakarta gubernatorial coalition - carried Sudrajat and Syaikh. They also received support from FPI and the components of ex-protesters in Jakarta. The FPI's support and ABI elements are easily accessible for Sudrajat-Syaikh, because most of them came from West Java. In the campaign, they carried sentiment against the Jokowi government, and appeared representing Islamic leadership figures. However, their efforts were not enough to win the election. They lost to Ridwan Kamil-Uu Ruzhanul Ulum, promoted by some of Jokowi's supporting parties, namely PKB, PPP, Nasdem Party, and Hanura Party. The regional election results even become predicament for a PKS, as they lost all supporting candidates in other regions in Java. The PKS's poor achievement in the 2018 simultaneous regional election brings into question whether conservative Islamic mobilisation is beneficial.

The unexpected result of the 2018 regional election did not loosen the PKS's militancy in facing the 2019 election. Dislodged from governmental incentives and unable to compete with incumbents in the parliamentary arena, the PKS has been dragged to use contentious politics, through involving themselves in the anti-government movement mainly mobilised by Islamist activists. Using an extra-parliamentary strategy to delegitimise Jokowi's government remained the most likely alternative to be used by PKS, in strengthening its position as an opposition party (Mietzner, 2017: 168). At the grassroots, one of PKS's boards, Mardani Ali Sera along with Ahmad Dhani from Gerindra Party and Neno Warisman, an activist close to PKS, mobilised the anti-Jokowi movement called the @2019GantiPresiden ("2019 change the president") to challenge Jokowi's second term office. The movement itself was initially popular on Twitter and Facebook. Mardani Ali Sera then brought activism to the offline sphere. In May 2018, he officially declared the #2019GantiPresiden movement present in Jakarta. Afterward, Mardani continued to hold public meetings in Makassar, Medan, Bandung, and Tangerang. In July 2018, a survey conducted by Lingkaran Survey Indonesia revealed that the #2019GantiPresiden became famous with 60 percent respondent approval (Rmol.co, 2018). Merchandise such as t-shirts, hats, and stickers with the logo #2019GantiPresiden was widely sold in marketplaces. This movement had the potential to become a wave of people's power that flung Jokowi's electability aside. However, before it was broadening, the police, intelligence, and pro-Jokowi groups intimidated the #2019GantiPresiden activists and the movement receded even though it was not extinguished completely.

PKS continued to grasp electoral incentives from conservative Muslims, by prolonging the spirit of ABI. They consistently engaged in mass mobilisation efforts that revived the voters'

collective memory about the ABI movement, through the Reunion of ABI held in Jakarta in December 2017 and 2018. Throughout these actions, the PKS leaders emphasised the importance of Muslim unity (Jawapos.com, 2017) that seems to be their chief electoral attraction. PKS closeness with Islamist components also takes place in the context of institutional politics. In the event of determining the support or recommendation of presidential and vice-presidential candidates in mid-2018, PKS took part in the Ijtima' Ulama (Ulama Conference) held by the Presidium 212 and GNPF (both of them are driven by ABI and FPI activists). The conference generated support for Prabowo to run as the presidential candidate. They also recommended Salim Segaf and Abdul Somad, a recently famous preacher, as Prabowo's running mate. Because Abdul Somad was not willing to be nominated, the choice of recommendation fell to Salim Segaf. However, after a long negotiation process Prabowo finally chose Sandiaga Uno as his partner.

Even though PKS failed to get a ticket for a vice presidential candidate, at least they succeeded in establishing themselves as a representative Islamic party for anti-government Muslim voters. One prominent step of PKS' electoral manoeuvring in facing the 2019 election is to set affinity with FPI. Their closeness to FPI has been established especially since the momentum of the ABI events. The closeness of the two was also influenced by the relationship of Salim Segaf, and Habib Rizieq Shihab who came from the habaib community. They are believed to be a descendant of the Prophet that is honourable in traditional Islamic circles. FPI and other conservative organisations were impressed by the PKS commitment to their cause. Besides its full support toward the ABI movement, PKS pledged to fight for a draft bill that essentially glorifies clerics, religious leaders, and religious symbols (Tempo.co, 2019). The plan represented the mood of Islamist voters furious with Jokowi's confrontational and discriminatory approach to their religious activists. PKS also provided legal assistance to Slamet Maarif, Chairman of the 212 Alumni Brotherhood (ABI). He was named a suspect for supporting for Prabowo-Sandi while protesting the government in Solo in February 2019 (Kompas.com, 2019). The PKS effort to support conservative groups paid off. During the campaign, the GNPF gave support for PKS in the 2019 election (Detik.com, 2019). On its website, PKS expressed pride when Habib Rizieq called on his supporters to vote for the PKS in the 2019 election, because the party was seen as the most trustworthy Islamic party in fighting for their aspirations (Pks.id, 2019).

The alliance of PKS and FPI is opposite from an open party orientation previously promoted by Anis Matta. Although FPI supporters and sympathisers were also not small, in the context of electoral politics approaching FPI was a precarious step for PKS which had tried to target middle voters in the past ten years. PKS is threatened with abandonment by the voters who do not like the image of the FPI as a hardliner Islamic group often involved in violent acts. PKS could easily be labelled as an Islamic party that supports intolerance and vigilante actions. Even though FPI always tries to show its positive side such as being active in

humanitarian activities, there is almost no positive reporting about them in mainstream mass media. The organisation is also among the most hated by minorities, because of their hard actions against other places of worship. The alliance with FPI does not seem to be careful planning but driven by the necessity of the situation, post-2014. PKS does not have many options for maximising votes, after they are dragged away in political intrigues involving the Islamists' mobilisation during their opposition to Jokowi's government.

Is it the End of PKS Electoralism?

The PKS has shown a strong tendency of serving conservative Islamic interests and ignoring flexible political compromises, as they performed before 2014. Therefore, it is important to examine whether PKS have overlooked electoral objectives rationally? Does their overwhelmingly idealist paradigm make them highly selective regarding alternative choices in maximising political achievement? By prioritising a strategy that fulfils ideological desires, PKS seems to give up the opportunity of electoral achievement. In their Jakarta 2017 gubernatorial win, PKS failed to place their cadres as candidates. At the beginning of the candidacy period, PKS had a voter base of 10 percent in Jakarta. It had the opportunity to entrench its cadres, such as Mardani Ali Sera and Tri Wicaksana. One of them was almost paired with Sandiaga Uno from the Gerindra Party. However, the coalition finally carried out Anis Baswedan (non-party) and Sandiaga Uno, just before the candidate registration. Moreover, the victory of Anis-Sandi has benefitted, from conservative Islamic group protests eroding the electability of Ahok. Worse yet, when Sandiaga advanced as Prabowo's running mate in the 2019 presidential election, the PKS struggled to obtain the position of the Jakarta deputy governor, despite desperately wanting the position. The PKS elites felt that their struggle to fight the national incumbent should be properly rewarded by Gerindra Party. However, Gerindra Party seems unwilling to hand over the chair (Interview, December 2018). Unfortunately for PKS, they lack political support from other parties in the Jakarta legislative body. The situation illustrates that the PKS political performance is abysmal, and the support of a conservative Islamic mass base cannot help at all.

The faint political bargaining of PKS was also seen in the candidacy process in the 2018 West Java gubernatorial. PKS had to leave a governor candidacy to Sudrajat from the Gerindra Party, and get only a deputy ticket for Syaikh, a PKS politician from Bekasi. The defeat in West Java is also quite suffocating for PKS. They feel like they are struggling on their own. The winning team from the Gerindra Party was considered less serious, due to the lack of financial and logistical support. When Gerindra Party tried to tackle PKS, to get the deputy governor's seat in Jakarta, PKS finally thought that cooperating with Gerindra Party was 'the no other option' choice heading the 2019 election (Interview, December 2018). Further, opposing the Jokowi government militantly, by taking part in the ABI and #2019GantiPresiden movement, has turned out to weaken their bargaining position with the



Gerindra Party. PKS has been transformed into Jokowi's perpetual enemy, which means their position has been 'locked' into a polarised coalition, making it easy for the Gerindra Party to pull PKS into their own political interests.

After getting nothing from the 2018 regional head elections in Java, the PKS' big hope if not the only hope in the 2019 election, lay in their strategic positioning as a representative Islamic party for the conservatives or Islamists. PKS was successful in this environ because there were no Islamic parties in the ranks of Prabowo-Sandi's supporters beside them. However, their positioning as a sole, Islamic opposition party was incoherent with the potential for their vote support in the 2019 election. During the campaign, many survey institutions showed that PKS struggled to get past the parliamentary threshold. For example, in October 2018 Kompas displayed that PKS electability was only 3.3 percent (Bangkapos.com, 2018). In January 2019, Indikator Politik Indonesia exposed that PKS number was only 2.2 percent (Katadata.co.id, 2019). The miserable condition of the party's low electability was slightly remedied by a small number of surveys, which revealed that PKS was among those who passed the parliamentary threshold. In a survey by Charta Politika in early 2019, PKS succeeded in grasping the coattails effect of Prabowo-Sandi, with an estimated 4.1 percent vote, just after the Gerindra Party and Demokrat Party in its presidential coalition (Bbc.com, 2019).

Predictions which stated that in 2019 the PKS would not get a better vote result than 2014 were reasonable. The history of Islamic politics in the post-Suharto Indonesia notes that the fragmented Islamic parties experienced a drastic decline in votes, such as that undergone by PPP and PKB in 2004-2009. The PKS internal divisions that have excluded popular cadres with high mobilisation skills, such as Anis Matta and Fahri Hamzah, are likely to give a downturn in votes. While the PKS central officials struggled to prepare logistics for the 2019 election, they must have also worked to restore the organisational situation in regions affected by the internal conflict. PKS' defeat by Fahri Hamzah in court was a severe blow to the credibility of party leaders under Salim Segaf and Sohibul Iman. Furthermore, Fahri Hamzah continued to launch attacks on PKS officials while developing his new organisation, Garbi, which targeted the PKS's potential supporters. Party cracks are the situations that are least expected by any cadre, because it is considered as a deviation from the manifestation of usrah doctrine which strongly emphasises solidity and hierarchical compliance wrapped in religious justifications. However, the party's division in the post-2015 was somehow unavoidable since they failed to overcome the problem of moderation that was contrary to party doctrine.

Conclusion

This article argues that since PKS redefined its political goals with strict ideological reasoning, they have taken a way that is far from a flexible, pragmatic path. Accordingly,



their political position that juxtaposed in the political streams (aliran) romanticism has constrained the party from exploring more strategic decisions. The party's detachment from political incentives has also made PKS increasingly drawn to aggressive opponent-style politics, and unsurprisingly more involved in Islamist mobilisations for its electoral ends, which in turn it derogates the party's political achievements. Other observers, such as Hasan (2009) and Permata and Kailani (2010) anticipated that PKS never touched ideological moderation. However, this article confirms it and provides further explanation of how demanding circumstances could affect the party's move back to its idealist character. The alteration in PKS behaviour towards idealism augments the theoretical presumption that Islamist parties have a burden on ideological doctrine, so that whatever they adapt to a democratic political system is always vulnerable to returning to its idealism. When the political environment causes severe ideological inconsistencies, as indicated by events post-2014, the pendulum of the party's authority swings to its purist side. This is different from the continuous phase of party organisational change described by Panebianco (1988), who assumes the party would get institutionalised in the end, after they professionalised the system. Instead, the recent PKS development shows that its initial idealism hampered its maturity. The party has no institutional capability to confront demanding situations. This finding also highlights what Carey (2012: 51) has pointed out. As long as the party fails to loosen their ideology, they will never achieve real moderation. The half-hearted moderation of an Islamic party keeps the potency of an undemocratic-style insurrection, especially when the political environs do not espouse its traditional constituents.

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