

THE IDENTITY OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN A DEMOCRATIC REGIME: THE IDEOLOGY OF THE PROSPEROUS JUSTICE PARTY (PKS), INDONESIA AND THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY (AKP), TURKEY

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Abstract: This study focuses on the identity and ideological orientation of two Islamic political parties, as well as their steps towards ideological moderation and specific electoral strategies within the political landscapes of two different countries. This is a library-based research that explores the identity of political Islam ideology in secular democracies, utilizing a combination of historical and political approaches. The sources include literature and writings about political Islam groups in Indonesia and Turkey, specifically PKS and AKP, derived from reputable books and scholarly articles. The study concludes that both PKS and AKP are moderate in ideology and politics. PKS, especially in post-New Order, transformed through moderation and inclusion, maintaining its Islamist identity while forming coalitions with nationalist parties for survival. Meanwhile, AKP combines moderate Islamism with conservative democracy, though Erdogan's dominant leadership tends toward authoritarianism.

Keywords: Political Islam; Ideological Moderation; PKS; AKP; Electoral Strategies.

Introduction

The resurgence of Islamic ideology in politics is marked by the rise of political Islam, or Islamism, in many Muslim-majority countries. Political Islam manifests through Islamic political parties that

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participate in political contests. These groups adopt Islam as their ideology and strive to establish an Islamic political and state system, characterized by the absence of a separation between religion and state. This concept is described by Olivier Roy as the “Islamic political imagination.”¹ Recently, in numerous Muslim-majority countries, Islamic parties with an Islamist ideological identity have emerged, exhibiting diverse manifestations as they engage in varying democratic political processes from one country to another.

One of the significant phenomena of Islamism or political Islam in at least the past two decades is the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) in Turkey and the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS) in Indonesia. In the realm of practical politics, the AKP has won several elections and held power for the last two decades. The central figure of the AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been the President of Turkey since 2014, after serving as Prime Minister from 2003 to 2014.² Meanwhile, the PKS, as an Islamist party, has never won a general election and has never truly held governmental power, although it did form a coalition with the winning party in the 2009 presidential election,³ securing a cabinet minister position. However, during the 2014-2019 period, the PKS was an “opposition” party in parliament and against President Joko Widodo’s administration. Several scholars have sought to identify similarities between these two parties in different countries, focusing on their political and ideological identities and electoral strategies, especially for political or power-related objectives. To some extent, Tomsa even posits that the PKS is “following in the footsteps” of the AKP in its process of moderation within the context of democratic electoral procedures. The development of the PKS shows parallels with the AKP;

¹ Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), viii.

² Meltem Müftüler-Baç, E. Fuat Keyman, “Turkey Under the AKP: The Era of Dominant-Party Politics,” *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (2012): 85-99; Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³ Noorhaidi Hasan, “Islamist Party, Electoral Politics and Da’wah Mobilization Among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2012): 17-47; Greg Fealy, “Indonesian Politics in 2012: Graft, Intolerance, and Hope of Change in the Late Yudhoyono Period,” in *Southeast Asian Affairs*, ed. Daljit Singh (Singapore: ISEAS, 2013).

both are Islamist in nature but position themselves as political forces within a competitive party system, without abandoning their Islamist origins.⁴

The political evolution of Turkey post-Ottoman Empire has followed a long historical trajectory. Turkey underwent a significant transformation from an empire to a nation-state, facing various economic challenges within a democratic system that frequently experienced fluctuations in its multiparty structure. In this democratic process, the military played a crucial role in maintaining Turkish secularism and often intervened in the ideological structuring of socio-economic and political life.⁵ For nearly 80 years, Turkey was under a highly aggressive secular political regime, from Kemal Atatürk's era until the 2000s, when the AKP emerged as a political force with a strong ideological identity rooted in conservative Islamic principles.⁶ Baser and Ozturk, citing Jeffrey Haynes, refer to this extended period as “eighty years of aggressive secularization,” during which Islamic groups were marginalized from the political arena.⁷

The emergence of political Islam (Islamic parties) in Turkey's electoral landscape, culminating in the rise of the AKP as an Islamic party that has won several elections, has transformed the political scene in Turkey, especially the relationship between secular and Islamic politics.⁸ The AKP originated from Islamist circles but has since renounced its Islamism, exhibiting tendencies that are highly secular. Nonetheless, the staunchly secular regime remains distrustful of the AKP's true nature. Since the AKP ascended to power in 2002, Turkish politics has been characterized by paradoxical views, particularly regarding the interplay of secular and Islamic elements. The primary issue in the AKP's politics and ideology is its identity. The AKP's commitment to transforming Turkish politics is deeply

⁴ Dirk Tomsa, “Moderating Islamism in Indonesia: Tracing Patterns of Party Change in the Prosperous Justice Party,” *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2012): 495.

⁵ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁶ Bahar Baser dan Ahmet Erdi Ozturk, “In Lieu of an Introduction: Is It Curtains for Turkish Democracy?” in Bahar Baser dan Ahmet Erdi Ozturk (eds.), *Authoritarian Politics in Turkey: Elections, Resistance and the AKP* (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2017), 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Umit Cizre, *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

tied to its efforts to reconstruct its own identity. The party's democrat-conservative identity encompasses its understanding of Westernization, secularism, democracy, and the role and relevance of Islam in politics.⁹ This hybrid identity has undeniably played a crucial role in the party's electoral success. However, this has also raised concerns about the future of democratic politics in Turkey, given the existing system that grants significant power to the president, a role currently held by Recep Tayyip Erdogan.¹⁰

Unlike the AKP in Turkey, the PKS in Indonesia has a distinct historical and political context, although both share similarities in their identities as Islamic (or Islamist) parties. The PKS, which originated from the Tarbiyah movement in university campuses, has a strong inclination towards Islamism, particularly after the fall of the New Order regime, which was considered authoritarian. The transition from authoritarianism to democracy in the late 1990s and early 2000s provided an opportunity for various political forces to emerge with their ideological identities, including Islamist groups like the PKS.¹¹ However, Islamism did not become the preferred choice for most Muslims in Indonesia. The precursor to PKS, the Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan*, PK), failed to surpass the electoral threshold, necessitating a name change to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). Tomsa describes this change as an electoral strategy, marked by adopting more moderate and inclusive policies.¹²

Despite never winning legislative or presidential elections, PKS has managed to meet the parliamentary threshold in several elections. In the 2004 elections, the party even formed a coalition with the Democratic Party, which nominated Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono for president. Yudhoyono won and served two terms

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ For a study on the tendency of authoritarianism returning in Turkish politics, see Baser and Erdi Ozturk (eds.), *Authoritarian Politics in Turkey: Elections, Resistance and the AKP*. Specifically about secularism and Islam under Erdogan, see M. Hakan Yavuz and Erdi Ozturk, "Turkish Secularism and Islam Under the Reign of Erdogan," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19, no. 1 (2019): 1-19.

¹¹ Mark Woodward et al., "Getting Culture: A New Path for Indonesia's Islamist Justice and Prosperity Party," *Contemporary Islam* 7 (2013): 173-189.

¹² Dirk Tomsa, "Moderating Islamism in Indonesia: Tracing Patterns of Party Change in the Prosperous Justice Party," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2012): 486-498.

(2004-2014), and PKS secured several cabinet minister positions, though it did not become a dominant party in parliament. In electoral politics, PKS faces a choice between maintaining its Islamist ideological identity and securing electoral votes to remain in political contention, both in parliament and government.¹³ The choice to moderate its political stance has had internal and structural impacts on the party. This moderation often leads to internal conflicts and disputes among the party's leadership and members.¹⁴ One specific yet representative aspect of PKS's broader tendencies is its strategic moderation and inclusiveness on political issues, including women's and feminist issues, which has helped the party retain support from constituents, including female candidates, in electoral processes.¹⁵

To a certain extent, both of these Islamic parties share ideological affinities and draw inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The AKP and PKS each translate these ideological principles within the context of the democratic and secular political landscapes of their respective countries. By moderating their ideologies for electoral purposes, the AKP has successfully won several elections since the 2000s.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the PKS has also moderated its stance within Indonesia's democratic political context post-New Order since 1998, though it has yet to win a general election.¹⁷ However, both parties share a commonality in their so-

¹³ Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS: Suara dan Syariah* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2012).

¹⁴ Tomsa, "Moderating Islamism in Indonesia."

¹⁵ Rofhani and Ahmad Nur Fuad, "Moderating Anti-Feminism: Islamism and Women Candidates in the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40, no. 1 (2021): 156-173.

¹⁶ Menderes Cinar, "From Moderation to De-moderation: Democratic Backsliding of the AKP in Turkey," in *The Politics of Islamism: Diverging Visions and Trajectories*, eds. John L Esposito, Rahim Lili Zubaidah, Naser Ghobadzadeh (Sydney: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Güneş Murat Tezcür, *Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey: The Paradox of Moderation* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Tomsa, "Moderating Islamism in Indonesia;" Michael Buehler, "Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis in the Context of Decentralized Institutions: The Behavior of Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party in National and Local Politics," *Party Politics* 19, no. 2 (2012): 210-229; Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS: Suara dan Syari'ah*; Airlangga Pribadi, "Kebangkitan Politik Identitas Islam di Tengah Gelombang Demokrasi: Studi Kasus Pemikiran Politik Partai Keadilan Sejahtera"

cial support base: the Muslim middle class, which is motivated to engage in politics to counter secularism and advocate for the legalization of Islamic teachings as state law.¹⁸

The ideological and political realities of these two parties, along with the different historical and political contexts of Turkey and Indonesia, make for an intriguing research topic. Both parties are Islamist in nature, but in their political practices, they face the challenge of balancing the maintenance of their Islamist ideological identity with the need to secure significant electoral support. This reality can be described as a “paradox of moderation,” borrowing Tezcür’s term.¹⁹ This research focuses on examining the identity and ideological orientation of these two political parties, as well as the steps they have taken to moderate their ideologies and devise specific electoral strategies within the political landscapes of their respective countries. The goal is to identify the distinctive characteristics of these two Islamist political parties.

Several scholars and researchers have conducted studies on the identity of political Islam groups, particularly the AKP and PKS, including their ideological moderation steps and electoral strategies. For instance, Meltem Müftüler-Baç and E. Fuat Keyman analyze the dominance of the AKP in Turkish politics.²⁰ Banu Eligür focuses on the mobilization strategies of Islamist groups in Turkey.²¹ Other studies re-evaluate the AKP’s moderation steps, highlighting the evolution of political democracy in Turkey.²² In Indonesia, Noorhaidi Hasan examines how the PKS implements

ra,” in *Membaca Indonesia*, eds. Soengeng Sarjadi and Sukardi Rinakit (Jakarta: Soengeng Sarjadi Syndicate, 2005).

¹⁸ M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Güneş Murat Tezcür, *Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey: The Paradox of Moderation* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010).

²⁰ Meltem Müftüler-Baç and E. Fuat Keyman, “Turkey Under the AKP: The Era of Dominant-Party Politics,” *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (2012): 85-99.

²¹ Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

²² Cinar, “From Moderation to De-moderation;” Güneş Murat Tezcür, *Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey: The Paradox of Moderation* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010).

political strategies to gain political support (votes).²³ Dirk Tomsa traces the changes within the PKS,²⁴ while Michael Buehler questions the inclusion-moderation thesis regarding PKS's political behavior.²⁵ Burhanuddin Muhtadi analyzes the dilemma PKS faces between adhering to its ideology and meeting electoral demands,²⁶ while Airlangga Pribadi emphasizes the political thought within PKS.²⁷ Rendy Adiwilaga explores the transformation of political Islam movements, from their early rise to their efforts to adapt to contemporary developments.²⁸ Syahminan studies the factors influencing the growth and development of political Islam in Indonesia.²⁹

This research is a literature study that seeks to explore the ideological identity of political Islam in secular democracies, combining historical and political approaches. Consequently, the concepts and theories used are drawn from the discipline of political science. The data sources include literature and writings on political Islam groups in Indonesia and Turkey, specifically the PKS and AKP, produced by scholars in the form of books and articles published in reputable scientific journals. The data collected from these sources are verified for validity and credibility by conducting comparative analyses. The historical-political analysis employs identity theory and considers the inclusion-moderation thesis to interpret the ideological tendencies and electoral strategies of the two parties under study. Thus, the combination of historical analysis and political sociology, focusing on the differing socio-political settings of Indonesia and Turkey, yields specific data and conclusions for each party.

²³ Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamist Party, Electoral Politics and Da'wah Mobilization Among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2012): 17-47.

²⁴ Tomsa, "Moderating Islamism in Indonesia."

²⁵ Michael Buehler, "Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis in the Context of Decentralized Institutions: The Behavior of Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party in National and Local Politics," *Party Politics* 19, no. 2 (2012): 210-229.

²⁶ Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS*.

²⁷ Pribadi, "Kebangkitan Politik Identitas Islam."

²⁸ Rendy Adiwilaga, "Gerakan Islam Politik dan Proyek Historis Penegakan Islamisme di Indonesia," *Jurnal Wacana Politik* 2, no. 1 (Maret 2017): 1-9.

²⁹ Syahminan, "Pemikiran dan Gerakan Politik Islam di Indonesia," *Jurnal Politeia* 4, no. 1 (January 2012): 1-11.

The PKS as a Centrist Islamic Party

Discussions and writings about the PKS cannot be separated from the Tarbiyah movement, which originated on university campuses in Indonesia. The Tarbiyah movement, the precursor to the PK, comprises five key elements. First, Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (*Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia*, DDII). This organization played the initial role in promoting *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) on campuses, led by its chairman, Mohammad Natsir. Second, Campus Da'wah Institute (*Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*, LDK). Serving as the backbone of the Tarbiyah movement, LDKs are the primary actors in campus *da'wah*, providing mechanisms for recruiting cadres in universities and schools. Third, foreign university alumni. Particularly those from the Middle East, these individuals act as transmitters of ideology, methodology, thoughts, and strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*). Fourth, Islamic community and youth organization activists. These activists organize and mobilize Islamic *da'wah* organizations. Fifth, preachers from Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). These individuals serve as Islamic teachers and mentors, imparting Islamic teachings and contributing their *da'wah* experiences to the community.³⁰ These elements collectively shaped the foundation and development of the PKS, illustrating its deep-rooted connection with Islamic educational and activist networks in Indonesia.

According to Muhtadi, the development of the PKS consists of three phases: the campus *da'wah* phase, the formation of the student movement phase, and the political movement phase. Firstly, campus *da'wah* phase.³¹ This phase began with the establishment of DDII in 1967, initiated by prominent Masyumi figures like Mohammad Natsir in response to the Suharto regime's hostility towards the idea of "Political Islam." In 1968, DDII launched a *da'wah* training program for religious instructors involved in mosque-based student activities on campuses. The training was attended by alumni from various student organizations and universities across Indonesia and was held at the Indonesian Hajj Training Center (*Pelatihan Haji Indonesia*, PHI). Secondly, the formation

³⁰ M. Imdadun Rahmat, *Ideologi Politik PKS Dari Masjid Kampus ke Gedung Parlemen* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Printing Cemerlang, 2011), 24-25.

³¹ Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS*.

of the student movement. In the mid-1980s, small Islamic study groups called *usroh* were formed in campus mosques. These groups (*usroh*, meaning “family”) were organized into small units of 6-10 people, each with a mentor (*murabbi*) in a systematic structure. Initially, these activities were conducted secretly and often disguised as campus activities when involving larger groups. This covert approach was due to the New Order government’s repressive policies towards religious activities during the 1970s and 1980s.³² Thirdly, the political movement. The embryo of PKS’s political movement emerged from a network of LDKs that met in 1986 at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta, involving 13 universities. This network later formed the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, KAMMI), marking the transition towards a more organized and overt political activism. These phases illustrate the evolution of PKS from a campus-based religious movement to an influential political party, shaped by the socio-political context of Indonesia during the New Order era and beyond.

After the fall of the Suharto regime on 21 May 1998, KAMMI activists held discussions to consider establishing an Islamic political party.³³ In August 1998, they organized a meeting led by Dr. H. M. Hidayat Nur Wahid, with H. Lutfi Hasan Ishaq, MA, as the secretary. This meeting resulted in the formation of a political party named the Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan*, PK). Through deliberation, Dr. Nur Mahmudi Ismail was appointed as the party president, Dr. Salim Asegaf Al-Jufri as the chairman of the party’s Advisory Council (*Dewan Syura*), and Anis Matta, Lc. as the Secretary General. The Justice Party quickly developed, leveraging the initial base of *Tarbiyah* cadres, totaling 42.202 core and supporting members. The party viewed elections primarily as a means for *da’wah*, to promote Islamic values which they deemed more important than merely garnering votes.³⁴

In the 1999 elections, the Justice Party attracted significant public attention by presenting itself as “the only political party with

³² Rahmat, *Ideologi Politik PKS*, 23-24.

³³ Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS*, 43-44.

³⁴ Arif Munandar, “Antara jemaah dan Partai Politik: Dinamika Habitus Kader Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) Dalam Arena Politik Indonesia Pasca Pemilu 2004” (Ph.D Thesis--Fakulty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, July 2011), 6.

a transparent, well-organized structure and clear program agenda.” Party cadres were required to understand and adhere to religious norms and remain loyal to the party.³⁵ In this election, the Justice Party secured 1,436,565 votes, about 1.36% of the total, which allowed seven party representatives to take seats in the national parliament (DPR). Within the parliament, the Justice Party played a significant role, notably through its emphasis on clean governance and concern for the people’s interests, bolstering its reputation and influence despite its modest electoral success.³⁶

The participation of the PK in the 2004 elections faced some challenges due to the electoral threshold requirement, which mandated a party to secure at least 2% of the vote in order to participate in the following elections. This requirement was stipulated in the 1999 Electoral Law, Chapter VII, Article 39. Consequently, the Justice Party was ineligible to participate in the 2004 elections unless it merged with another party or established a new political party. During a plenary session in 2001, two options were proposed to continue the *da’wah* through politics. The first was to transform the Justice Party into a mass organization. The second was to create a new party with a symbol and goals similar to those of the Justice Party. The latter option was ultimately approved. A team was formed to formulate the new party, chaired by Muzammil Yusuf. During this session, it was decided to establish a new party by adding the word “*Sejahtera*” (Prosperous) to its name, thus forming the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS). PKS was officially founded on 20 April 2002 as a strategic step to overcome the electoral threshold obstacle. Due to the shared vision and mission of the two parties, the Consultative Assembly of the PK, held at Wisma Haji, Bekasi, West Java, on 17 April 2003, decided that the PK would merge with the PKS. This merger enabled the PK to participate in the 2004 elections. According to Liddle, PKS represents a new Islamic political group, distinct from existing modernist organizational forces.³⁷

The identity of the PKS is closely tied to its fundamental concept as a *da’wah* (Islamic outreach) party and a cadre-based organi-

³⁵ Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS*, 46.

³⁶ Rahmat, *Ideologi Politik PKS*, 36-37.

³⁷ R. William Liddle, “The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 3 (1996): 613-634.

zation. The movement of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (the Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt³⁸ inspired PKS in its early political endeavors. The ideological principles of *da'wah (manhaj)* of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* have been extensively adopted by PKS, leading PKS to be often referred to as an ideological offshoot of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*. The influence of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* has been seminal for PKS, as it has assimilated elements from the Brotherhood and incorporated them into its ideology and identity.³⁹ These similarities can be observed in concepts such as Islam *usrah* (Islamic study groups) and the concept of *ka'ffah* (comprehensiveness), which have been adopted by PKS.⁴⁰

The concept of being a cadre-based party, PKS has a system and method of cadreship. Cadreship is conducted through open recruitment and nurturing for all members through the party's institutional infrastructure. PKS's cadre network includes not only Tarbiyah guidance under mentors (*murabbi*) but also involves the general public, especially women, through Salimah and the Women's Justice Posts (*Pos Wanita Keadilan*, PWK). Additionally, PKS's subordinate organizations such as KAMMI, GK (*Garda Keadilan*/Justice Guard), SPK (Serikat Pekerja Keadilan/Justice Workers Union), PPNSI (Perhimpunan Petani Nelayan Sejahtera Indonesia/Association of Prosperous Farmers and Fishermen of Indonesia), KAPMI (Kesatuan Aksi Pelajar Muslim Indonesia/Union of Indonesian Muslim Students' Action) develop their own cadre recruitment patterns and methods. Meanwhile, formal party cadreship is officially conducted by party officials from the parliament to the Central Board (*Dewan Pengurus Pusat*, DPP).⁴¹ The formation

³⁸ *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* is a contemporary Islamic movement that has spread into a transnational movement, influencing various Islamic political movements, particularly in countries with Muslim populations. This organization was founded by Shaykh Hasan al-Banna in April 1928 in Egypt. In its activities, the organization calls on Muslims to return to Islamic Sharia as the foundation of their lives, as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The movement's objectives are to propagate Islam, unify Muslims, maintain the glory of the nation for the welfare of the people, enhance social justice, and improve the standard of living for the community.

³⁹ Rahmat, *Ideologi Politik PKS*, 97-98.

⁴⁰ Anthony Bubalo, Greg Fealy, and Whit Mason, *PKS dan Kembarannya: Bergiat Jadi Demokrat di Indonesia, Mesir dan Turki* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2012), 57-59.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 239.

of the self-concept as a party cadre based on Islam utilized the *Manajemen Tarbiyah Anggota Pemula* (Management of Tarbiyah for New Members) module developed in 2003. In 2005, a more comprehensive module titled “*Manhaj Tarbiyah PK Sejahtera*” (the Tarbiyah Manhaj of Prosperous Justice Party) was further developed.⁴²

As a *da'wah* party, PKS plays a political role in realizing the concept of a “civil society” within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. PKS believes in the integration of civil society and the Indonesian context, which embodies *ukhummah Islāmīyah* (Islamic solidarity), *ukhummah waṭaniyah* (national solidarity), and *ukhummah bashariyah* (human solidarity) within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia.⁴³ Systematic and continuous *da'wah* is the only way to achieve these two victories. Therefore, PKS's understanding of Islam encompasses *'ubudiyah* (worship), *mu'amalah* (human interaction), and *siyasah* (political governance). Thus, PKS is convinced that Muslims must live Islamic lives and uphold Islamic law, including participating in the establishment of an Islamic state.

PKS also aspires to be a catalyst for change, aiming to be a force for transformation (*anāsīr taghyīr*), an icon of reform, an advocate for citizen empowerment, civil society, and a critical force against the government to ensure that societal norms align with Islam. PKS embodies the spirit of Islamic revivalism, advocating for “Islam as the solution” and “Islam as an alternative” to Western threats such as liberalism, secularism, capitalism, socialism, and the secular political systems of nation-states.⁴⁴ PKS asserts that to form a unitary republic based on Pancasila as the state's foundation, it must include belief in one God, humanitarianism, national unity, democratic representation, and social justice. PKS strives to seek compromises, emphasizing that no religion should dominate the state; instead, religion should be one of the state's important pillars. Agendas inspired by Islam are embraced as long as they align and do not contradict each other.

The agenda of strengthening ideology is one of PKS's crucial overarching policies. PKS formulates it to first project Islam as the

⁴² Ibid, 243.

⁴³ Abu Ridha, *Politik Tegak Lurus PKS* (Solo: PT. Era Adicitra Intermedia, 2018), 277-278.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 120.

ideology of the community as the foundation of its political movement. Second, to make Islam the spirit of struggle for the welfare of the community, shifting from servitude to fellow humans to servitude to Allah alone. The operationalization of its ideology is based on three principles: first, the comprehensiveness and finality of the Islamic system; second, the authority of Shariah derived from the Quran, Hadith, and *ijtihad*; and third, the suitability of implementing Islamic systems and solutions in every time and place. From this ideological exposition, it is evident that PKS plans to change the ideological landscape in society from “man-made ideologies” to Islamic ideology.⁴⁵ Based on the above ideological foundation, it becomes the basis of the party’s written policy that Islam is an integral system capable of guiding humanity towards worldly and hereafter well-being, both materially and spiritually. This well-being can only be achieved through two victories: personal victory (*futūḥ khāṣyah*) achieved through individual piety, and political victory (*futūḥ ‘ammah*) achieved through collective piety.⁴⁶ This ideology is employed for the training and cadreship activities. PKS’s cadreship is an adoption from the cadreship of *Ikhtwan al-Muslimin* Tarbiyah. Its curriculum includes philosophical, ideological, and religious principles. PKS’s Tarbiyah only adapts according to the needs of the Indonesian context while eliminating what is not suitable.

PKS’s ideological direction places it within the category of “moderate Islamists” rather than “radical Jihadists.” PKS operates by avoiding confrontation and instead advocates for peaceful means. The party demonstrates acceptance of the nation’s ideology, democratic system, and the nation-state system. It declares itself positioned in the center, amidst the diversity of Islamic groups in Indonesia. Former President Hidayat Nur Wahid referred to PKS as a “Centrist Islamic Party.” However, not all Islamic groups agree with PKS’s stance, some labeling PKS as right-wing, accepting democracy only to achieve its ideological goals.⁴⁷ Many observers and political analysts suspect that PKS deliberately hides behind non-Islamic issues to push its Islamist agenda. Some also argue that PKS has contradictions between its universal issues and

⁴⁵ Rahmat, *Ideologi Politik PKS*, 119-120.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

conservative agenda. On one hand, PKS supports openness and tolerance, but on the other hand, it contradicts with its curriculum and guidance for cadre systems.⁴⁸ PKS has evolved from being the most puritan and exclusive Muslim party by promising commitment to moderation and becoming more open. PKS elites explain that they remain committed to moderation to expand their support base in East Java and Central Java and move away from their traditional stronghold in the urban middle class.⁴⁹ This is done to adjust the party's ideology because moderate religious ideologies or perspectives used so far are not sufficient to achieve political sustainability in electoral competition and religious politics.⁵⁰ In terms of party survival, PKS is often compared to the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, PKB). On one hand, PKB has experienced decline due to literal relationships, fragile organization, and lack of institutionalization. On the other hand, PKS's survival is linked to its good organizational character and institutionalization. The party's strong organization and institutionalization assist PKS in achieving political resilience and longevity. This also enables PKS to reassess and revitalize religious struggle rules through competitive politics.⁵¹

The AKP: From Islamism to Muslimhood

The establishment of the AKP in 2001 marked a significant milestone in Turkish politics. The party emerged from the remnants of the banned *Refah* (Welfare) Party, which later formed the first majority government in a generation in Turkey. There are four key factors underlying the formation of the AKP. First, the *Refah* Party had young members with diverse experiences. When the party was banned, these young members sought ways to continue their political struggle. Second, although the Turkish military and judiciary rigorously maintained the secular order, they also showed limited tolerance for political parties. While suppressing certain parties, they also provided space for parties to voice the interests

⁴⁸ Ibid., 183.

⁴⁹ Kikue Hamayotsu, "The End of Political Islam? A Comparative Analysis of Religious Parties in the Muslim Democracy of Indonesia," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 3 (2011): 133-159.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

of their constituents. Third, demographic changes formed new constituencies in Turkey. This forced the AKP to combine cultural conservatism with political and economic pragmatism, taking into account the aspirations and needs of its constituents. Fourth, AKP membership offered a reform agenda, especially regarding Turkey's accession to the European Union.⁵²

The name *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party, AKP) means “clean” or “untarnished,” with Erdogan as its leader. The founders of the AKP were open to cooperating with secular politics and declared their loyalty to the basic values of secularism and the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. The AKP does not define itself as an Islamic party, but rather as a conservative democratic party. There are similarities with Christian democratic parties in Western Europe.⁵³

In the 2002 elections, the AKP obtained 34 percent of the vote, exceeding the 10 percent threshold to secure seats in parliament. The AKP won a total of 363 seats. This electoral outcome marked a significant victory for the AKP, marking the first time in a generation that a single-party government was formed. The AKP's rival, the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), only garnered 19 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, the new party founded by Erbakan, the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*), only received 2 percent of the vote.⁵⁴ Just before the 2002 elections, Muslim intellectuals who had previously supported Refah began to voice a change in perspective. Ali Bulac, who led a group of intellectual circles, founded a magazine focusing on science and thought that supported the AKP, outlining elements of the “new Islamism.” According to the magazine's writers, confrontational approaches were proven ineffective in the context of international developments.⁵⁵

After the success of the AKP in the general elections, questions arose about the reasons behind the voters choosing the AKP. Some answers indicate that they chose the AKP as an alternative to “center-right” parties like *the Anavatan Partisi* (ANAP) and DIP,

⁵² Umit Cizre, *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁵³ <https://beritaturki.com/milli-gorus-necmettin-erbakan-dan-islamisme-turki/>; accessed 26 July 2021.

⁵⁴ Bubalo, Fealy, and Mason, *PKS dan Kembarannya*, 82.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

as well as two nationalist parties, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (MHP) and *Demokratik Sol Parti* (DSP). Most of the AKP voters come from former supporters of the *Fağilet Partisi* (FP), *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (MHP), and ANAP. These voters consist of nationalists (Turkish), conservatives (Muslims), and also liberal voters whose economy chooses the AKP as the main voice. About 29 percent of AKP voters are new voters. Those who choose the AKP want to create a new political center according to their needs, not according to the needs of the state. The reasons for choosing the AKP vary, including political, economic, and social considerations. Many believe that the AKP is an effort to continue Özal's efforts to expand public space and bring moral codes into everyday life, as well as to reduce the gap between Turkish society and the Turkish state. Additionally, they hope the AKP can open up more economic opportunities to create jobs and strengthen social peace by integrating Turkey into the European Union.⁵⁶

The early success of the AKP is attributed to three significant factors. Firstly, the division within the *Fağilet Party* into two factions: the younger generation and the older traditional generation.⁵⁷ Secondly, the inability of other parties, such as the *Anavatan Partisi* and the *Doğrul Yol Partisi*, to meet the requirements of adaptation, resulting in a political vacuum.⁵⁸ The third factor behind the success of the AKP is the financial crisis of 2001, caused by the implementation of structural reforms demanded by the IMF, leading to conflicts between President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit.⁵⁹ In February 2001, the Central Bank of Turkey abandoned the inflation targeting regime five months earlier than scheduled under less than optimal conditions. The coalition government was forced to devalue the Turkish Lira on February 22, 2001.

Since 2002, the AKP has won four consecutive national elections, marking an unprecedented success in contemporary Turkish politics. The AKP's electoral performance in terms of votes and seats is as follows: 34.3% of the vote and 363 seats in 2002; 46.6%

⁵⁶ M. Hakan Yavuz, "Islamic Political Identity in Turkey-Religion and Global Politics," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19, no. 1 (2019): 258.

⁵⁷ B. A. Yeşilada, "The Future of Erdoğan and the AKP," *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016): 20.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

of the vote and 341 seats in 2007; 49.9% of the vote and 326 seats in 2011; 40.9% of the vote and 258 seats in June 2015; and 49.5% of the vote and 317 seats in September 2015.⁶⁰

Despite its Islamic roots, the AKP differs from other Islamic parties. Erdogan, as the party's founder, chose to adopt the ideology of "conservative democracy," which upholds liberal democratic values. As a conservative democratic party, the AKP aims to establish Turkey as a country that values democracy highly and implements conservative values such as moral, cultural, and national identity aspects within the framework of democracy, legislative sovereignty, and human rights, thus creating a more liberal, progressive, and democratic state.⁶¹

The AKP exhibits the same nationalist instinct as other parties in Turkey, but what sets it apart is its ambition, energy, and honesty. The AKP seizes the opportunity to advocate for Turkey's demands to Europe, pushing for reforms to qualify for European Union membership. Although the AKP does not present itself through Islamic symbols, it pursues these demands more seriously than previous governments, which tended to be more Islamic-leaning. This confuses those who accuse the AKP of obstructing Turkey's development with a Western model.

Critics argue that "conservative democracy" is merely a new term without a legitimate concept or policy. Some observers acknowledge that the term "conservative democracy" was coined because the AKP cannot label itself as a Muslim democracy. However, this criticism is countered by party leaders who argue that if the "Muslim" label were attached to the AKP's ideology, it would not create a conducive environment for its inclusive goals. Turkey is home to various religious minorities with deep roots and a noble political reputation.⁶²

The conservatism espoused by the AKP is not intended to reject the secularism established as Turkey's national identity. This stance differs from previous Islamic parties that saw secularism as a threat. The AKP approaches it by preserving and committing to maintain Turkey's secular identity. The secularism understood by

⁶⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁶¹ Mujani and Ibrahim, "Identiti Adalet Ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) Turki di Per-simpangan Jalan," 135.

⁶² Bubalo, Fealy, and Mason, *PKS dan Kembarannya*, 89.

the AKP is purely a political principle and is not related to individuals' daily life views. Therefore, even though the state and the party are secular, Turkish people still have the right to practice religion as a way of life without feeling constrained by anyone.⁶³

In this context, the AKP is very cautious in conveying its identity and ideology. As expressed by Jenny White, as quoted by Bubalo, the AKP shows a shift from Islamism towards Muslimhood or Kemusliman. This change is made to attract support from voters. The AKP does not rely solely on Islamist programs because Islamist movements tend to be more focused on religion. Although Islamic values are crucial for the AKP and reflect its image as good Muslims, in practice, the AKP does not exclusively identify itself as a religious movement.⁶⁴

Overall, it can be said that the ideology of the AKP includes two aspects. Firstly, conservative democracy, which is the party's ideology that combines conservative values with principles of liberal democracy. Secondly, the AKP introduces and commits to maintaining secularism as the identity of the Turkish state. However, the secularism believed in by the AKP is a more liberal and democratic form, allowing people to practice their religious demands.

Ideological Moderation and Electoral Politics of PKS and AKP

As previously discussed, the transformation of the Tarbiyah movement into a political party has become both an agenda and a significant challenge for the sustainability of the group and its cadres. The traditions developed within the Tarbiyah movement are undoubtedly different from those that emerge in political party life. As a party that emerged from the "Islamist" tradition, the Justice Party (PK) and later the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) face the practical political reality filled with contestation and require strategic, even pragmatic actions. Therefore, accommodationism or even opportunism can be considered characteristic of politics. PKS's image as an Islamic party or political Islam cannot be sepa-

⁶³ Mujani and Ibrahim, "Identiti Adalet Ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) Turki di Persempangan Jalan," 135.

⁶⁴ Bubalo, Fealy, and Mason, *PKS dan Kembarannya*, 89.

rated from the public perception that PKS adheres to a transnational Islamic ideology and advocates for its implementation in the context of society and state politics. PKS is often associated with the Muslim Brotherhood and its ideology, which, in the national context, is considered to be against the religious traditions commonly practiced by most Muslims in Indonesia.

Because of the Islamic ideology embraced by PKS and its accommodative political choices, some scholars identify PKS as a party with “moderate fundamentalism” ideology.⁶⁵ Firman Noor describes PKS’s characteristics in this way after observing two conflicting forces within PKS, namely fundamentalism and moderation.⁶⁶ Firman Noor explains that fundamentalism, which acknowledges diversity in its practices, is not always extreme or radical. This differs from the common perception that Islamic fundamentalism tends to be absolutist and monolithic. The “moderate Islamic fundamentalism” he advocates is a reflection of the political thought of the PKS. This perspective sheds light on a new perspective in the analysis of Islam and politics in contemporary Indonesia, often colored by the spirit of fundamentalism and radicalism. Fundamentalism is defined as a belief that Islam is a perfect and comprehensive doctrine, where the Quran and Sunnah are the foundations for a final and complete Islamic law. Firman Noor notes that PKS is clearly a fundamentalist group living in urban areas but remains distinct from other modernist Islamic groups such as Muhammadiyah, Persis, and others. However, upon examining various political perspectives and practices as one of the parties competing in Indonesia’s elections, PKS, while remaining faithful to its fundamentalist Islamic views, also demonstrates moderate views in various aspects. Firman believes that this perspective sets PKS apart from other fundamentalist groups, especially those on the hard and radical lines like the Islamic Defender Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI) and Laskar Jihad.⁶⁷

Although they still fully believe in Islamic values, moderate fundamentalists tend to agree with democracy, as with democracy

⁶⁵ Firman Noor, “Moderate Islamic Fundamentalism: Understanding the Political Thinking of The Partai Keadilan Sejahtera,” *Studia Islamika* 14, no. 3 (2007): 447.

⁶⁶ Zuly Qodir, *HTI dan PKS Menuai Kritik: Perilaku Gerakan Islam Politik Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Jusuf Kalla School of Government, 2013), 135.

⁶⁷ Noor, “Moderate Islamic Fundamentalism,” 447.

they can exist and provide space for a popular government based on Islamic values. Fourth, moderate fundamentalists believe that the spiritual development of society can occur gradually towards an ideal social order. PKS's moderate views are evident in various aspects, such as the relationship between religion and the state, the implementation of Islamic law, the Islamic state, and democracy. PKS tends to agree with the Pancasila state ideology and the concept of a nation-state, but not necessarily believing that such state ideology and the current form of nation-state are final. Its unique perspective on these issues sets PKS apart from traditionalist, modernist, and radical fundamentalist Islamic movements. Although it employs more moderate approaches and perspectives in its political ideology, PKS still falls under fundamentalist Islam, not only because it has militant followers but also because of its steadfastness in adhering to and applying the basic ideology, assumptions, and main goals of Islamic fundamentalism as a whole. Finally, PKS remains open to various possibilities: becoming more moderate and accommodating or more radical. The future of PKS will depend greatly on the extent to which its elites can maintain their moderate stance amidst the tendency for internal factionalism common in political parties, and how conducive the national political climate is to diverse political views.⁶⁸

In choosing to convey its message in a religion-neutral manner, PKS does not imply that the message has departed from its objectives. On the contrary, it asserts that it is too early to focus on Sharia issues because most voters have a poor understanding of the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood and PKS does not want to risk being labeled sectarian. PKS also learned from Turkey's AKP, which it views as the only party with Islamic roots to win elections and gain widespread legitimacy lawfully.⁶⁹

In terms of moderation, PKS is hindered by two factors. First, PKS is both a social movement and a political party. This movement is ideologically pure with the primary goal of teaching Muslims about Islam and enhancing individual and familial piety, as well as community and societal righteousness from the grassroots up. The party seeks to expand its support base to become a major

⁶⁸ Ibid., 448.

⁶⁹ Nadirsyah Hosen, "Religion And Indonesian Constitution: A Recent Debate," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2005): 663.

party and often requires strategic compromises, such as decisions to portray the party as open or to remain silent on Sharia. Since its inception, the elites have gradually exerted moderate influence over the movement, promoting pragmatism to reach voters from non-Tarbiyah backgrounds. Second, PKS has its peculiarities, viewing compromise as the only mechanism to gain power, and its purists believe that the party has compromised too much on its core ideological values to gain power. The majority of supporters fall somewhere between these two positions.⁷⁰

The process of rebranding PKS from a conservative party to a centrist party is no easy task. Opening the doors to nationalists and non-Muslims poses two major challenges. First, PKS must convince traditional fanatic voters that the rebranding will not change the party's Islamic commitment. This challenge must be delicately addressed because a misstep could result in PKS losing many of its loyal voters instead of gaining additional support. Second, as an electoral party, PKS faces the challenge of convincing nationalist and non-Muslim voters that being an open party is not just rhetoric or mere lip service. If these two challenges are not met, PKS risks its worst-case scenario: losing support from its traditional base and failing to recruit new supporters.⁷¹

The rise of the AKP to power in Turkey has sparked heated debates among academics and policymakers. Some liberal-oriented writers praise the AKP as a turning point in Turkey's history, where a group of politicians rooted in Islam could form a political party styled after "Christian-democratic" parties, ultimately ending the tug-of-war between Islamists and secularists and filling the gap in the center-right political spectrum in Turkey. Scholars also argue that the reformist factions, led by Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, will lead Turkey on a path that will dismantle the old state and bring socioeconomic and political progress. Other scholars take a more cautious view, warning against quick judgments about the AKP's impact on Turkey's socioeconomic and political future and urging attention to the roots of Islamic party leadership and the potential hidden Islamic agenda.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid., 665.

⁷¹ Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS*, 249-250.

⁷² Birol A. Yesilada, "The Future of Erdogan and the AKP," *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016): 19-30.

In many debates about the AKP, the issue of democratization is formulated around the tension between democracy and Islam. Even those optimistic about the compatibility of Islam and democracy tend to praise the AKP because its leadership has produced a version of conservative democracy as if this were the only game achievable in a Muslim city. It is generally underestimated that the conservative democratic framework is not solely maintained because of the ideological mindset of conservative elites. Such framing makes it easier to control the distribution of resources and serve the interests of new rival elites determined to build their economic, political, and cultural networks. No political party in Turkey so far has acted to dismantle the state's vast powers in creating and nurturing new wealth while implicitly or explicitly threatening old wealth to buy their loyalty.⁷³

The issue is largely related to the limitations of religious nationalism in addressing daunting identity issues. There is difficulty in labeling democratization in Turkey: "too secular for Islamists, too Sunni for Alevis, and too Turkish for Kurds."⁷⁴ The AKP has significantly moderated the "overly secular characteristics" by promoting religious freedom. In the context of religious freedom, Turkey is still perceived as too Sunni for Alevi groups, alongside the fact that the AKP still hesitates to fully resolve the Kurdish issue. The unresolved Kurdish issue is due to the continued strength of conservative democrat groups adhering to religious nationalism. AKP figures have shown success in marginalizing ethnocentric nationalism from the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*).⁷⁵

Conclusion

The PKS represents the Islamist force in politics and governance. As a metamorphosis of the PK, learning from the political experience of not passing the parliamentary threshold, the PKS underwent ideological and political reorientation, including electoral strategies. In the early stages of its formation, this party had a

⁷³ Yuksel Taskin, "Hegemonizing Conservative Democracy and the Problems of Democratization in Turkey: Conservatism Without Democrats?" *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 2 (2013): 293.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 299.

strong orientation towards Islamic ideology. Post-New Order era, party politics allowed parties to be based on specific religions or develop religious ideological aspirations.

In response to Indonesia's political composition, which did not initially provide opportunities for political Islam, the PKS reformulated policies to be more open or inclusive, and moderated aspects of the issues it developed and advocated for. As mentioned earlier, in the PKS National Conference in Bali, the PKS declared itself as an open party. Regardless of whether the statement as an open party is a strategy to cover up its Islamist or political Islamic agenda, it is evident that the PKS has increased electoral appeal. This is evident from the increase in votes in general elections starting from 2014 (description of PKS's national vote acquisition data). The PKS's political flexibility is relatively high because it is open to coalitions with nationalist parties both at the national level for presidential elections and at the regional level for gubernatorial or mayoral elections. Competition for Muslim votes is inevitable among Islamic parties or those based on Islamic mass organizations. Muslim votes are also targeted by nationalist parties. Therefore, the Islamist votes of the PKS have never exceeded 7 percent. The issues raised by the PKS in every election for electoral purposes do not always reflect Islamist ideological issues, which tend to be formalistic and symbolic.

The PKS's involvement in international political issues such as the Palestinian case is one of the party's strategies to maintain the loyalty of its traditional constituents and Muslim voters in general. Although it does not have historical and political ties with the AKP, the PKS has similarities in certain aspects such as its moderation and inclusion strategies. The political problems of the AKP can be said to be more complex due to Turkey's historical factors, Middle East geopolitics, domestic ethnic relations (Kurdish issues), and relations with the European Union. As an Islamist party that has won elections and brought its leader to the presidency, the AKP faces opposition parties critical of the Turkish government's policies under the AKP.

PKS often builds solidarity actions for international issues involving the Muslim community, even though the political views of Muslims in Indonesia on international issues are not always the same. Meanwhile, the AKP and its government, geographically and

geopolitically, are closer to the locus of international political issues in the region. The success of the AKP in electoral politics and governance implies the strengthening of Islamism combined with democracy and recognition of a passive form of secularism, rather than assertive secularism as in the pre-2000s era. The concept and practice of conservative democracy adopted by the AKP can be called an accommodationist strategy towards the complexity of the elements shaping the political Islam identity of the AKP.

The moderation and inclusion strategies by the PKS and AKP have political implications both internally and externally. The choice to open up as an open party after being previously bound by strict Islamism can create internal dynamics such as friction and result in division. Factions emerge that still want to maintain the Islamic ideology formulated at its inception and refuse to become an open party, let alone accept party membership from non-Muslims. There are also factions that tend to be progressive and inclusive, pushing the party to recruit cadres from diverse segments of society in terms of their religious backgrounds.

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