

RESEARCH PAPER

The Resilience of the Moral Discourse of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) Amidst the Dominance of Transactional Politics in the Selayar Islands, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Local political contests in Indonesia are often influenced by political compromises and oligarchic intervention, especially when political campaign costs increase, forcing parties to rely on material resources concentrated among certain elites. However, this dynamic in the local politics of the islands has been understudied. This study examines the resilience of the moral discourse marketing of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in the political market of the Selayar Islands, amidst the dominance of the transactional political power of the oligarchy in the 2024 Legislative Elections. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using a thematic approach. The findings show that the resilience of PKS in marketing moral discourse was able to compete with transactional political logic in the Selayar Islands in the 2024 Legislative Elections. In maintaining its electoral existence, PKS consistently and repeatedly articulates, produces, and distributes moral messages and social activities, thereby strengthening its alternative political identity in surviving and adapting amidst the dominance of transactional political practices. This study enriches the literature on politics and government, particularly the study of political party resilience, by emphasizing the role of non-material resources in political marketing in the islands.

Keywords: *Local Elections in Peripheral Islands of Indonesia; Local Oligarchy; Political Commodities; Political Parties; Political Resilience*

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Introduction

Political parties occupy a strategic position as institutions that have the privilege of nominating political leaders through the country's constitutional mechanisms (Corduener, 2020; Sabrina & Inder, 2024). The presence of political parties symbolizes the acceptance of democratic political practices in electoral contests (Kristiyanto et al., 2023). However, in the dynamics of democracy in Indonesia, the political consequence for parties is the dominance of political oligarchy (Fionna & Tomsa, 2020; Taufik et al., 2023; Warburton, 2024). This oligarchy is characterized by the centralized ownership of economic and political resources by certain elites (Hermawan, 2024; Winters, 2011).

In this context, oligarchs can control the media, become political financiers, and even facilitate political compromises and political appointments

(Asrinaldi & Yusoff, 2023; Mietzner, 2025). In fact, they have taken control of party power structures (Fionna & Tomsa, 2020; Tambunan, 2023; Taufik et al., 2023). The impact of this oligarchic domination includes political parties being used merely as instruments for consolidating oligarchic power, candidate recruitment emphasizing economic capacity over political integrity, and political parties prioritizing coalitions based on access to resources rather than ideological affinity (Berenschot, 2015; Tambunan, 2023).

In the context of local politics, this oligarchy originates from influential local figures in electoral political competition (Mazepus et al., 2021). The existence of such oligarchies has a direct impact on the direction of the formal internal and external agendas of political parties. Jainuri & Solahudin (2017) show how oligarchies have undermined the

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internal structure of the National Mandate Party (PAN) in the city of Malang, which have directly obscured recruitment procedures and eliminated internal rivals. Sardini (2019) even notes that local oligarchies can control election organizers and the entire political process in local political contests in the Jayapura region of Indonesia.

The oligarchy survives in local politics because of the strong appeal of money politics among voters (Habibie et al., 2021). Money politics is perceived by some voters as providing direct benefits that are most tangible and immediately felt (Regif & Pribadi, 2024). This is because economic limitations and low trust in political parties have made some voters increasingly transactional (Muhtadi, 2019). This condition benefits oligarchs who have large economic resources to convert financial capital into electoral support.

The dominance of local oligarchies encourages the resilience of political parties, which in turn leads to their increased involvement with oligarchies. Azizah et al. (2021) show how the United Development Party (PPP) seeks to maintain political support through strategies of bureaucratic mobilization, patronage, and even pesantren dynasties operating within the oligarchic structure in Jombang. Similarly, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), the Functional Groups (Golkar), the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), the People's Conscience Party (Hanura), and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) supported candidates with dynastic potential in the city of Batu (Adzmy & Disyacitta, 2018). However, PKS in urban areas still relies on ideology (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2024). In West Sumatra, PKS operates ideologically, relying on the values of social justice, political Islam, and religious-cultural symbols (Mulyawan et al., 2025).

In political contests in island regions, especially peripheral islands, oligarchy and centralized power tend to emerge due to patron-client relationships, the personalization of power, social intimacy within communities, political actors who know each other, and a lack of political alternatives (Veenendaal, 2018). The conditions of these peripheral regions can influence how political parties adapt their political discourse, symbols, or narratives in order to expand and maintain their electoral support (Pascual, 2023).

However, the resilience of parties in the context of local archipelagos, particularly how parties utilize moral discourse as a strategic resource to maintain electoral support from oligarchic domination, has been understudied. Unlike previous studies that emphasize party survival strategies under oligarchic domination, this study introduces moral discourse as a political commodity that facilitates party resilience in the context of peripheral islands.

This study examines the resilience of PKS's moral discourse marketing in the 2024 Legislative Elections in the Selayar Islands, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The Selayar Islands are the only archipelagic regency whose entire territory is separated from the mainland of South Sulawesi Province (Saehu et al., 2024). This location can be categorized as a "marginal," "isolated," or "peripheral" area, both geographically and in terms of political construction (Kelman, 2023; McKay et al., 2024). This peripheral condition has the potential to become an area dominated by local elites, clientelism, and patronage (Tomsa, 2015; Tsagkroni & Veenendaal, 2024).

The Selayar Islands have become a habitat for oligarchs, particularly those from the Berlian political family. This political family dominates the local political arena in the Selayar Islands, supported by its economic resources and socio-political networks. In addition, the oligarchy has influenced political party recruitment, marked by the spread of family members within the internal structures of a number of parties, such as Golkar, PAN, and PDI-P (Bakar et al., 2025). In fact, in the 2024 Legislative Elections, Golkar became the political party with the most seats, 9 seats, followed by PAN and PKS with 4 seats each (Alief, 2024).

According to data from the General Election Commission (KPU) of Selayar Islands Regency in 2024, Golkar also dominated all electoral districts with a total of 25,943 votes, while PAN came in second with 10,479 votes. Meanwhile, PKS ranked below PAN in terms of votes, with 8,629 votes. PDIP received 5,265 votes. This situation demonstrates PKS's competitiveness as an ideological party in the context of local politics in the Islands.

Table 1. Number of Votes for Political Parties in the 2024 Legislative Elections

Party Name	Electoral District					Total votes
	Selayar Islands 1	Selayar Islands 2	Selayar Islands 3	Selayar Islands 4	Selayar Islands 5	
GOLKAR	4.149	6.788	2.879	5.394	6.733	25.943
PAN	629	3.950	629	2.415	2856	10.479

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PKS	2.233	1.438	827	2.582	1.549	8.629
PDIP	1.748	1.015	66	1.585	851	5.265

Source: Compiled from data of the Selayar Islands KPU.

Table 1 illustrates how PKS was able to survive amid political parties affiliated with oligarchies. In this competitive structure, PKS was able to obtain the third highest number of votes and the second highest number of seats in the Selayar Islands Regional Representative Council. This phenomenon indicates PKS's capacity to survive by adapting the political messages it produces, constructs, and distributes into moral values. These moral values function as non-material resources in PKS's political marketing in an electoral arena that is in line with the geographical characteristics and voters.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to analyze how PKS markets moral discourse as a political commodity in an effort to influence voter preferences in the 2024 Legislative Elections in Selayar Islands Regency. This article seeks to explain how PKS's strategy maintains its relatively competitive electoral position without relying on the economic power of the oligarchy, while offering an alternative reading of moral-based political marketing strategies in the context of local island politics.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach emphasizes the exploration and understanding of meanings as informed by individuals or groups regarding a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A case study refers to a method that seeks to investigate phenomena or events in real-life conditions in depth (Yin, 2018). This research approach and design enable an exploration of how PKS markets moral discourse amid the dominance of transactional politics in the local political arena of the Selayar Islands.

The research was conducted within the Regional Executive Board (DPD) of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Selayar Islands Regency. This location was chosen because the region encompasses both mainland and islands, with an area of 10,369 km² (Jusdi et al., 2022). Based on data from the Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Kepulauan Selayar (2025), there are 6 sub-districts on the main island and 5 sub-districts outside the main island. The main island can only be reached by boat. The informants for this study comprised key informants from the DPD PKS Selayar Islands, who were selected through purposive sampling with an emphasis on the principle of information-rich cases,

which considers the informants' ability to provide in-depth information about the phenomenon being studied (Benoot et al., 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The selected informants were PKS administrators and legislative candidates who had knowledge of PKS's political marketing strategies.

The names of the informants in this study have been anonymized as RU, MA, BD, ES, and AR to protect their identities. These informants were selected because they played a direct role in the planning and implementation of the PKS political marketing strategy in the Selayar Islands in the 2024 Legislative Elections, so they were considered capable of providing in-depth information in accordance with the concept of information-rich cases, which was emphasized in the purposive selection of informants. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. The data collection process took place from April 12 to August 19, 2025, and was conducted face-to-face. The data were then analyzed using a thematic approach to identify, analyze, and report themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis began with transcribing audio recordings of interviews stored on mobile phones into text. Data coding was then carried out to identify themes relevant to the phenomenon under study. These themes were grouped based on their similarities to produce main themes describing the obstacles and opportunities for PKS political mobilization in the 2024 elections. Finally, the data were interpreted through theory. To maintain data validity, the researcher conducted data or source triangulation, which involves checking and comparing information from various data sources (Denzin, 1978).

Results and Discussion

Local Political Context and the Position of the Selayar Islands PKS within Electoral Competition

The Selayar Islands have fragmented geographical characteristics that require significant material capital to reach voters, especially in terms of campaign logistics costs. These conditions encourages the development of money politics in electoral contests. An informant revealed that "there is also money politics on the island, which has even destroyed what we have built" (MA, interview, April 12, 2025). The development of money politics can create space for oligarchs to become directly involved in the political arena by utilizing their

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economic resources (Berenschot, 2018; Taufik et al., 2023).

Political parties that are not supported by significant economic resources tend to encounter structural obstacles in maintaining their electoral competitiveness (Chandranegara & Cahyawati, 2023; Mutawalli et al., 2023; Schoeman, 2021). However, financial limitations do not completely close the electoral space for survival; parties can utilize non-material resources such as values, ideology, and political symbols (Carlin, 2019; Wieringa & Meijers, 2022). In this context, non-material resources that embody moral values are utilized by parties in shaping political interactions between party candidates and voters (Alim et al., 2024).

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) has limited economic resources within the transactional political structure in the Selayar Islands. As one informant stated, “PKS has minimal financial resources because there is no such thing as fraud, unlike other parties” (RU, interview, April 20, 2025). This condition was also conveyed by one of the informants who stated that “PKS has no money, so if we want to use money, we will probably lose to other parties” (MA, interview, April 12, 2025).

These financial limitations have prompted the party to develop a resilience strategy that does not rely solely on economic resources. This situation has become an important backdrop for the emergence of PKS's value-based political marketing strategy as a political commodity to maintain its presence in the Regional Representative Council and increase electoral support in the 2024 Legislative Elections.

Articulation of Moral Messages in the Political Marketing Strategy of PKS within the Selayar Islands

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) maneuvers within a transactional political structure by strengthening its political marketing strategy, which focuses on articulating moral values in its political messages to voters within Selayar Islands Regency ahead of the 2024 legislative elections. Moral values such as honesty and social concern are consistently constructed as the identity of PKS that distinguishes it from other parties in the Selayar Islands. These moral messages are not only ethical narratives, but also instruments for building emotional closeness and voter trust (Husson & Palma, 2025; Larrosa-Fuentes, 2022).

Before PKS candidates deliver their political messages to the public, the party instills the value of honesty in order to maintain voters' trust in PKS. As one informant stated, “Legislative candidates must convey their vision and mission to the public, but they should not make promises because if they are

not fulfilled, they will be seen as traitors who did not keep their promises” (MA, interview, July 21, 2025). This is because voters in the Selayar Islands know that the DPRD's role is not to execute political policies. This was revealed by one informant who said, “The people of Selayar know that we are not the decision-makers” (ES, interview, July 22, 2025).

In this context, one indicator of declining voter turnout occurs when political parties fail to fulfill their campaign promises, as was the case in Nigeria (Aliyu et al., 2020). Thus, voters' political preferences can be shaped by their perceptions of the moral integrity of candidates, where honesty is perceived as a credible intrinsic attribute, not just the result of political rhetoric (Alhaimer, 2023; Griebeler & Silva, 2020).

In addition to honesty, PKS's social concern is also a moral value that is articulated through various forms of social services in the Selayar Islands. One form of service was revealed by an informant who stated that “when a disaster occurs, PKS legislative members donate a percentage of their salaries to social assistance, and members who are doctors also create social programs for health” (AR, interview, July 24, 2025). Political parties can frame social assistance as a form of moral responsibility toward society, especially when the state is perceived as not being fully present (Hallink & Siachiwena, 2023; Pasička, 2022). This type of party social assistance emphasizes the moral value of solidarity, which demonstrates concern for vulnerable communities (Thomas, 2023).

In the electoral context, PKS's social services also influence voters' perceptions. As one informant stated, “PKS's concern for Palestine and disasters has touched the hearts of the people of Selayar” (RU, interview, April 20, 2025). This is reinforced by another informant's statement that “people whose social needs are met will join forces in the elections, because they think what's the point of receiving money when there are PKS friends who always help” (RU, interview, April 12, 2025). These statements demonstrate a trend in the context of local island politics, where moral-based social assistance practices weaken the appeal of money politics in shaping voter preferences. Nevertheless, the power of money politics generally still dominates the political contestation arena (Mutawalli et al., 2023; Nwozor et al., 2021).

The marketing of PKS's moral messages is not conveyed through rigid political narratives, but is carried out adaptively in accordance with the character of the community and the regional context. As stated by an informant, “each electoral district is different, we have to look at the natural conditions, the potential, where we are talking, and also look at the character of the community” (AR, interview dated July 24, 2025). In this context, political issues

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or messages will be effectively marketed in the political arena when they are relevant to voters (Bukari et al., 2022; Lees-Marshment, 2001).

The PKS's political message in the Selayar Islands is flexible; the party conveys a political message that does not explicitly call for voting for a particular candidate. However, the political message is more about raising awareness of the importance of elections as a collective means of producing quality leaders. This is reinforced by the informant's statement that "how we encourage everyone to go to the polling stations together to make the legislative elections a success, so that quality leaders can be born, who can then become good council members" (MA, interview, July 21, 2025). The flexibility of these political messages is a strategy of marketing messages persuasively based on market intelligence (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Thau, 2024).

Overall, PKS's moral-based political marketing strategy ahead of the 2024 legislative elections is not merely an electoral tool, but also shapes voters' perceptions of ideal political practices in the Selayar Islands. Consistently articulated, adaptive, and contextual moral messages enable PKS to instill alternative political meanings amid the dominance of transactional practices. This condition provides an entry point for understanding how PKS's moral messages operate as political discourse to secure acceptance and strategic positioning in the electoral contest in the Selayar Islands.

The Production and Distribution of Moral Discourse as a Political Resource for PKS in the Selayar Islands

The articulation of moral messages in PKS's political marketing strategy not only shapes short-term electoral support, but also functions as a mechanism for producing long-term political meaning as a political resource in the electoral arena within the Selayar Islands. Informants emphasized that "we don't just meet with the community during the campaign, but throughout the five years" (AR, interview, July 24, 2025). The connections formed through continuous presence allow moral messages to be perceived not as campaign rhetoric, but as part of everyday political practice (Bos & Minihold, 2022; Brisbane et al., 2023). In this context, the party's continuous presence creates long-term trust among the electorate (Bukari et al., 2022).

In this context, the meaning of political messages is never predetermined, but rather constructed through the practice of political articulation (Jobson, 2024; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). PKS's moral messages are produced through internal guidance given to cadres, supporters, and legislative candidates who will contest the elections. As stated by an informant, "there is training by inviting supporters, cadres, and legislative candidates to religious lectures, so they understand PKS" (BD,

interview, August 18, 2025). This is reinforced by another informant's statement that "PKS is an open party, but we want everyone to have the same perception of the party, so there is an agreement that those who join must participate in the party's training or cadre development" (RU, interview, August 19, 2025).

Internal coaching is an effort to build a common understanding of the political message to be conveyed, while also preparing candidates to attain ideological readiness in line with the party's direction (Bladh, 2022; Fisher et al., 2024; Kristiyanto et al., 2023). Through internal coaching, political parties instill moral values that form the basis for candidates' interactions with voters (Andersson & Larue, 2025). These moral values in political messages are strategically constructed through the management of moral emotions before political messages are communicated to the public sphere (Klinger et al., 2023; Metz, 2024; Szabó & Kiss, 2023).

In this context, the political message communicated to the public is a form of moral discourse distribution carried out repeatedly by PKS through direct interaction between cadres, legislative candidates, and voters in the Selayar Islands. The delivery of political messages is not always conducted through formal political channels, but through various channels such as preaching, daily communication, social activities, social media, and personal relationships with voters that are produced on an ongoing basis.

The distribution of PKS political messages through da'wah channels is carried out continuously by utilizing the communication skills of cadres and candidates. One informant emphasized that "every day that is important in Islam, such as Friday, Eid al-Fitri, and Eid al-Adha, PKS gives sermons everywhere" (ES, interview, July 21, 2025). In fact, according to another informant, "the lower classes are happy and interested in PKS's sermons" (BD, interview, August 18, 2025). The political messages of PKS conveyed through these sermons are seen as increasing the number of members and electoral support (A'isyah & Lessy, 2022; Pamungkas et al., 2020).

In addition to political preaching channels, PKS also utilizes the dissemination of political messages through everyday communication channels. The political messages communicated are distributed using language that is easily understood by the community. As stated by one informant, "we tell PKS candidates and cadres that when meeting with the community, they should not use high-level language, but rather language that is easy for them to understand" (MA, interview, July 2025). In this context, party and voter communication, if it is able to adapt the delivery of political messages to the

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everyday understanding capacity of voters, has the potential to be more easily accepted than using narratives that are technocratic or strategic in nature (Haselmayer et al., 2020; Russmann, 2021).

PKS's political messages are also distributed through social activities to influence voter preferences, as confirmed by one of the informants in the previous section: "PKS's concern for Palestine and disasters has touched the people of Selayar" (RU, interview, April 20, 2025). In this context, social activities are a channel for conveying political messages that are communicated through social actions, not political rhetoric (Ambrosini, 2024; Milan, 2019). The continuous social activities carried out by political parties allow them to be perceived as part of the daily social life of the community, not merely seasonal electoral actors (Haute & Kernalegenn, 2021; Postell, 2025).

In addition to preaching, daily communication, and social activities, PKS also utilizes personal relationships to distribute political messages in the Selayar Islands. PKS's personal relationships with the community have been established for a long time, not just during the legislative elections. In fact, according to one informant, "PKS is already well-known to the community, because from the party officials to the candidates, their relationships with the community are good" (ES, interview, July 22, 2025). A party that is close to the community in personal relationships can break down the barriers between actors and the community, so that communication is more fluid, open, and less defensive (Albertazzi & Kessel, 2024; Lucas et al., 2022). This is evident from the informant's statement, "the community always complain about their situation" (ES, interview, July 22, 2025). This statement illustrates the personal closeness between PKS and its voters.

In this context, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) not only uses conventional channels, but also digital channels such as Facebook to distribute political messages widely and quickly, without requiring large financial resources. One informant stated that "the use of Facebook has had a significant effect on PKS in mainland or city constituencies" (RU, interview, April 20, 2025). Social media is used by the party as an alternative channel in political marketing amid the party's financial limitations (Bär et al., 2025; Sriyai & Kwanyou, 2025).

The effectiveness of social media as a channel for distributing political messages can influence the market in the political contestation arena if packaged according to the target, so that the visibility of the message quickly shapes the political perceptions of social media users who are the target constituents (Bär et al., 2025; Marquart et al., 2022). The significant influence of PKS's use of Facebook

shows the party's capacity to distribute political messages through social media, that are packaged according to the target market in the local political arena of the Selayar Islands.

Thus, the production and distribution of PKS moral discourse in the Selayar Islands through various channels of moral value marketing shows that political messages do not operate individually, but accumulate through repetitive and long-term patterns. The diversity of political message distribution channels shows that the party does not rely on a single channel for moral messages, but forms a mutually reinforcing political marketing ecosystem. The combination of internal coaching, preaching, daily communication, social activities, personal relationships, and social media allows PKS's political messages to become non-material resources in the local political arena of the Selayar Islands ahead of the 2024 Legislative Elections, which can shape the political preferences and orientations of the electorate, deep trust in the party, and even alternative political identities.

The Formation of PKS's Alternative Political Identity in the Selayar Islands

The formation of PKS's alternative political identity in the Selayar Islands did not spontaneously emerge in the local political arena during the 2024 legislative elections, but rather through a process of political meaning construction shaped through the articulation of political messages, social relations, and everyday political experiences. This alternative political identity is understood as a process in which the values, perceptions, and political orientations of voters are constructed through discursive relationships that shape specific political subjects (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Schneider, 2025; Zamora & Santarelli, 2021).

This alternative political identity was formed through the articulation of PKS's political messages that were produced and distributed through political marketing strategies. As described in the previous sections, PKS is able to articulate moral messages in a consistent, adaptive, and contextual manner, which are then distributed through various political marketing channels to instill alternative political meanings amid the dominance of transactional practices. This process positions PKS's moral messages as non-material resources that serve as the basis for the formation of alternative political identities in the Selayar Islands.

In forming this identity, PKS distinguishes itself from other parties that are perceived as only appearing seasonally ahead of elections. As one informant stated, "PKS is indeed close to the community, unlike other parties that only come when they need something" (ES, interview, July 22, 2025). Additionally, according to another informant, "PKS's religious study sessions and social activities

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are ongoing, unlike other parties that are less visible” (BD, interview, August 18, 2025). In this context, negative expressions towards opposing parties constitute a means of articulating identity, as an attempt at political differentiation from other parties (Areal, 2022; Røed et al., 2025). Such strategies serve to consolidate the electoral support base by articulating voter disappointment into a flexible and contextual political narrative (Cohen, 2020; Kazlauskaitė & Salmela, 2022).

The disappointment of the people of the Selayar Islands is evident in their diverse aspirations, which are generally related to the economy, employment, and infrastructure, and which are consistently voiced to PKS candidates. This condition was expressed by one informant who said, “The biggest problems we see are mainly employment, infrastructure, and the economy” (RU, interview, August 19, 2025). These diverse aspirations are then articulated by political parties as efforts to connect various complaints in a political narrative to form the basis of a common struggle in the political arena (Sablin, 2023).

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) responded to these aspirations by positioning itself as part of the suffering of the people of the Selayar Islands over various issues that constituted their aspirations. One informant emphasized that “believers are like one body; when one part hurts, the whole body feels the pain, and that is what PKS realizes” (RU, interview, April 20, 2025). In fact, according to one informant, “the presence of PKS has helped many people through services that are not always in the form of money” (BD, interview, August 18, 2025). This position of PKS is in line with the findings in the previous section, which show the party's commitment to social and humanitarian programs that are carried out continuously, thereby strengthening its identification as a party that is present, caring, and integrated with the people of the Selayar Islands.

In this context, social activities that consistently articulate moral values and ideological commitments in everyday community practices can

shape political identity through repeated and meaningful social experiences (Hult, 2023; Pedrini, 2018). In fact, the social actions of political parties that are continuously operated as mechanisms for forming alternative political identities can offer political experiences that differ from the electoral and transactional logic that dominates (Chouhy, 2022; Kaul & Kannangara, 2023). In the context of PKS, according to an informant, “the party is liked by educated people from the party's side, and its activities are liked by the lower classes, so that when elections come around, it is not so difficult” (BD, interview, August 18, 2025). This statement reinforces the finding that PKS's alternative political identity is formed through a combination of moral values, social activities, and relational closeness that distinguishes it from transactional political practices in the Selayar Islands.

The Political Resilience of PKS Amidst Transactional Politics in the Selayar Islands

Findings in previous sections show PKS's strategy in maintaining its electoral position without relying on the economic resources of the oligarchy amid transactional political dominance in the Selayar Islands. The ability of political parties to articulate, produce, and distribute moral messages, as well as the formation of alternative political identities, serve as the primary basis for PKS's resilience in marketing moral discourse in the Selayar Islands. In this context, resilience refers to the capacity of political parties to survive and adapt politically by relying on non-material resources (Albertazzi & Kessel, 2024; Carlin, 2019).

The political resilience of the PKS, as reflected in the 2024 legislative elections in the Selayar Islands, is evident not only in the party's ability to maintain its presence in the local parliament, but also in its capacity to adapt in articulating, producing, and distributing moral messages that can unite various local aspirations, thereby forming an alternative political identity. This is evident from the increase in PKS seats in 2024 compared to previous elections in the Selayar Islands, as shown in the following table.

Table 2. Number of PKS Seats in the Regional Representative Council from the 2014–2024 Legislative Elections in the Selayar Islands

Year	PKS seats	PKS Seats in the Regional Representative Council	Total Seats in the Regional Representative Council
2014	3	Second Highest Seats	25 Seats
2019	2	Third Highest Seats	
2024	4	Second Highest Seats	

Source: Compiled from data of the Selayar Islands KPU; Selayar Islands Government website.

Table 2 shows the continued existence of PKS in the Selayar Islands Regional Representative Council from the 2014–2024 legislative elections.

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However, fluctuations in the number of seats won by the party indicate that the local political arena is dynamic and not entirely stable. This condition reflects that the political preferences of the people are not formed naturally, but are continuously organized, sorted, and focused by political actors through the practice of discourse articulation (Tinnevelt, 2020). In this context, political ideas and values continue to be presented prominently in order to remain relevant in public discourse (Laclau, 2015). Therefore, political party ideology does not operate as a rigid and explicit doctrine, but rather through the articulation of political values that frame interests, conflicts, and legitimacy in public discourse (Weiß et al., 2020).

The fluctuation in the number of seats won by the party does not mean that PKS has completely failed in marketing its moral discourse in the Selayar Islands, but rather reflects a shift in the political needs of the electorate. This shift has weakened the party's ability to articulate its moral message, thereby diminishing the moral articulation of PKS that was previously produced and distributed in maintaining its alternative political identity. Alternative political identities in such contexts are never stable, but can always be rearticulated to form new political identities (Gkinopoulos, 2020; Halawi, 2024).

The PKS's consistent moral discourse, which is articulated, produced, and distributed to the public in an adaptive, flexible, and contextual manner, demonstrates the party's resilience in the arena of local political contestation by marketing its non-material appeal in accordance with the conditions of society ahead of the 2024 legislative elections. The implication is that PKS is able to reaffirm its political identity amid the dominance of transactional politics. One informant emphasized that "I was defeated by power, pressure, and material incentives; if it weren't for my voter base, I would not have been elected" (ES, interview, July 21, 2025). This statement shows that the relationship between PKS and its voter base, which is internalized in the form of identity, is not easily shaken by material incentives.

The voter base is formed based on long-standing experiences between the party and the community (Jocker et al., 2025; Klingelhöfer et al., 2025). The voter base is reproduced through political narratives, social activities, and the presence of political parties in the daily lives of the community (Postell, 2025). However, it can survive and even strengthen when parties are able to represent the political needs of their base, but when parties fail to perform this representative function, the voter base will gradually erode and potentially disappear (Aaskoven, 2023). Therefore, PKS legislative candidates never make promises beyond their capacity. The party emphasizes marketing

moral discourse through the distribution of political messages through various channels that are acceptable to the public. According to one informant, "the public can compare our experience in PKS; we don't just meet the public during the campaign, but continuously for five years" (AR, interview, July 25, 2025).

In this context, the resilience of PKS's moral discourse marketing is not a form of resistance that eliminates transactional politics in the Selayar Islands, but rather an effort by the party to survive and adapt amid this dominance. This is because transactional politics is deeply rooted in a society that is oriented towards direct material gain. One informant stated that "people in Selayar like to be bought; whoever buys them, they take" (ES, interview, July 21, 2025). This phenomenon is reinforced by another informant's statement that "verbal, formal, idealistic discussions, but everything can change in society; they usually change their choice in the voting booth because of the money they receive" (AR, interview, July 24, 2025). This condition illustrates that the marketing of non-material political products does not always appeal to voters who have direct material interests (Au, 2025; Bukari et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This study shows that moral discourse marketing is a strategy used by the PKS to maintain its electoral existence, while adapting to the strong dominance of transactional political practices in the local political arena of the Selayar Islands. Through this marketing of moral discourse, political messages and social activities become non-material political resources that are consistently articulated, produced, and distributed in a flexible and contextual manner through various political channels capable of forming relations that differ from transactional logic.

The political relationship between PKS and the community is constructed through the instillation of values of honesty, social concern, and moral alignment in long-term political interactions, thereby strengthening an alternative political identity in the face of competition under the dominance of material resources. In this context, political identity is not understood as an instant and stable preference, but rather as the result of a continuous process of repeated articulation that constructs the perspectives, political orientations, and political affiliations of the community.

These findings confirm that PKS's resilience in the 2024 Legislative Elections in the Selayar Islands was supported by the party's capacity to articulate, produce, and distribute moral values through flexible and contextual marketing of moral discourse, which was converted into non-material

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political resources. PKS's strategy was able to persist amid the dominance of transactional political practices, which cannot be completely eliminated in the local political arena of the Selayar Islands.

Theoretically, this study enriches studies of political party resilience by emphasizing the importance of non-material political resources in political marketing to maintain electoral competitiveness in peripheral regions. Empirically, this study contributes to the literature on island politics and local government by showing that the marketing of non-material political products by parties still has capacity to survive and adapt. Furthermore, future studies are expected to explore how to compare moral discourse marketing strategies between parties in peripheral islands or test the long-term sustainability of alternative political identities in the islands.

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May this research contribute positively and substantively to the development of political science and governance, particularly in relation to the resilience of political party discourse amid the dominance of transactional political practices in peripheral island political arenas such as Selayar Islands Regency, Indonesia.

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