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Ethics and Religion as Standards for Politics and Leadership in 2024 Indonesian Election

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Abstrak

Di dalam pemilihan umum tahun 2024, publik Indonesia bahkan dunia telah dibuat terkejut dengan berbagai pelanggaran etik yang bersifat berat dan mengancam demokrasi negara Indonesia. Meskipun secara konstitusi dan peraturan perundangan yang berlaku tidak terdapat kesalahan yang sah dan meyakinkan akan keputusan yang diambil oleh para pemimpin di republik ini, akan tetapi telah dengan sengaja menghadirkan problem etis di tengah kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara. Beberapa kasus yang dapat diambil secara umum di Indonesia dalam periode pemilihan umum tahun 2024 adalah Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Nomor 90/PUU-XXI/2023 dan keberpihakan pimpinan negara dalam pemilihan presiden dan wakil presiden. Kedua isu tersebut membuat guncang rakyat Indonesia dan dunia internasional. Nilai-nilai demokrasi Indonesia dipertanyakan berdasar pada kesadaran etika dan moral yang hidup di Indonesia. Artikel ini membahas bagaimana kesadaran etik dan moral menjadi sesuatu yang harus dikedepankan dan diurusutamakan dalam standar berpolitik dan memimpin Indonesia. Artikel ini bersifat studi kepustakaan dengan metode deskriptif-analitis dengan sumber dari bacaan yang dipercaya melalui artikel jurnal, surat kabar, berita, putusan hukum, buku, dan bahan bacaan lainnya yang relevan. Penelitian ini memberikan rumusan utama pada krisis etika dan moral dalam penyelenggaraan pemilihan umum tahun 2024. Studi ini membawa pada kesimpulan pada standar etika, moral, dan agama harus dikedepankan dan diurusutamakan dalam sikap berpolitik dan kepemimpinan di Indonesia. Studi ini juga memberikan masukan kepada

semua pemimpin dan calon pemimpin untuk memiliki standar etika, moral dan agama yang ideal dengan budaya demokrasi di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Pemilu 2024, Politik, Pemimpin, Etika Politik, Agama

Abstract

The Indonesian public, and even the world, were shocked by numerous serious ethical violations during the 2024 general elections, threatening Indonesia's democracy. Although constitutionally and in existing laws and regulations, there is no legitimate or convincing error in the decisions taken by the leaders of this republic, they have deliberately created ethical problems in the life of the nation and state. Some cases that can be taken generally in Indonesia during the 2024 general elections are Constitutional Court Decision Number 90/PUU-XXI/2023 and the partisanship of state leaders in the presidential and vice-presidential elections. Both issues have shaken the Indonesian people and the international community. Indonesia's democratic values are being questioned due to the country's lack of ethical and moral awareness. This article discusses how ethical and moral awareness must be prioritized and mainstreamed in the standards of politics and leadership in Indonesia. This article is a literature study employing a descriptive-analytical method, drawing on reliable sources such as journal articles, newspapers, news, legal decisions, books, and other relevant reading materials. This research offers key insights into the ethical and moral challenges of the 2024 general elections. It concludes that ethical, moral, and religious standards must be prioritized and mainstreamed in Indonesia's political attitudes and leadership. It also provides guidance to all leaders and prospective leaders on upholding ethical, moral, and religious standards aligned with Indonesia's democratic culture.

Keywords: 2024 Election, Politics, Leader, Political Ethics, Religion

Introduction

An ethical and moral crisis also occurred in the 2024 general election. The 2024 general election was a democratic celebration for the Indonesian people. This event was a contest to elect representatives of the Indonesian people to hold office and serve in the executive and legislative branches of government. Every citizen with the right to vote was called upon to cast their votes at their respective polling stations (Tempat Pemungutan Suara, TPS). On February 14, 2024, the Indonesian people cast their ballots, casting their hopes for the next five years. These votes must represent their people for the positions of President and Vice President, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), the Regional Representative Council of the Republic of

Indonesia (DPD RI), and the Regional People’s Representative Councils (DPRD) of Provinces, Regencies, and Cities throughout Indonesia (Nurhanisah, 2022). Meanwhile, much later, the elections for executive officials or regional heads—Governor and Deputy Governor, Regent and Deputy Regent, and Mayor and Deputy Mayor—were held on November 27, 2024 (“Portal Publikasi Pemilu Dan Pemilihan,” n.d.).

Unlike previous elections, which received intense global attention, the 2024 Indonesian general election has sparked extraordinary controversy with the inclusion of incumbent President Joko Widodo’s son, Gibran Rakabuming, in the presidential and vice-presidential election (Parandaru, 2023). This began with Constitutional Court Decision No. 90/PUU-XXI/2023 on the minimum requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidacy. This created an anomaly among the Indonesian public, as the then-chief justice was the uncle of the vice-presidential candidate and the brother-in-law of the incumbent president (Mantalean, 2023). This was compounded by various underground movements, clearly ethically carried out by the government, which sided with one of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates (Puspita, 2024). This demonstrates a lack of ethical and moral standards in the continuity of the state, government, and general elections.

The political turmoil described above has created an ethical and moral crisis for the Indonesian nation. The Indonesian people have agreed that Pancasila, as the state ideology, serves as the highest ethical standard for anyone to govern the country. This turmoil has directly tarnished the noble values of Pancasila and undermined the people’s faith. The nation’s leaders, who should be role models for the people in ethical and moral matters, have become individuals who violate the nation’s ethical and moral values (Santoso, 2024; Wahidin & Marasabessy, 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to provide lessons for every Indonesian who recognizes and embraces the ethical and moral values that live within the nation and should guide their every thought, word, and action.

Several studies have examined this issue from various perspectives. Among them is a journal article by M. Miftahul Hidayat, which addresses how dynastic politics and

election fraud have led to nationwide protests across Indonesia (Hidayat, 2024). This research focuses on the Indonesian public's reaction to the political turmoil and does not comprehensively address ethical aspects. Furthermore, a study on the constitutionality of the administrative requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates was published in a journal article by Silverius Tey Seran and Verlyana Risyah. Their study examined how legal norms and Constitutional Court rulings changed the requirement to include experience as a regional head (Seran & Risyah, 2024). This study did not specifically explain how judges' ethics and morals in issuing these decisions affect Indonesian politics. There is also a journal article by Hengky Fernando et al. that analyzes three aspects: the weak commitment of politicians and election organizers, the massive intervention of politicians and election organizers, and the implications of citizens' attitudes toward the legitimacy of the election results (Fernando et al., 2024). This study also does not provide a fundamental critique of the ethical and moral crisis that has occurred or an alternative ethical paradigm. These studies have pointed out how the implementation of the 2024 general election has been ethically tainted and does not follow the principles and rules of the general election itself. However, these studies do not provide a clear description and critique of this matter, nor a paradigm for building a future Indonesian political paradigm.

The question posed in this study is to what extent the decline in ethical and moral values held by state administrators, election organizers, and election participants is influenced by the election process. Furthermore, how the nation's value system, ethics, and morals weigh and dictate what is true. This is crucial to highlight, as the aforementioned study has implications for the ethical and moral crisis in Indonesia. Indonesia's ethical and moral system, based on Pancasila and other noble norms of life, such as religious, legal, and customary norms, must be upheld in the conduct of general elections, particularly the election of the president and vice president. This issue is crucial for measuring the extent to which national leadership can embody national values amid political pragmatism. It also serves as a precedent for the legacy incumbents' leave to

new officials. General elections, specifically the election of the head of state and head of government, simultaneously signify a shift in the political paradigm in national development, as well as other impacts that the nation will feel in the future.

This research will uncover the political upheaval through an ethical and moral analysis grounded in Pancasila and noble religious values. The ethical and moral crisis that occurred is a concern in this research, and it must be explored within the dynamics of national politics. The goal is to re-establish the ethics and morals of state administrators to uphold a dignified Indonesian democracy. The first analysis will be based on religious ethical standards, which are the fundamental and primary foundation of the Indonesian nation. Then, ethical and moral standards and Pancasila, as the foundation and culture of Indonesia, will be discussed to guide and narrate ethical and moral principles within political and governmental systems. Good governance must prioritize the nation's cultural values, consisting of religious, ethical, and moral values, to produce the best leadership at all levels. Leadership that prioritizes these principles will bring Indonesian democracy back to its former glory, in accordance with the mandate of the nation's founding fathers.

Theoretical Framework

As a theoretical overview in analyzing this research, leadership theories proposed by al-Farabi and Mohammad Natsir were used. These two theories were used in the analysis, drawing on al-Farabi's concept, which emphasizes the ideal leader as a prophet or philosopher, possessing a prophetic vision and a source of wisdom from heaven. Meanwhile, Mohammad Natsir's leadership theory emphasizes the integrity of a leader, grounded in the values of honesty and consistency in upholding them.

Integrity is a fundamental principle that every leader must prioritize at any level of government because it serves as the moral foundation for managing power, public policy, and the governance of state organizations. It encompasses life values related to ethics and morals that constitute a person's noble character (Hutahayan, 2020). A leader

with integrity not only adheres to written rules but also internalizes ethical values that go beyond mere administrative compliance, such as honesty, consistency, responsibility, and a commitment to the public interest. Integrity is a key indicator of leadership quality because it influences how leaders determine policy direction, make decisions, manage conflicts of interest, and maintain public trust, the primary social capital for the sustainability of government (Huberts, 2018).

According to Kouzes and Posner, integrity is directly correlated with credibility, organizational stability, and a leader's ability to inspire and mobilize public support (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Therefore, integrity is not merely a matter of morality or personal character, but also a structural factor that determines the quality of democracy and governance. In the Indonesian context, the urgency of integrity is increasingly apparent, given that numerous cases of abuse of authority show that weak leadership integrity can have a far-reaching impact, undermining public trust and disrupting state functions. Therefore, integrity must be understood as a life value that unites ethics, morality, and noble character, serving as a compass that guides leaders in carrying out their mandates fairly, honestly, and responsibly.

In Al-Farabi's concept of leadership, the ideal leader is depicted as a prophet or philosopher, a figure who combines intellectual, moral, and spiritual perfection as a foundation for governing. For al-Farabi, the ideal leader is not merely someone who possesses political power, but rather an individual who attains the highest degree of rational thinking, practical wisdom, and ethical depth, thus enabling him to guide society toward *al-sa'ādah* or perfect happiness (al-Farabi, 2013). Although this leadership model is idealistic and al-Farabi acknowledges that it is challenging to realize perfectly, the concept serves as a normative prototype that can serve as a standard for society in formulating the form of the state and selecting leaders (Mahdi, 2001). This ideal is crucial because it provides direction and moral guidance so that leadership practices do not become trapped in mere political pragmatism.

The leadership concept proposed by Mohammad Natsir places integrity as the primary foundation for a leader, both in political and moral-spiritual contexts (Fitri, 2022). For Natsir, integrity is not merely a personal trait, but a manifestation of Islamic values internalized in political actions and decisions. Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and consistency in truth serve as ethical pillars that shape political integrity and a leadership orientation that combines morality with competence in the exercise of power. Natsir emphasized that leaders must be inseparable from the moral dimension, ensuring a leader's commitment to the principles of truth and avoiding the trap of power pragmatism that sacrifices values (Natsir, 1954). Natsir's assertion that integrity is the heart of leadership makes his thinking both an analytical tool for assessing the quality of contemporary leaders and an ethical guideline for aspiring leaders in a democratic society.

The leadership concepts proposed by al-Farabi and Mohammad Natsir both present a prophetic idealism that places ethics, wisdom, and integrity as the primary foundations of power. Al-Farabi emphasized the importance of leaders possessing clarity of reason and moral wisdom. In contrast, Natsir underlined the need for political integrity grounded in Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and adherence to truth. While both concepts appear ideal and challenging to achieve, they are not unrealistic utopias but rather normative guidelines that provide direction for leaders at various levels to improve their personal qualities and leadership practices. Leaders who can bring these prophetic values to life not only maintain ethical stability within the government but also create a sense of security, social comfort, and prosperity for the people. Therefore, the prophetic idealism in the thought of al-Farabi and Natsir remains relevant as a moral standard and ethical compass, guiding contemporary leadership toward a more just and dignified society.

Method

This research is a literature study using a descriptive-analytical method. Data were collected from credible, high-quality sources, including journal articles, newspapers, news reports, legal decisions, books, and other relevant sources. These include Constitutional Court Decision No. 90/PUU-XXI/2023 and credible media reports regarding President Joko Widodo's partisanship. The data was compiled sequentially and analytically described. The ethical crisis arising from these two issues was then explored, culminating in a climax of moral and ethical tension. This analysis was then elaborated by comparing it with Islamic ethical and moral concepts, the thoughts of prominent figures, and Indonesian values.

The ultimate goal of this research is to encourage, narrate, and campaign to stakeholders, the Indonesian people, intellectuals, and especially leaders and future leaders of the nation, to pay attention to and mainstream ethics, morals, and religion as standards in politics and national leadership. As a leader, you must set a good example for your people, especially in terms of political ethics.

Result And Discussion

Ethical Violations in Constitutional Court Decisions

As mandated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the President and Vice President are elected by political parties or coalitions of political parties for a five-year term and can be re-elected for one further term (Setjen DPR RI, n.d.). Therefore, it is a constitutional obligation to hold such elections. The current series of elections, namely the 2024 General Election, began in mid-2022 and will continue until the inauguration of the president and vice president on October 20, 2024 (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, n.d.). This ultimately led to the election and inauguration of Indonesia's new leaders, President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming.

Although the inauguration of the president and vice president, preceded by the inauguration of legislative members at both the central and regional levels, has raised ethical issues in Indonesian society. The constitution, which is shackled by the wishes of those in power to smooth the way for children to participate in government, presents a seemingly ironic aspect of Indonesian democracy. This was triggered by the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 90/PUU-XXI/2023 concerning the minimum age limit for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The ruling stated that anyone under the age of 40 could run for president and/or vice-presidential candidates with prior experience as a regional head (Konstitusi, 2023, p. 58). This decision then became the basis for the Mayor of Surakarta to run for vice president at the age of 36 at the time (Mantalean, 2023).

Interestingly, the Constitutional Court's ruling presented both concurring and dissenting opinions. The verdict was delivered by two Constitutional Justices, Constitutional Justice Enny Nurbaningsih and Constitutional Justice Daniel Yusmic P. Foekh, with different reasons. Furthermore, dissenting opinions were expressed by Constitutional Justices Wahiduddin Adams, Saldi Isra, Arief Hidayat, and Suhartoyo. The five judges who partially granted the petition were divided into two groups: three judges who partially accepted the petition, with the alternative being a minimum age of 40 years or having served as a regional head. The other two judges dissented, citing different reasons, namely, a minimum age of 40 years or having served as a governor (Konstitusi, 2023, p. 58).

As a manifestation of the ethical violations that occurred in the decision-making process, as stated in the Constitutional Court's decision, there were indications of an ethical violation by one of the Constitutional Court Justices, Constitutional Justice Anwar Usman, who served as Chief Justice. This was clearly stated by the four other Constitutional Justices, who held differing opinions. The interference by the Chief Justice raises ethical concerns and a conflict of interest (Konstitusi, 2023, pp. 87–121). Given the political climate and context at the time of the decision, Indonesian politics was awaiting

the possibility of allowing the son of the incumbent president, who coincidentally had a familial relationship with the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court at the time, to be elected. Therefore, ethical, moral, and conflict of interest issues were unavoidable in the decision-making process, as outlined in the petition for the Constitutional Court's decision, as expressed by the member justices who rejected the petition.

Under existing legal norms, judges, both Supreme Court justices and Constitutional Court justices, are prohibited from participating in cases in which they are directly involved. This involvement can include family ties, business relationships, and so on. The judge's integrity will be questioned regarding the validity of their decisions. Along with this prohibition, a judge is essentially endowed with the right to recusal, namely the right not to participate in trials related to cases related to him (Alamsyah & Darmadi, 2024). Therefore, the Indonesian legal system has protected existing laws and legal products with a noble value system to maintain the integrity of state administrators, in this case, judges at the Constitutional Court. This system also ensures the continuity of the judicial profession, which is entrusted to individuals and trusted by the Indonesian public for its justice and legal certainty.

Dynastic Politics and Political Honesty

On the other hand, following Constitutional Court Decision No. 90/PUU-XXI/2023, the Indonesian President accepted the ruling and supported his son's candidacy in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential elections (Pepnisky, 2024). This served as a directive for presidential aides to their subordinates to select presidential and vice-presidential candidates endorsed by the incumbent president. Such actions are generally permissible for the president or any state official with the political right to campaign and publicly promote their choice. However, the president does not engage in overt campaigning until the campaign period ends. Instead, a covert presidential campaign took place, manifesting in concrete actions at cabinet meetings, in which the president

clearly directed support for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, whose sons were among the candidates.

Indonesia, as the world's third-largest democracy, has also come under scrutiny both domestically and internationally. This is due to the discourse of dynastic politics, which clearly suggests that the incumbent president is pushing his son to be one of the vice-presidential candidates (Aspinall, 2023). Although dynastic politics is defined as politics based on lineage, even a democracy as large as Indonesia can become dynastic if the holder of power, the president, directs support toward a single candidate. Dynastic politics perpetuates power and policies that continue those of the previous administration without evaluation or innovation. On the other hand, dynastic politics raises concerns about the persistence of a feudal culture within the government, with bureaucrats loyal to the oligarchy and unwilling to defend the people's interests. Similarly, human rights values are threatened by numerous policies that violate humanitarian values before the election ("Five Things You Need to Know About Indonesia's 2024 Elections," 2024).

The election organizers, namely the General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum; KPU), along with the Election Supervisory Body (Badan Pengawas Pemilu; Bawaslu), took note of the Constitutional Court's controversial ruling, which immediately changed the regulations for presidential and/or vice-presidential candidates nominated by political parties or coalitions of political parties (Basyari, 2023). This demonstrates a lack of ethical conduct on the part of the election organizers regarding this sudden change in the democratic process. There are moral irregularities and crises facing election organizers and supervisors who do not outright reject the changes. If the Constitutional Court has indeed changed legal norms, election organizers and supervisors should prioritize integrity and the principles of Direct, General, Free, Secret, Honest, and Fair (Langsung, Umum, Bebas, Rahasia, Jujur dan Adil; LUBER-JURDIL) elections ("Kilas Pemilu Tahun 2024," n.d.). Such circumstances demonstrate a systematic ethical and moral crisis in Indonesia's 2024 general elections. Instead of

producing the best leaders at all levels of government, they have led to an unnatural decline in morals and ethics among state officials.

Ethical and Religious Standards in Political Mainstreaming in Indonesia

As a boundary for actions and decision-making, officials and high-ranking state officials must be aware of the ethical, moral, and religious boundaries that exist within society. Officials and state administrators can't act beyond the bounds of their duties, rights, and authority. These boundaries serve as ethical standards, acting as a bulwark against the emergence of bad intentions and even policies that could lead to negative orientations among the people they lead. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize and mainstream them within Indonesian political culture in the state's management and administration. If these standards are in place, state administrators will likely continue to echo and reinforce the narrative that their positions and duties carry consequences accountable not only to the people but also to God Almighty.

To mainstream ethical, moral, and religious standards in Indonesian politics, it is best to start with religious-based political standards. This is important to convey, narrate, and campaign for, given that Indonesia is a culturally rich nation that places religion at the center and is legalized in the constitution. Even the first principle of the Indonesian state ideology, Pancasila, places divine values, meaning religion and belief, within the first principle. Therefore, it is not surprising that this discussion places this study as the first element of Indonesia's political standards (Tanamal & Siagian, 2020).

In Islam, a leader places faith and good deeds in direct proportion. First, the word "*iman*," meaning to believe, refers to complete faith and trust in Allah SWT. Faith, which is always accompanied by the word "*Islam*," is defined as a belief in and trust in Allah SWT as one's Lord, and submission to His commands. Consequently, a believer must be a Muslim (Taimiyah, 2020). When a person's faith and Islam are perfect, then good deeds, meaning behavior or, in government language, policies, must reflect these Islamic values.

The Islamic personality inherent in a Muslim must be evident in their thoughts, actions, and behavior. A leader is someone entrusted by their people to carry out a specific position. In Islam, the word “leader” comes from the word “*ra’i*,” meaning leader, while “*ra’iyah*” means “led.” Linguistically, there is a difference in capacity between the two terms; therefore, when the people have entrusted an individual or group with the responsibility to manage their affairs, that individual or group should provide the best possible service to their people (Fata, 2012).

The role of a leader extends beyond simply overseeing the government and the welfare of their people. It is also crucial for a leader to be a role model for the people they lead. A leader must possess a sense of self while simultaneously (*ex officio*) belonging to the people. A leader must prioritize the noble cultural values of their community, including religious, ethical, and moral values, in every action and policy. A leader cannot act unjustly or arbitrarily toward their people. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize these values. This crisis has taught the Indonesian people a lesson in prioritizing ethical and moral principles. If this trend continues, it will likely be challenging to avoid in the future. The future outlook for Indonesian democracy following the Constitutional Court’s ruling that no revisions to the General Elections Law will significantly affect the 2029 general elections. The possibility of bias among state officials will also emerge in different forms. While national leaders are expected to uphold ethical, moral, and normative values, conflicts of interest can arise. This underpins the importance of ethics and morals in national leadership.

Analysis of Al-Farabi’s Leadership Theory

Several Islamic philosophers and thinkers also set high standards for leaders and potential leaders in governing their people. For example, the theory proposed in al-Farabi’s seminal work, “*Arā ahl al-Madīnah al-Fādhilah*,” states that the best state is led by a prophet or philosopher (al-Farabi, 2013). Al-Farabi’s concept of leadership within the state system places a leader at the center of every policy. He argued that a prophet or

philosopher should be the leader because they possess the *'aql al-mustafad* (intelligible reason) and can connect directly with God. Al-Farabi incorporated metaphysical concepts to implement Islamic belief. God will always guide prophets and philosophers on the right path through revelation or inspiration to His chosen servants (Haq, 2014). It is said that a prophet must be a leader because a prophet possesses a pure intellect (*'aql hads*), which has been pure, pure, and untainted since eternity. A prophet will guide his people on the right path in accordance with God's will. Philosophers, on the other hand, do not directly receive revelation as a basis for their thinking. Instead, they cultivate their thoughts and feelings through the continuous refinement of their empirical experiences, enabling them to make the best decisions for their followers (Zar, 2014). Ultimately, philosophers possess wisdom, a gift similar to that of prophets, in another form of inspiration, which allows them to connect directly with God.

As with the religious values mentioned above, it is also essential to prioritize and mainstream ethical and moral values. Discussions of ethics and morals in the context of leadership are closely related to thought, behavior, and policy. A leader will be deemed ethically sound if he can present the best decisions—best for himself and best for his people. They should not be best in one aspect or bad in both. Every word serves as an example for his community. Indeed, a leader in the modern era needs not be a pure human being, free from fault or sin. This is the importance of ethical values, both derived from religion and those embedded in societal norms. Leadership with integrity, as a form of implementing the values of honesty, refraining from lying, refraining from betrayal, and refraining from committing wrongdoing in the eyes of the people, is exemplified by the great prototype of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (Lapidus, 1992). Managing the city of Medina with noble morals and providing justice for every element of society is the key to success.

Leaders also uphold the values and norms of their communities. Laws are enforced because of mutually agreed-upon norms. It would be inappropriate for a leader to fail to uphold and defend those norms within their communities. If a leader violates a

norm or law, it is not difficult for the people to violate it (Spector, 2021). Likewise, in the Indonesian context, it is both unethical and normal for a leader who holds the power to enforce laws and norms to violate them; even considering breaking them is prohibited. This is because leaders have sworn to uphold the Constitution and applicable regulations.

Political Integrity in M. Natsir's Perspective

Political integrity generally refers to the harmony between ethical principles and political practice. In Islam, politics is not understood solely as power, but as an instrument for upholding justice and the common good. Values such as trustworthiness, justice (*'adl*), and honesty (*shidiq*) are the moral foundations that a leader or politician must possess. According to Al-Mawardi (d. 1058), in *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, a leader must have moral integrity and intellectual capacity to uphold justice (Al-Mawardi, 1985). Natsir appears to develop this view with a more contextual approach to the reality of pluralistic and democratic Indonesia.

Amidst the crisis of public trust in the political elite, an urgent need has emerged to redefine the meaning of integrity in political leadership. Political integrity is not merely a matter of personal morality, but is closely related to honesty, responsibility, and consistency between values and actions in the public sphere. This is what is happening in the 2024 general elections, particularly the presidential and vice-presidential elections. State administrators who also organize general elections must demonstrate political integrity in their work. According to Natsir, this principle, as defined by Islam, must be met and maintained as a harmony between Islamic faith and political reality (Nursahid & Fata, 2020). State administrators must possess competence as law enforcers and election organizers, and the people must have sound political integrity.

Political integrity is a valuable asset when confronted (*vis-à-vis*) with conflicts of interest and political pragmatism. A state administrator, who should maintain ethical and moral attitudes rooted in existing values and norms, is faced with this dilemma. Political

mandates, consisting of duties and obligations, must be carried out while simultaneously confronting various interests seeking power (Natsir, 1954). Therefore, in the 2024 general elections, state administrators, from the highest levels down to officials of equal standing and below, must prioritize these values and attitudes. Trustworthiness, fairness, honesty, and consistency (*istiqamah*) must serve as a bulwark of ethics and morals, without premeditation. If this is the case, political unrest that would undermine Indonesian democracy through these elections will be avoided. Natsir has long warned about this to link politics in unity and oneness between the state and religion within a framework of political integrity that is in line with the values of religious teachings (Pangestu & Sudrajat, 2020).

Reflections on the Ethical Crisis and the 2024 General Election

As a reflection on the political disparities that emerged during the 2024 Indonesian general election, every stakeholder, leader, candidate, and citizen must review the existing text and context. Furthermore, considering that the new leadership has been inaugurated and is running the government, a narrative and campaign are needed to re-establish the noble values of ethics, religion, and Pancasila in Indonesian democracy.

The general election, which is fundamentally held based on the principles of Direct, General, Free, Secret, Honest, and Fair (LUBER-JURDIL), has been tainted by a series of unethical actions. This begins with the Constitutional Court's ruling granting leniency to the president's son to run for vice president, and continues to involve the incumbent president in secret and unseen biases. It must be acknowledged that the Constitutional Court's ruling, rendered by nine constitutional justices, has brought them all to an ethics hearing by the Constitutional Court's Honorary Council. As the institution authorized to adjudicate ethical matters and safeguard the dignity and honor of the Constitutional Court, the nine judges were subject to ethical adjudication. The most significant decision was the dismissal of Chief Justice Anwar Usman, the president's

brother-in-law, from his position. The other eight judges received only written warnings and were acquitted of any ethical violations (Pujianti, 2023).

It is interesting to note that the decision, which dismissed the Chief Justice from his position rather than from his position as a judge, indicates ethical misconduct on the Chief Justice's part. As a Constitutional Justice, one is required to behave reasonably and avoid conflicts of interest with any party, particularly in cases involving family matters. Furthermore, under the law and court procedures, judges may exercise the right of recusal by refusing to participate in the case's decision-making process. Therefore, ethically and under applicable legal norms, judges facing a conflict of interest in a case should exercise this right to maintain judicial stability and independence (Sulistyowati, Maharani, Maharaja, & Manoppo, 2024). Likewise, other judges are required to maintain their independence to uphold the rule of law in this country.

The president, as both head of state and head of government, must also maintain integrity during the general election. Legally, the president has the right to participate in and campaign for the candidate he supports, but this must be done in writing and publicly reported. This must not be done through underground movements that secretly campaign for specific candidates and interfere with the election process or judicial institutions such as the Constitutional Court. As the organizer of the election, the president, whose power is centralized, must uphold the values of integrity, ethics, morals, and religion (Putra, 2024). These values are ingrained in the Indonesian nation and are enshrined in the ideal foundation of Pancasila. The president must be a role model in upholding Pancasila's morals in every word, deed, and policy, both in personal matters and for the benefit of the people.

On the other hand, the general election, conducted by an independent institution, the General Elections Commission (KPU), must uphold its independence throughout the process. Together with the election supervisory body, the Election Supervisory Agency (BAWASLU), it should act as a balancing force in the implementation of elections, resulting in elections of quality and integrity. It is inappropriate for KPU

leaders to act arbitrarily, violate election principles, violate ethics, and be susceptible to intervention by external parties. This news spread widely among Indonesians, who simultaneously questioned the role of BAWASLU in upholding the integrity and independence of election organizers (Wardah, 2024). Although some KPU leaders were ultimately dismissed for ethical violations, they have at least introduced moral distortions into the election process.

During the democratic process, the Indonesian people have only seen their leaders and state administrators commit ethical violations. Protests and demonstrations have been held in various locations alongside the election. Even smear campaigns have been unavoidable as a result of this immoral behavior. It is time for the Indonesian people to pay attention to how democracy in this country functions, to assess and evaluate, and to demand their right to democracy and to leaders and administrators who possess integrity, ethics, morals, and religion in accordance with Pancasila and the ideals of the nation's founders. Likewise, we need leaders who understand the nation's noble values, ethics, and democracy at every level of government.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study finds that the ethical crisis in the 2024 general election has significantly undermined democracy and the independence of state officials. The highly revered and upheld values of ethics, morals, religion, and Pancasila have been rendered meaningless by short-term political interests. State and election officials, who should be exemplary ethical models throughout the electoral process, have set a poor example through various controversies, compromising integrity and ethics, and engaging in intervention. This crisis is recorded in Indonesian political history and witnessed worldwide. State officials, including those in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, must set ethical and moral examples in upholding Indonesia's noble democracy. Pancasila, ethics, morals, and religion must be prioritized and narrated in every state policy. Oversight by certain state institutions and, most importantly, the

public, serves as a bulwark against intervention, fraud, and conflicts of interest during the election period. Consistently presenting a narrative and campaigning for sound political ethics grounded in Pancasila and the nation's noble values can ensure sound leadership in the election process at every level.

This study provides recommendations for further research on narrating and promoting fair and integrity-based elections by state officials, including election organizers, state leaders, independent oversight bodies, and the public. Future research could explore the possibility of an ethical and moral crisis occurring in the 2029 general election, with similar or different patterns. However, it is also necessary to project how current and future political developments will always change in accordance with the pragmatism of Indonesia's political elite.

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