

Islamic Political Communication and Female Leadership: A Case Study of Khofifah Indar Parawansa in East Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to analyze the practice of Islamic political communication applied by Khofifah Indar Parawansa in building the image of Muslim women leadership in the Indonesian political realm. The focus of this study is how Islamic values such as trust, justice, and benefit are integrated into Khofifah's political communication strategy, both symbolically and substantively. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a literature study approach. Data sources are obtained from books, scientific journals, online articles, and relevant official documents. The data were analyzed interpretively and thematically to identify communication patterns and the meaning of Islamic values in political practice. The results of the study show that Khofifah has succeeded in constructing political communication based on the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah through a strategic, contextual, and inclusive approach. Her leadership as Governor of East Java reflects the integration between religious symbols and public policies that favor the welfare of the community. Her communication strategy is also effective in gaining support from various circles, including inter-religious groups, as well as strengthening women's legitimacy in politics. In conclusion, the Islamic political communication applied by Khofifah is an alternative model of ethical, inclusive, and spiritual leadership in modern Indonesian democracy.

KEYWORDS: Islamic Political Communication, Female Leadership, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, Inclusive Governance

INTRODUCTION

Communication science continues to experience rapid development, including through the strengthening of approaches based on religious values such as Islamic communication. In recent years, Islamic communication has begun to gain attention as part of the treasure trove of contemporary communication science (Adeni & Bakti, 2020; Pirol, 2017; Suhaimi, 2013). This approach seeks to integrate Islamic principles into modern communication theory and practice (Hefni, 2014, 2017), not only limited to spiritual aspects, but also includes social, cultural, and political dimensions. One of the important branches of Islamic communication that develops is Islamic political communication, which focuses on the application of Islamic values in political practice, especially in the relationship between individuals, society, and the state. Islamic political communication offers a distinctive approach that emphasizes leadership ethics, management of public opinion, and the delivery of political messages based on Islamic teachings (Bakti, 2000; Bakti & Meidasari, 2014; Muhammad, 2012). This approach is based on moral values such as justice, integrity, and welfare (*maqashid sharia*) which are important foundations in building ethical and inclusive political communication.

In general, political communication aims to influence public opinion through the delivery of messages and mobilization of support by individuals, groups, and political institutions (Heryanto, 2018; Pureklolon, 2016). Rusadi Kantaprawira (in Alfikri, 2022) stating that political communication functions as a bridge between the community and the government in conveying public discourse and policies. In the context of Islam, political communication uses religious narratives and symbols to reinforce political messages and build trust, especially among Muslim voters (Dianto et al., 2021). Islamic values function as an instrument to instill credibility and legitimacy.

Digital transformation is also accelerating changes in Islamic political communication. The presence of social media allows the spread of political messages with Islamic nuances more widely and across borders (Dianto, 2023b; Lubis et al., 2023). However, this progress also poses new challenges in managing increasingly complex and diverse public opinion. At the same time, the issue of gender equality continues to be an important agenda in sustainable development. Although Indonesia's constitution guarantees the principle of equality, women's participation in politics still faces significant structural and cultural barriers (Dewi, 2015; Nurisman, 2024; Robinson & Bessell, 2002). This limitation has an impact on the low policy response to women's issues (Dianto, 2021, 2023a).

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In this context, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Governor of East Java for the 2019–2024 period, is present as a figure who combines women's leadership with a political communication approach based on Islamic values. Its leadership emphasized that women's participation in politics is not only limited to meeting quotas, but as a form of actualization of social justice and substantive representation. She positions women as agents of change and strategic decision-makers who are able to shape fair and inclusive policies. A number of previous studies (Khafid & Sutarso, 2019; Kahpi dkk., 2024; Edwinarta, 2013) has discussed political communication strategies in the context of local elections or Islamic organizations. However, these studies have not in-depth highlighted the integration of Islamic values as a key cornerstone in political communication strategies. Women's political representation still faces serious challenges, both structurally and culturally.

Although Indonesia has set a quota of 30% female representation in the Election Law, studies such as Rajab (2018) and Agasya (2019) show that its implementation is ineffective due to weak sanctions for violating parties and a strong patriarchal culture. Other obstacles include gender stereotypes, double burdens, and symbolic violence experienced by women during the political process (Kahpi & Harahap, 2024). However, research also shows that there are significant driving factors, such as political education, mentoring, and the role of local communities. In Garut and Central Java, women politicians have succeeded in building strength through personal communication, local media, and leadership training (Basri & Nurbayani, 2021; Mirin, 2022). The theological aspect was also examined by Nurhafiza et al. (2023) and Rahmayeni & Febrina (2024), who concluded that there are no explicit prohibitions in Islam regarding women's leadership. In addition, media bias and hate speech in the digital space reinforce the marginalization of women in politics (Brugnoli et al., 2022; Cuthbertson et al., 2019). Therefore, women's political engagement requires a holistic approach: affirmative policies, community empowerment, and equal digital literacy to create an inclusive political space. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap, by focusing on the analysis of how Islamic teachings are used explicitly and implicitly in shaping the approach to political communication by female Muslim figures.

In the midst of the dynamics of democracy and the penetration of digital technology in Indonesia, political communication has become an important instrument in shaping image, gaining legitimacy, and influencing public opinion. Unfortunately, the study of political communication is still dominated by a secular approach that does not pay attention to the role of religious values, especially Islam, in political practice. Meanwhile, women's leadership in politics still does not get a proportionate portion (Dewi, 2015). The emergence of figures such as Khofifah Indar Parawansa—who combines all three: Islamic values, political communication, and women's leadership—is a strong reason to conduct an in-depth study of contemporary Islamic political communication practices. This study argues that Khofifah Indar Parawansa practices a strategic and contextual form of Islamic political communication, by integrating Islamic narratives, symbols, and values into her communication strategy. This approach significantly contributes to the formation of a positive image, strengthening public support, and mainstreaming gender equality in Indonesian politics. This study aims to analyze the practice of Islamic political communication applied by Khofifah Indar Parawansa, especially in the use of symbols, narratives, and language derived from Islamic teachings. The study also explores how an Islamic values-based communication approach can build public trust, strengthen political credibility, and support ethical and inclusive women's leadership. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of the study of Islamic political communication and women's leadership discourse in the contemporary Indonesian political space.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Basic Concepts of Communication and Politics

The term “communication” comes from the Latin *communis*, which means “building togetherness.” Its root, *communico*, means “to share.” The Communication means “to make common.” Based on this etymological meaning, communication reflects the process of exchanging information, ideas, or feelings with the aim of creating a common meaning between communicators and communicators (Ardianto & Anees, 2007; Cangara, 2018; Rafiq, 2018). If this common meaning fails to be realized, then the purpose of communication—that is, to influence opinion or change behavior—is not achieved. On the other hand, the term “politics” comes from the Greek *polis* (state/city), which gave birth to the words *polites* (citizen), *politikos* (citizenship), and *politeia* (public affairs). Politics essentially refers to activities related to the arrangement of common life, including decision-making, the distribution of power, and the implementation of policies. In this framework, Smith (in Sampurna dkk., 2022) explains that politics involves *power*, authority, and competition in obtaining resources. Thus, politics is not only administrative, but also includes a relational process between society and the state in an effort to regulate public affairs.

Political communication is a relatively new field of study terminology, although its aspects such as political participation, voter behavior, and political institutions have long been the object of political science study. In general, political communication is understood as the process of exchanging information related to power and the process of government. Goldstein defines it as the exchange of information regarding the exercise of power (Finnemore & Goldstein, 2013; Goldstein, 1991). Natalie J Stroud et al. sees political communication as an interaction between elites, media, and citizens around public issues (Stroud et al., 2017). Lynn Sanders (1999) emphasized the role of political communication in shaping public spaces through the exchange of ideas, both

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verbally and visually, with the aim of influencing or maintaining the order of power. According to Harold D. Lasswell, political communication includes three main aspects (Lasswell, 2017): The exchange of information in the context of power struggles; Transfer of information regarding the distribution of political resources; and Production and dissemination of information related to public opinion, policy, and government. From these various definitions, it can be concluded that political communication is a strategic process between individuals or groups, either directly or through the media, that focuses on power, public policy, and state issues (Heryanto, 2018; Perloff, 2021). This process includes elements such as political communicators (political actors or institutions), political messages, media or communication channels, targets (public or constituents), and effects or influences on people's political behavior. Islamic Political Communication is a form of political communication that comes from the values and principles of Islamic teachings. It covers how to convey, receive, and understand political messages based on the Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic moral values, such as justice, trust, honesty, and social solidarity (Dianto, 2019). In practice, Islamic political communication uses religious narratives, symbols, and language to shape political identities, gain public support, and influence policy. Communication channels can be in the form of religious speeches, mass media, and social media, which allow Islamic messages to be conveyed widely and contextually. The purpose of this communication varies, from gaining electoral support to building public opinion that supports the application of sharia principles. Islamic political communication does not only take place in Muslim-majority countries, but also arises in the context of the diaspora or secular state, where Islamic identity is used as a force for political mobilization. Although its goals can be pragmatic, the value foundations it uses provide an ethical and spiritual dimension that distinguishes it from secular political communication.

Ethics and Spirituality in Islamic Political Communication : Ethics and spirituality are the main foundations of Islamic political communication, which fundamentally distinguishes it from secular political communication practices. In the framework of Islam, political communication is not only aimed at gaining power, but also as a means to realize the benefits of the ummah. The Qur'an and Sunnah are used as ethical and spiritual references in shaping just, honest, and responsible political messages. A leader who makes the Qur'an the main guideline will be instructed to be trustworthy, stay away from manipulation, and make politics an instrument of da'wah and social transformation, not a pragmatic power struggle (Dianto, 2019). Islamic values such as honesty (*sidq*), wisdom (*hikmah*), responsibility (*amānah*), and social ethics (*adab*) became the moral foundation that could not be separated from political communication (Hefni, 2014; Mowlana, 1996). Through this reference, politics is directed to achieve the goal of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, that is, as a blessing for all nature (Mowlana, 2007), which ethically demands stability, justice, and social responsibility in the practice of communication.

Islamic political communication has five main elements that form a distinctive system and are oriented towards transcendental values. The first is political communicators, namely individuals or institutions such as presidents, political parties, or clerics who convey messages by prioritizing Islamic values. The second is a political message that can be in the form of aspirations, promises, and visions, but it is conveyed within the framework of justice, honesty, and responsibility. The third is media or communication channels, both in traditional forms such as sermons and lectures, and digital such as social media and online platforms. Fourth is the target audience, especially the Muslim community, who are expected to respond to political messages rationally and ethically. The fifth is the effect or impact of communication, in the form of changes in attitudes and political actions of society based on Islamic values (Abdullah & Sahad, 2016; E-sor et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2024).

Ethics play a central role in shaping the direction of Islamic political communication. Although freedom of expression is recognized, Islam imposes strict moral limits. Information manipulation, slander, and hate speech are considered violations of the principles of monotheism and Islamic morals. Therefore, political communication is directed to form the collective consciousness of the ummah in accordance with maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, namely to protect religion, soul, intellect, property, and posterity (Kamali, 2017). In the digital context, new challenges have emerged in the form of disinformation, Islamophobia, and the commercialization of religious teachings. Therefore, Islamic media literacy and digital ethics guidelines are urgent needs (el-Nawawy & Khamis, 2009). In this context, the *Integrated Marketing Communication* (IMC) approach is relevant because it emphasizes message consistency, an integrated approach, and attention to audience values. When IMC is combined with Islamic principles, it becomes an effective strategy in building participatory and dignified political consciousness (Khan & Ahmad, 2020; Saeed et al., 2001), at the same time, it creates political communication that is not only strategic, but also has worship value.

METHOD

This research uses a literature study method (*library research*) by utilizing secondary data obtained from various credible sources (Danandjaja, 2014; Hamzah, 2019; Zed, 2004), such as books, scientific articles, journals accessed through *Google Scholar*, as well as official reports relevant to the research topic. This approach allows researchers to systematically review and analyze the information that has been available in order to gain a deeper understanding of the practice of Islamic political communication by Khofifah Indar Parawansa. This research is descriptive-analytical, which aims to describe in detail and analyze how Islamic values are integrated in political communication strategies by Khofifah. This approach is used to explore the forms of Islamic political

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communication used, as well as their impact on political imagery, public support, and gender mainstreaming in the context of their leadership. Data collection was carried out through literature search, with reference to scientific works, articles, and documents relevant to the issue of political communication, Islamic values, and women's leadership. All data are analyzed qualitatively through in-depth interpretation and logical and structured arguments (Arikunto, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sugiyono, 2022). The analysis process is carried out in a deductive manner, namely by starting from an analysis of general phenomena that occur in Islamic political communication in Indonesia, then directed to a special understanding of the communication strategies applied by Khofifah Indar Parawansa. This approach not only allows mapping of the communication strategies used, but also provides a conceptual framework to understand the contribution of Muslim women figures in shaping ethical and values-based political narratives. Thus, the results of this research are expected to be able to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the study of Islamic political communication and women's leadership in the context of contemporary Indonesian democracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Political History Dynamics of Khofifah Indar Parawansa

Khofifah Indar Parawansa was born in Surabaya on May 19, 1965 and spent her childhood and education in the city. She studied in two different scientific fields, namely political science at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University and communication and religious sciences at the Surabaya Da'wah College. Her postgraduate education continued at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, in the Master Program in Social and Political Sciences (1993–1997), and in 2023, Khofifah obtained an Honoris Causa (HC) Doctorate in Economics from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Airlangga University.

Khofifah's interest in social and political issues has been seen since a young age, which then led her to enter the world of politics at a relatively early age. At the age of 27, she managed to become a member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) from the United Development Party (PPP) for the period 1992–1997. Not long after, in 1999, she joined the National Awakening Party (PKB) and was trusted to serve as the Minister of Women's Empowerment in the Cabinet of President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). At that time, she became one of the youngest female ministers in Indonesia. Although her term of office ended after Gus Dur was replaced by President Megawati Soekarnoputri, Khofifah remained active in the social sphere, especially as the General Chairman of Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) since 2000 (Widi, 2023).

In her role as Chairperson of Muslimat NU, Khofifah focuses on strengthening the position of women in society and encouraging gender equality through programs related to education, health, and economic empowerment. Her political career was even more uphill when she was trusted to lead Commission VII of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in charge of energy, environment, and research in the 2004–2006 period. She also served as Chairman of the PKB faction in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in the same period. Despite experiencing several failures in her candidacy for Governor of East Java, Khofifah still showed perseverance and determination. In the 2014 presidential election, she became the spokesman for the Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla team, which showed that her political influence remained large. Furthermore, she was trusted to serve as Minister of Social Affairs in the Working Cabinet (2014–2018), where she launched various social protection programs and empowerment of the underprivileged.

The peak of her career in government was achieved when she was elected as the Governor of East Java for the 2019–2024 period. In this position, Khofifah prioritizes equitable development and social justice throughout East Java (Puspita, 2023). Khofifah Indar Parawansa is known as a female activist who has a great influence and can be considered as a pioneer of contemporary women's struggle. Her thinking and leadership style show a high commitment to improving the dignity of women. She is very vocal in supporting gender equality and encouraging women's participation in various fields, including politics, which have been dominated by men. Her commitment is contained in various works, such as her book *entitled Measuring Paradigms Through Tradition: Thinking About Gender Compatibility*. In another book, *NU, Women, Indonesia, Traditional Islamic Perspectives*, Khofifah emphasized the importance of NU women's involvement in the public sphere to help solve the nation's problems. She stated, for example, that more NU female doctors are needed to overcome the high maternal and toddler mortality rate in Indonesia (Parawansa, 2015b). Khofifah also believes that women have the ability to become leaders. In her book *Leading Serves*, she emphasized that in Indonesia's diversity, both men and women have the same rights and opportunities to lead, both at the local and national levels. According to her, openness and support from organizational leaders and community leaders are needed to encourage women's participation in the leadership realm (Parawansa, 2015a).

Khofifah's leadership style presents a new approach by combining political strategies and the idea of gender equality, which she consistently implements both in parliamentary roles and in women's organizations. This approach has made her able to become a figure who not only leads, but also empowers women. Through her leadership, the patriarchal system that has been a structural obstacle for women began to be actively resisted. Although Khofifah did not explicitly describe the forms of patriarchal culture that she wanted to abolish, she emphasized that any patriarchal practices that are contrary to Islamic values must be abandoned. According to Khofifah, leadership must be based on sharia principles, and a person's success is not only measured by her ability,

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but also by her moral integrity. She also emphasized the importance of women presenting a distinctive perspective and maintaining women's values in the world of politics (Eriyanti, 2017).

Khofifah is of the view that social and political conflicts that occur in various regions are generally rooted in low understanding and knowledge. Therefore, she emphasized the importance of education and broad insights for women who want to enter the world of politics. Knowledge will strengthen the position and increase respect for women. She also appreciated the Islamic figure, Sayyid Abbas, who openly respected women. For her, mothers are a central figure in life that deserves to be upheld. This mindset and values led her to become the first female governor in East Java (Edwinarta, 2013).

During her tenure as Governor of East Java 2019–2024, Khofifah recorded important achievements in reducing the extreme poverty rate. When she took office, the extreme poverty rate was at 4.4 percent and was successfully suppressed to 0.66 percent. This achievement reflects the commitment and effectiveness of her leadership in realizing social welfare in the region. The strategies she implemented are even considered to be able to be used as a model to be applied in other regions (Lubis et al., 2023; Warta, 2024). In 2024, Khofifah will again run for the East Java Regional Election. The support of NU Muslimat became the main strength in her candidacy. Political observer of Universitas Brawijaya, Wawan Sobari, assessed that the support of Muslimat NU provides a significant advantage for Khofifah in the electoral battle, considering the wide network of this organization and is deeply rooted in the community (News, 2024)

According to Saiful Mujani and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, the effectiveness of political communication among Nahdliyin residents is highly dependent on the delivery of messages wrapped in religious nuances. In the context of traditionalist societies, messages that touch on spiritual aspects are more acceptable and can even trigger changes in political behavior. Therefore, during the campaign period, religious terms such as istighosah, joint prayer, silaturahmi, jihad, and bughat were often raised in political narratives, both by the NU elite and the mass media (Muhtadi, 2004). This discourse first surfaced when Gus Dur initiated a "national dialogue" in 1998 as a solution to the national crisis. However, KH Yusuf Hasyim from the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School suggested the term "national gathering" as a more religious and non-controversial alternative. The term is considered more in accordance with the culture of the community and still carries the mission of unity. At the same time, istighosah activities also emerged as part of a political communication strategy, although these activities are often considered to be full of political content (Benigna, 2014). The use of religious terms such as silaturahmi and istighosah is intended to create harmonious political communication between political elites, religious leaders, and the ummah. Although the issues discussed are politically related, the delivery of messages through a religious approach is considered more effective, especially because of the similarity of cultural and spiritual references among the Nahdliyin.

Wawan Sobari also highlighted Khofifah's strategic role in the 2024 Presidential Election. As the General Chairman of PP Muslimat NU, Khofifah openly supports the Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka pair and acts as a Steering Board and National Campaigner. The support proved significant, with the pair garnering 16,716,603 votes in East Java, contributing to a national victory of 58.59 percent of the valid vote. As the leader of Muslimat NU, Khofifah is also active in spreading the Islamic values of Rahmatan Lil Alamin, with a focus on strengthening the physical and mental aspects of mothers in Indonesia. The programs implemented are oriented towards economic, social, and spiritual improvement. Khofifah emphasized that the NU Muslimat network has spread to various countries, reflecting the breadth of the social impact of her leadership.

Khofifah's influence is not only limited to the national level. She was listed in *The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2025* with big figures such as Megawati Soekarnoputri and Joko Widodo. The award recognizes her contributions to global politics, especially when she served as Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and Minister of Social Affairs. She is also known for her efforts in supporting interfaith unity and eradicating the practice of prostitution through the policy of closure of localization. Khofifah has twice been included in the list of the most influential Muslim figures by *The Muslim 500*, namely in 2021 and 2023. She stated that all her work and devotion are dedicated to creating a better and more inclusive world (Warta, 2024).

Khofifah Indar Parawansa Campaign Jargon

Khofifah Indar Parawansa, as a candidate for Governor of East Java, carries a big vision that focuses on sustainability and progress, with the main goal of realizing the national ideal of "Golden Indonesia 2045" through the development of an advanced, fair, prosperous, superior, and sustainable East Java. This vision became one of the main jargon in her political campaign and reflected a strong commitment to equitable welfare and inclusive progress for all people. In various statements, Khofifah expressly stated that to realize this vision, she supports the visions and missions of President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka. This support shows that Khofifah's political aspirations are in line with the national grand agenda of building a fairer, more advanced, and more prosperous Indonesia by 2045 (Ardani, 2024).

According to an official document uploaded by the General Election Commission (KPU) of East Java Province, Khofifah's vision is specifically formulated in the ideal of creating East Java as a province that excels in various aspects, both economic, social, and

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environmental. She referred to East Java as the "New Nusantara Gate," a concept that describes the province's strategic role in driving overall national progress. In this context, Khofifah emphasized the importance of synergy between the local government and the central government. For her, the success of development will not be achieved without consistent national support and policies. Therefore, she expressed her commitment to bring East Java to a higher level of progress, while making it a model for other provinces in Indonesia (Setiawan & Rusiana, 2024).

In Khofifah's view, East Java's development is not only measured through economic indicators alone, but also through the extent to which welfare can be felt equally by all levels of society. She emphasized that social justice is the main goal of her grand vision, where every citizen, regardless of social background, has equal access to public opportunities and services. One of the main focuses in realizing this vision is to improve the quality of education and health services. According to her, these two sectors are an important foundation in forming superior, competitive, and competitive human resources, both at the national and global levels.

Khofifah also invited all elements of society to be actively involved in realizing this vision through cross-sectoral cooperation and collaboration. She believes that innovation and creativity are the main keys in answering the challenges of an increasingly complex era. For this reason, she designed a sustainable development program based on the use of local potential, as well as the strengthening of strategic sectors such as agriculture, renewable energy, and the technology industry. With this approach, she hopes that the development carried out will not only improve the welfare of the community, but also maintain environmental sustainability as a legacy for future generations.

In addition to the economic and social sectors, Khofifah also pays great attention to infrastructure development. According to her, integrated and quality infrastructure will open wider access for the community, both in the fields of mobility, trade, and education. Increasing connectivity between regions is believed to accelerate regional economic growth, create new jobs, and encourage equitable development that has not been completely evenly distributed. Good infrastructure is also considered a major supporting factor for other sectors to grow and develop.

With the spirit of togetherness and a vision based on the principles of justice and sustainability, Khofifah is optimistic that East Java will be able to appear as a pilot province in national development. She believes that the success of development in East Java will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the big target of Golden Indonesia 2045. Therefore, in her capacity as a candidate for governor, Khofifah affirmed her determination to make East Java the driving force of the nation's progress—a region that is not only a center of economic growth, but also a symbol of inclusive, sustainable, and well-being oriented towards the welfare of the people as a whole.

Main Issues in Khofifah Indar Parawansa's Campaign

In order to realize the vision of "Golden Indonesia 2045," Khofifah Indar Parawansa designed nine strategic missions as pillars of her political campaign in the East Java Regional Head Election. Each of these missions describes an approach that is not only administrative and technocratic, but also demonstrates a political effort in framing development as part of a larger national project. However, from an analytical point of view, these missions can be read as a response to the structural challenges faced by East Java over the past decade—especially regional inequality, social disparities, and unequal access to public resources.

For example, the "East Java Sejahtera" mission, which focuses on poverty alleviation in rural and urban areas with a cross-sectoral approach, shows Khofifah's awareness of the need for more holistic and data-based policies. The empowerment of vulnerable groups such as women, the disabled, and the elderly is also proof that the issue of social inclusivity has a place in the proposed public policies. On the other hand, the missions of "East Java Work" and "Smart East Java" reflect a shift in orientation from resource-based development to knowledge-based and innovation-based development. By emphasizing the creation of new entrepreneurs, the development of the creative economy, and the strengthening of education through programs such as *East Java World Class Education* and *the Superior Santri Scholarship*, Khofifah seems to want to accelerate the transformation of East Java into a center of economic growth and superior human resources in the eastern region of Indonesia.

The mission in the health sector, which is summarized in "Healthy East Java", also shows an integrative welfare-based approach. The "KIPA" program and initiatives such as "CRADLE" and "Mental Wellness & Happiness Service" are not only aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality, but also raise mental health issues that have been underpaid in regional health policies. This approach reflects the adoption of a new paradigm in health services that is more humanistic and responsive to social dynamics. This strategy is also supported by an international cooperation plan through *the East Java World Class Hospital Collaboration*, which shows efforts to build a global network as part of East Java's repositioning in the national health service landscape.

Meanwhile, the missions of "East Java Access" and "East Java Berkah Amanah" highlight two important aspects in sustainable development: physical connectivity and governance. In the context of infrastructure development, the narrative built by Khofifah indicates the ambition to make East Java the main node in the national logistics chain, while through the transformation of digital bureaucracy 4.0, she offers an agenda of modernizing technology-based governance to accelerate government efficiency and

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transparency. However, it must be observed that bureaucratic digitalization does not necessarily guarantee the effectiveness of services without being accompanied by a substantive change in the institutional culture that is participatory and anti-corruption. In the agricultural sector, the vision of “East Java Agro” shows an emphasis on strengthening the traditional sector through a modern approach. Programs such as *Youth Agrifuture-Hub* and *Rural Agri-Industry* are strategically geared towards encouraging farmer regeneration and downstream agricultural products. However, the success of this program is highly dependent on the ability of local governments to build a profitable agricultural ecosystem, including access to financing, markets, and technology. The promise to make East Java a “Food Barn” demands not only production-oriented policies, but also fair distribution and price stabilization. The mission of “East Java Harmony” and “East Java Lestari” adds a social and ecological dimension to the vision of Khofifah's development. Efforts to strengthen the values of tolerance, diversity, and environmental preservation through a green economy and environmentally friendly technology indicate that Khofifah not only prioritizes economic growth, but also social and ecological sustainability. However, within a critical framework, concrete mechanisms are still needed to ensure that these environmental conservation efforts do not stop at green rhetoric alone, but are carried out with consistent policies, strict oversight, and broad public participation.

Beyond the content of the program, it is important to pay attention to the way Khofifah positions past successes as a foundation for political legitimacy in the future. She highlighted the highest investment achievement in a decade and a lower open unemployment rate than the national average as indicators of significant progress. This strategy also presents East Java as a region that is ready to become the “New Gate of the Archipelago” in the era of domestic and global economic competition. However, in an evaluative framework, it is necessary to examine more critically whether these indicators have been felt equally by all regions and social classes in East Java.

Khofifah offers a comprehensive and systemic campaign platform, with a grand narrative that blends regional programs and national visions. However, as with all political processes, the successful implementation of this vision and mission depends heavily on three main factors: policy consistency, bureaucratic capacity, and community participation. Therefore, the analysis of Khofifah's campaign does not only stop at the elaboration of the program, but must also consider the political, economic, and institutional contexts that will affect the realization of all these strategic ideas.

Analysis of Khofifah Indar Parawansa's Campaign in the Perspective of Islamic Political Communication

Khofifah Indar Parawansa's political communication strategy in the 2024 East Java Regional Election shows that her campaign is a concrete form of Islamic political communication that is integrated with the local socio-cultural context (Riza, 2020). As a female figure who has strong roots in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) environment, Khofifah has succeeded in utilizing a religious narrative that is very familiar to the majority of voters in East Java. By carrying the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja), she not only presents herself as a politician, but also as a symbol of the continuity of Islamic values in the public sphere. Her presence in various religio-cultural activities such as *tahlikan*, *haul*, and *ziarah wali*, creating an image that she is in line with the religious practices of the community. Within the framework of Islamic political communication, this action reflects the use of religious symbols and practices not only as identities, but also as instruments of ethical and spiritual electoral legitimacy (Kusnadi et al., 2023).

The existence of Khofifah as the General Chairman of Muslimat NU also strengthens the reach of her political communication, especially among women and the pesantren community (Irawan & Pradana, 2024). This position is not just a formality, but an effective channel in building a solid and loyal socio-political network. With the support of the elders of NU and the cultural structure of the Islamic boarding school, Khofifah obtained dual authority—both religious and electoral. In the perspective of Islamic political communication, it shows how religious charisma can be converted into political power within the framework of democracy without losing the value of spirituality. The patron-client relationship established between religious leaders and communities is also utilized productively, not manipulatively, because it is based on long-established emotional and ideological closeness (Siregar, 2021). Therefore, Khofifah not only appears as a politician, but also as a *mu'allimah*, namely an educator and moral guardian of the ummah (Pangastuti et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Khofifah positioned development as part of the Islamic mandate. Her success in reducing poverty is not only seen as an administrative achievement, but as an implementation of Islamic leadership ethics that demand justice, partiality for the weak, and moral responsibility for the people. This is in line with the basic values of Islamic political communication which places politics as a means to create *maslahah* or the common good (Bahri, 2018; Hasan et al., 2024). This approach strengthens Khofifah's moral and political legitimacy, even in the eyes of non-Muslims who also benefit from her inclusive policies. The image as the leader of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* is proof that Islamic political communication does not stop at symbolic rhetoric, but demands realization in the form of concrete and widely felt public policies.

Khofifah's grand vision, namely “East Java Advanced, Fair, Prosperous, Superior and Sustainable Towards a Golden Indonesia 2045” reflects the synthesis between Islamic ethics and development politics. The concept of justice put forward is not interpreted as uniform equality, but rather the provision of rights proportionately—in line with the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in the fiqh

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tradition. In this framework, politics is not merely a means of gaining power, but an instrument for the realization of *al-maṣṣlahah al-'āmmah* or the common good (CNN, 2024; Setiawan & Rusiana, 2024). Thus, the approach to Islamic political communication built by Khofifah is not just an image, but a paradigm of sustainable action that is ideological and substantive. That vision and mission set her apart from other politicians who often only offered populist promises without a strong value foundation.

Khofifah's success in leading East Java also represents the Islamic mandate of a leader's responsibility to prosper the region she leads. In Islamic political ethics, the success of a leader is not measured only by how much infrastructure is built, but by the impact of policies on the quality of life of the people. Strategic programs such as Prosperous East Java, Smart East Java, and Healthy East Java emphasized that Khofifah's approach does not only focus on physical development, but also on improving the quality of life of citizens. In this context, her campaign offers a narrative of progress that is inseparable from Islamic values, which provide hope for sustainable development and bring social blessings.

The integration between development and Islamic values is also seen in the mission of environmental conservation and governance. The "East Java *Lestari*" mission which emphasizes environmentally sound development and "East Java *Berkah Amanah*" which highlights clean and effective governance are a manifestation that the spiritual dimension is not neglected in technocratic affairs. Both missions reflect the principle of monotheism in governance, namely the balance between humans, nature, and God as the main orientation. Within the framework of Islamic political communication, this approach gives strong ethical weight and distinguishes Khofifah's campaign from pragmatic political campaigns that are only oriented towards short-term electoral interests.

The entire vision and mission of Khofifah, which includes the economic, educational, health, environmental, and government sectors, is designed with an approach that is not only rational and measurable, but also transcendental. Each mission is aimed at answering the challenges of the times while still being grounded in Islamic principles that emphasize justice, balance, and usefulness (*maslahah*). If the consistency and depth of integration of Islamic values are maintained, Khofifah will not only be remembered as the Governor of East Java, but also as a model of Muslim women leaders who have succeeded in translating Islamic political communication into inclusive, strategic, and visionary leadership practices.

By referring to Harold D. Lasswell's theory, he explained that political communication includes aspects of who, say what, in which channels, to whom, and with what effect (Lasswell, 2017). In Khofifah's case, she acted as an authoritative and spiritual political communicator, delivering political messages within the framework of Islam, through various channels ranging from religious forums to social media, to Muslim and non-Muslim audiences, with an impact that created widespread support and recognition of her leadership qualities. In the Islamic political communication system, this process becomes worship if it is done honestly, fairly, and responsibly (Abdullah & Sahad, 2016; E-sor et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2024).

Through this approach, Khofifah has implemented a communication strategy that is not only strategic and consistent as the principles of *Integrated Marketing Communication* (IMC), but also in accordance with Islamic values. The consistency of the message, the cohesion of the strategy, and the sensitivity to the value of the audience make the communication not only politically effective, but also morally dignified. This is in line with Hamid Mowlana's thought that Islamic political communication should reflect the value of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which creates stability, justice, and social responsibility (Mowlana, 2007). Therefore, the Khofifah campaign is not just an ordinary political campaign, but a concrete representation of Islamic political communication that is ethical, transformative, and oriented towards the benefit of the people.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Khofifah Indar Parawansa is an Islamic political leadership figure who has succeeded in integrating Islamic values, especially the principles of trust, justice, and benefit, in her political communication practice. Through her position as the General Chairman of Muslimat NU and her proximity to the NU cultural network, she was able to build political communication that was contextual, strategic, and firmly rooted in the values of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*. Her leadership in serving as Governor of East Java shows that a symbolic approach that is religious combined with the substance of policies that favor the welfare of the people, such as poverty reduction and improvement of social services. The vision of "A Just, Prosperous, Superior, and Sustainable Advanced East Java towards a Golden Indonesia 2045" reflects efforts to present inclusive governance based on Islamic spirituality. The political communication she built not only strengthened legitimacy in the eyes of Muslims, but also fostered the trust of interfaith groups.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is entirely based on a literature study and does not involve primary data such as in-depth interviews, direct observations, or field documentation. As a result, the analysis presented is more interpretive and not supported by empirical verification from actors or parties directly involved in Khofifah Indar Parawansa's political campaign.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

This research contributes to enriching the study of Islamic political communication, especially in the context of Indonesian democracy. By highlighting Khofifah Indar Parawansa's political strategy, this study shows that Islamic values such as trust, justice, and welfare can be effectively integrated into modern political practices. The study also provides an overview of how Muslim women leaders can leverage local religious and cultural networks to build strong political communication. In practical terms, these findings can be a reference for academics and practitioners in formulating ethical and religious approaches to political communication. Although based on a literature study, this research opens up space for follow-up studies with an empirical approach for a deeper understanding.

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