

Media, Integrity, And Political Reputation: A Framing Analysis Of Pks 's Image Construction Following The 2026 Political Party Integrity Index

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Abstract—The announcement of Indonesia's Political Party Integrity Index (Indeks Integritas Partai Politik/IIPP) 2026, which ranked the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) as the most integrity-driven party with a score of 71—well above the national average of 61.2—presents a scientifically compelling paradox: at the same time, PKS's electoral support remained stagnant at approximately 5.9 percent. This gap raises a critical question about how national media frames this institutional achievement and which dominant frames construct PKS's political reputation in the public sphere. This study aims to analyze the media framing construction of PKS following the IIPP 2026 announcement across eight national media outlets over a three-month period (February 11–May 11, 2026). Employing a qualitative approach with Entman's [5] framing analysis model—encompassing problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation—the study analyzes 40 news articles from Kompas.com, Tempo.co, Media Indonesia, Republika, Detik.com, ANTARA, JPNN, and CNN Indonesia. Findings reveal the emergence of four dominant frames: institutional legitimacy frame (45%), electoral paradox frame (30%), political instrumentalization frame (15%), and systemic critique frame (10%), with significantly varied distributions across media outlets consistent with their respective editorial orientations. PKS's reputation construction operates through three mechanisms: symbolic capital amplification, legitimacy contestation, and comparative contextualization. The study concludes that external integrity validation does not automatically generate a homogeneous reputation; media framing logic serves as an active and non-neutral mediator in the image construction process of political parties. These findings contribute to the development of framing theory in Indonesian political communication, particularly regarding the relationships among institutional integrity, mediatization, and party reputation management.

Keywords—framing analysis, IIPP, image construction, mediatization, political communication, political party reputation

I. INTRODUCTION

On February 11, 2026, the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, together with the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), announced the results of the 2025 Political Party Integrity Index (Indeks Integritas Partai Politik/IIPP) in Bali. Among all election-contesting political parties evaluated, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) achieved the highest score of 71, surpassing the national average of 61.2 [34]. This achievement formally positioned PKS as the most integrity-driven party in an institutional assessment covering internal democracy, cadre recruitment, and financial transparency. On the other hand, an electability survey released almost simultaneously showed that PKS garnered only about 5.9 percent of voter support—far behind Gerindra, which led with 26.1 percent (Poltracking Indonesia, March 2026). The stark gap between institutional integrity recognition on one hand and electoral stagnation on the other opens an academically underexplored question: how do national media frame PKS's IIPP achievement, and which frames dominantly construct the party's political reputation in the public sphere?

This question matters because political party reputation is not formed in a vacuum. It is built—and unbuilt—through a mediation process involving editorial selection, source choice, and emphasis on particular aspects of coverage. Fombrun and Shanley [23] show that organizational reputation is an accumulation of signals received by the public through various channels, with mass media as the dominant conduit in that process. In the context of political parties, Scammell [19] argues that a political brand does not merely reflect policy but is shaped by long-term perceptions strongly influenced by how media choose to narrate a party. The announcement of IIPP 2026 is thus not merely an administrative event but a reputational event—a moment that gives media the opportunity to construct, confirm, or contest PKS's public image.

Framing studies in Indonesian political communication have produced a number of important findings, particularly concerning election coverage and specific political figures. However, a literature gap remains largely unexplored: almost no research specifically examines how media frame a political party's institutional-achievement moment and how such framing interacts with broader reputational dynamics. Existing studies on PKS have generally focused on its mass base, Islamic ideology, or opposition dynamics [33], [32], while the dimension of reputation construction through media framing has received insufficient attention. Meanwhile, studies of party integrity in Indonesia remain dominated by political-science approaches that emphasize institutional analysis over communication analysis [30]. This study seeks to bridge that gap.

Theoretically, this study draws on three complementary scholarly traditions. First, framing theory as operationalized by Entman [5], who views media frames as a mechanism of selecting and making certain aspects of reality more salient. Second, the political mediatization perspective [14], which explains how media logic progressively shapes the way political parties build public legitimacy. Third, organizational reputation theory [22], [21], which provides a conceptual framework for understanding how media-constructed images are converted into symbolic capital for a political institution.

Based on the foregoing, this study is guided by one central research question: how do Indonesian national media frame the construction of PKS's image during the three-month period following the 2026 IIPP announcement, and which frames dominate the news discourse? To answer this question, this study analyzes 40 news articles from 8 national media outlets published between February 11 and May 11, 2026, using Entman's [5] framing analysis toolkit as the primary instrument. This study contributes to the development of framing theory in Indonesian political communication, offers a replicable cross-media analytical model, and provides practical input for political parties, journalists, and IIPP organizers.

This article is organized as follows: the second section presents the theoretical review; the third section explains the research method; the fourth section presents the results and discussion; and the fifth section closes with the conclusion and research implications.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Framing Theory: From Concept to Analytical Operationalization

Framing analysis in communication studies is rooted in the idea that media do not merely report reality but actively frame and construct it. The conceptual foundation of framing can be traced to Goffman [1], who introduced frames as interpretive schemata

individuals use to understand and respond to social situations. In the media context, this concept subsequently developed into one of the most influential analytical frameworks in communication science.

The most widely used formulation in media framing analysis is that developed by Entman [5]. Entman defines framing as the process of selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text—in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Entman identifies four principal frame functions: (1) problem definition, i.e., how media define an issue or event; (2) causal interpretation, i.e., who or what is identified as the cause; (3) moral evaluation, i.e., judgment of the actors or conditions involved; and (4) treatment recommendation, i.e., the suggested solution or action. These four elements serve as the primary operational tools in this study.

Understanding of framing has been further enriched by Scheufele [10], who distinguishes media frames as an independent variable from audience frames as a dependent variable. Chong and Druckman [3] emphasize the distinction between equivalence framing and emphasis framing—in political news coverage, the dominant type is emphasis framing, in which differences in framing arise from which aspects are chosen for emphasis. De Vreese [4] distinguishes between generic frames, applicable across issues, and issue-specific frames, relevant only to particular contexts. Pan and Kosicki [9] add a structural dimension by identifying four framing devices: syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical.

B. Political Mediatization and Party Reputation Construction

Media framing does not operate in a vacuum but within the broader process of mediatization—the tendency of political institutions to progressively adapt to media logic and formats in an effort to build public legitimacy. Strömbäck and Esser [14] identify four phases of mediatization, from media as a mere transmission channel for political messages to media as a semi-independent institution whose logic determines how political parties behave, communicate, and build their image.

Aalberg, Strömbäck, and De Vreese [11] document that the dominant political framing in the contemporary media landscape is game and strategy framing—media tend to frame political events through the lens of who wins, who loses, and the strategic calculations behind them. Voltmer [16] adds that in transitional democracies, media often play a dual role as watchdog and as an arena of discursive contestation. Van Aelst et al. [15] caution that in a high-choice media environment, audiences are increasingly exposed only to frames that match their own preferences.

C. Political Reputation: From Corporate Theory to Political Parties

Fombrun [22] defines reputation as a representation of public perception regarding an organization's ability to meet its stakeholders' expectations. Fombrun and Shanley [23] show that organizational reputation is formed from an accumulation of signals received by the public through various channels, including mass media. Wæraas and Byrkjeflot [24] identify that reputation management in the public sector has its own complexity: public institutions operate under tighter democratic oversight, with legitimacy standards based not only on performance but also on values.

Carpenter [21] introduces the concept of reputational capital as a political resource that allows an institution to act autonomously and gain trust from various constituent groups. This concept can be adapted to understand how PKS uses its IIPP achievement as symbolic capital convertible into public trust. Scammell [19] views the modern political party as a brand that must be managed strategically. Needham [17] adds that loyalty to a political brand is based not merely on rational calculation but also on emotional and identity dimensions.

D. Political Integrity, Public Trust, and Party Legitimacy

Norris [25] documents that public trust in political institutions has undergone a systematic decline across many democracies. In this context, IIPP emerges as an institutional effort to fill that trust deficit by providing a scientifically verifiable benchmark. Rose-Ackerman [26] argues that public trust in political institutions cannot be built through normative declaration alone but must be proven through verified consistency of behavior and transparency. Rothstein and Teorell [27] add a structural dimension: the quality of governance is determined by the extent to which institutions operate on the principle of impartiality.

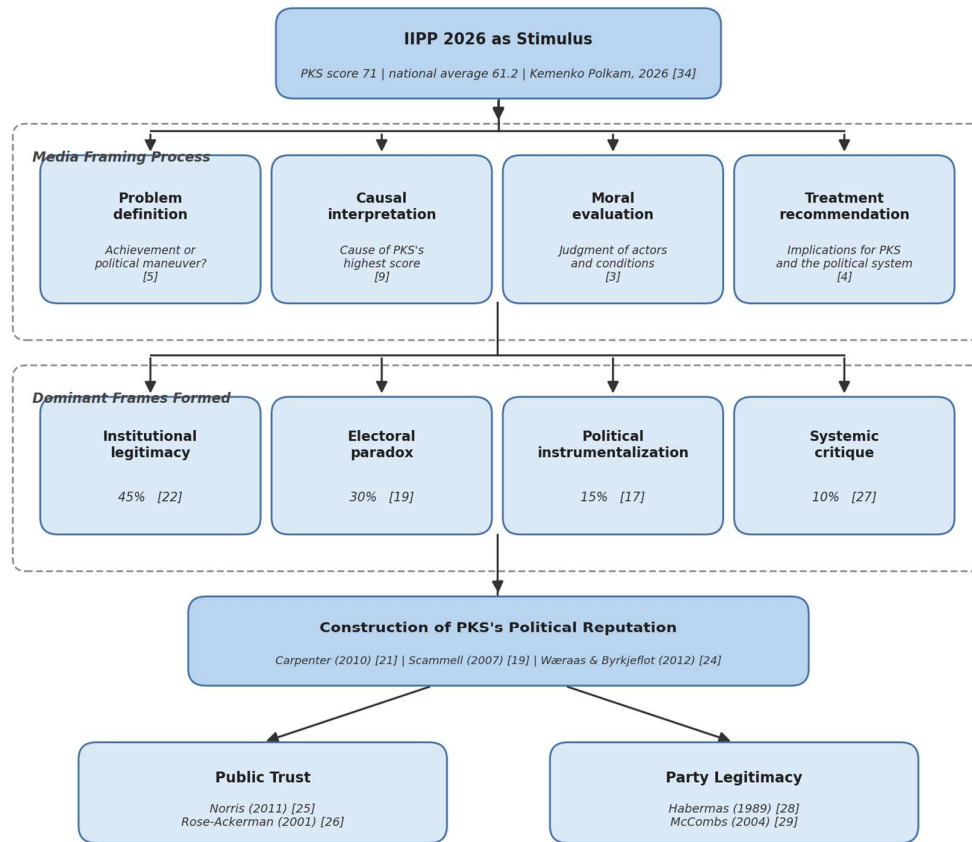
Habermas's [28] notion of the public sphere enriches our understanding of how party integrity becomes a publicly-debated issue. In the Habermasian conception, mass media should function as an arena of rational deliberation where validity claims—including claims of party integrity—are critically tested. However, Lim [31] shows that Indonesia's digital public sphere is instead increasingly fragmented into algorithmic enclaves, a form of continuous information compartmentalization that impedes critical thinking.

E. Media and Politics in Indonesia: Structural Context

Aspinall and Mietzner [30] document a trend of democratic decline—a gradual erosion of democratic quality—in Indonesia. Mietzner [32] identifies that pro-democracy parties in post-Suharto Indonesia face a structural dilemma between bureaucratic institutionalization and grassroots activism. PKS, which according to Muhtadi [33] faces tension between Islamic identity and broader electoral ambition, sits at a similarly critical juncture. McCombs [29], through agenda-setting theory, complements this understanding of how media editorial decisions determine which issues the public regards as important.

F. Integrated Analytical Framework

Building on the synthesis of the theories above, this study constructs an integrated analytical framework linking three key conceptual nodes: IIPP 2026 as the stimulus, the media framing process [5], [4], [9], the resulting dominant frames, the construction of PKS's political reputation [22], [21], and the implications for public trust and party legitimacy [25], [26]. This entire process is conditioned by two contextual factors: the characteristics of the Indonesian media system [31], [16] and the broader political context [30], [33].



Source: developed from Entman [5], Fombrun [22], Norris [25], and Kemenko Polkam [34]

Fig. 1. Integrated Analytical Framework: Media, Integrity, and PKS's Political Reputation Following the 2026 IIPP

Note: PKS's IIPP score (71) and the national average (61.2) serve as the stimulus that triggers the four-element media framing process (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation), which in turn produces four dominant frames (institutional legitimacy, electoral paradox, political instrumentalization, systemic critique) feeding into the construction of PKS's political reputation and, ultimately, public trust and party legitimacy. Source: developed from [5], [22], [25], [34].

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Approach and Research Paradigm

This study employs a qualitative approach with framing analysis as its primary strategy for data collection and interpretation. Paradigmatically, this study is situated within the constructivist tradition, an epistemological position that views social reality—including the image and reputation of a political party—as the outcome of an active construction process rather than a neutral reflection of existing facts. This choice is grounded in the nature of the research question, which does not aim to measure frequency or statistical correlation but to understand how and why national media frame PKS's IIPP achievement in particular ways that carry implications for the construction of political reputation.

B. Research Design

This study uses a comparative cross-media case study design, in which the case under investigation is coverage of PKS during the three-month period following the 2026 IIPP announcement. The unit of analysis is the individual news article, while the unit of observation comprises textual elements within each article that can be identified as framing devices.

C. Data Sources and Media Selection Criteria

Primary data are sourced from text news articles published by Indonesian national media between February 11 and May 11, 2026. Media selection was purposive, based on three criteria: (a) significant and verified national readership; (b) digital availability with accessible archives; and (c) representation of diverse editorial orientations and reader segments.

TABLE 1. NATIONAL MEDIA SELECTED AS DATA SOURCES

No.	Media	Editorial Orientation	Primary Segment
1	ANTARA News	Wire service / neutral-informative	General, institutional
2	Detik.com	Popular-digital, fast news	Millennials, urban
3	Kompas.com	Nationalist-moderate, analytical	Educated, upper-middle class
4	Tempo.co	Independent-critical	Educated, pro-democracy
5	Media Indonesia	Liberal-reformist	Professionals, urban
6	Republika Online	Islamic-conservative	Observant Muslims, organizational affiliates
7	JPNN.com	Popular, pro-party	General, regional
8	CNN Indonesia	Digital-television, independent	Urban, middle class

D. Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through systematic online media monitoring. Searches used the keywords “PKS,” “IIPP,” “Indeks Integritas Partai Politik,” “integritas PKS,” “PKS 2026,” and combinations thereof. This process yielded 40 news articles from eight media outlets, forming the study’s data corpus.

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ARTICLES BY MEDIA AND THEMATIC CLUSTER

Thematic Cluster	ANT	DET	KOM	TEM	MI	REP	JPN	CNN	Total
IIPP announcement & award	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	12
Expert response & institutional context	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	7
PKS image & reputation framing	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	10
Electability & surveys	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	5
Corruption context & comparative integrity	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4
Opposition position & PKS identity	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total	4	6	5	6	6	4	4	5	40

E. Instrument and Analysis Technique

Framing analysis operationalizes Entman’s [5] four-element model as the primary instrument, enriched with the textual framing devices of Pan and Kosicki [9]. The analysis procedure was carried out in three stages: (1) immersive reading of the entire data corpus; (2) systematic coding using Entman’s coding sheet for each article; and (3) comparative synthesis to identify dominant frames per medium and across media.

TABLE 3. ENTMAN’S FRAMING ANALYSIS CODING SHEET

Framing Element	Operational Definition	Guiding Question
Problem definition	How media define PKS’s IIPP result as a problem, an achievement, or a neutral phenomenon	Is IIPP framed as a pure achievement, a political maneuver, or an issue requiring scrutiny?
Causal interpretation	Identification of causes or factors linked to PKS’s achievement	What factors do media cite as the cause of PKS’s high score?
Moral evaluation	Judgment or attribution of value attached to the narrative about PKS and IIPP	Is the tone of coverage positive, critical, or ambivalent?
Treatment recommendation	Explicit or implicit suggested solution, implication, or action	What do media recommend for PKS, other parties, or the political system?

F. Validity and Data Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study's findings is ensured through source triangulation applied systematically at every stage of analysis. Source triangulation was chosen as the sole validity procedure given the study's cross-media comparative nature: data do not originate from a single medium but from eight national media outlets with differing editorial orientations, so cross-source verification occurs inherently within the research design itself.

Operationally, triangulation was applied through three rigorously enforced principles. First, the cross-media confirmation principle: a frame is declared dominant only if its constituent elements—problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation—are consistently identified across at least three media with different editorial orientations. A frame appearing in only one medium is treated as an editorial idiosyncrasy rather than a representative finding. Second, the textual verification principle: every interpretive claim is supported by direct textual quotations from the news text, explicitly cited in the results and discussion section. This allows readers and reviewers to independently assess whether the researchers' interpretation of a frame is adequately supported by linguistic evidence in the source text. Third, the editorial differentiation principle: cross-media confirmation is considered valid only when the media exhibiting a similar frame have different editorial orientations—for example, an Islamic-based medium (Republika), an independent-critical medium (Tempo.co), and a national wire service (ANTARA). Confirmation from three media with the same editorial orientation is not counted as valid triangulation.

Through the combination of these three principles, source triangulation in this study operates not only at the level of quantity—how many media display a particular frame—but also at the level of quality, namely the diversity of media orientation and the representativeness of textual evidence. This approach is consistent with Patton's [36] argument that the strength of triangulation lies not in the accumulation of source numbers but in the diversity of perspectives those sources represent.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. General Overview of News Coverage Patterns

Analysis of 40 news articles reveals a coverage pattern across three temporal waves. The first wave (February 11–17, 2026) was the most intensive period: 22 of 40 articles (55%) were published within the first seven days, dominated by factual-descriptive reporting. The second wave (February 18–March 15, 2026) was marked by the emergence of analytical commentary from observers and efforts at contextualization within broader political dynamics. The third wave (March 16–May 11, 2026) showed a decline in direct IIPP coverage, yet PKS remained present through the context of electability surveys and coverage of corruption cases involving other parties, which implicitly reinforced PKS's integrity narrative. This pattern is consistent with De Vreese's [4] findings on the political news cycle.

B. Dominant Cross-Media Frame Findings

Framing analysis identifies four dominant frames that repeatedly emerge in the data corpus. These frames are not mutually exclusive, but each has a distinct pattern of occurrence and media distribution.

1) Institutional Legitimacy Frame

This is the most numerically dominant frame, appearing in 18 of 40 articles (45%), most concentrated in the first coverage wave. In this frame, IIPP is constructed as an external, scientific, and independent validation of the quality of PKS's internal governance. Problem definition frames the IIPP event as an institutional achievement. Causal interpretation predominantly points to PKS's structured cadre system. Moral evaluation is positive-affirmative, using diction such as "best" and "recognition." Treatment recommendation implicitly calls for other parties to adopt PKS's governance model. This frame is strongest in ANTARA News and JPNN, consistent with Voltmer's [16] argument on media functioning as an institutional megaphone.

2) Electoral Paradox Frame

This frame appears in 12 articles (30%) and becomes the dominant frame in the second coverage wave. The electoral paradox frame does not deny the high IIPP score but systematically questions its relevance in the context of electoral competition. Problem

definition frames the gap between integrity and electability as a systemic problem. Causal interpretation points to the narrowness of PKS's voter segment. Moral evaluation is ambivalent—appreciating the IIPP achievement while questioning PKS's capacity to convert it into electoral capital. This frame is strongest in Tempo.co and Kompas.com, consistent with the game and strategy framing concept [11].

3) *Political Instrumentalization Frame*

The third frame appears in 6 articles (15%), concentrated in opinion columns in Tempo.co and Media Indonesia. This frame constructs IIPP not as a neutral evaluation outcome but as a reputational resource strategically exploited by PKS. Moral evaluation is skeptical-critical, implicitly questioning whether IIPP's integrity reflects authentic value or an image-management strategy. This frame reflects the conceptual tension identified by Needham [17] between value-based loyalty and calculation-based loyalty in political branding.

4) *Systemic Critique Frame*

The fourth frame appears in 4 articles (10%) and is the most structural in nature. Rather than focusing on PKS as the sole subject, this frame uses IIPP as an entry point to critique Indonesia's political party financing system as a whole. The most explicit treatment recommendation is a call to revise party finance regulation and strengthen oversight capacity. This frame is strongest in Media Indonesia and reinforces the argument of Rothstein and Teorell [27] that institutional quality cannot be separated from its underlying rules of the game.

D. *Variation in Framing Across Media*

Comparative cross-media analysis reveals significant variation, with patterns attributable to editorial orientation, reader segment, and each medium's journalistic tradition.

TABLE 4. FRAMING PROFILE BY MEDIA OUTLET

Media	Dominant Frame	Secondary Frame	Primary Sources	Tone
ANTARA	Institutional legitimacy	—	Kemenko Polkam officials, PKS Secretary-General	Positive-neutral
Detik.com	Institutional legitimacy	Electoral paradox	PKS cadres, brief commentary from observers	Neutral-informative
Kompas.com	Electoral paradox	Systemic critique	Political observers, survey data	Analytical-critical
Tempo.co	Electoral paradox	Instrumentalization	Academics, independent observers	Critical-investigative
Media Indonesia	Systemic critique	Institutional legitimacy	Policy experts, civil society activists	Reformist-critical
Republika	Institutional legitimacy	Instrumentalization	PKS cadres, Islamic figures	Positive-affirmative
JPNN	Institutional legitimacy	—	Official PKS statements	Positive-promotional
CNN Indonesia	Electoral paradox	Instrumentalization	Survey analysts, observers	Analytical-neutral

Table 4 shows that ANTARA, JPNN, and Republika form one cluster that predominantly displays the institutional legitimacy frame with a positive-to-affirmative tone. Conversely, Tempo.co, Kompas.com, and CNN Indonesia form a second, more critical-analytical cluster. Media Indonesia occupies a distinct position, dominated by the systemic critique frame. This variation reinforces Lim's [31] argument on the fragmentation of Indonesia's media public sphere: a single event can produce very different constructions of reality depending on the identity of the medium covering it.

E. *Mechanisms of PKS Reputation Construction through Framing*

The above findings enable a deeper analysis of how the four frames cumulatively and contestably construct PKS's political reputation. Drawing on Carpenter's [21] framework, three simultaneously operating construction mechanisms can be identified.

The first mechanism is symbolic capital amplification. The institutional legitimacy frame effectively amplifies the IIPP score as empirical proof of PKS's integrity claim, transforming a statistical figure into a reputational signal embedded in readers' collective memory [22].

The second mechanism is legitimacy contestation. The electoral paradox and instrumentalization frames question whether the integrity measured by IIPP truly constitutes an authentic organizational attribute. This contestation represents what Wæraas and Byrkjeflot [24] term a legitimacy gap.

The third mechanism is comparative contextualization. Coverage of corruption cases involving officials and cadres of other parties implicitly reinforces PKS's integrity narrative through contrast. This mechanism aligns with Smith and French's [20] finding that political brand associations are often formed from comparative context with poorly-performing competitors.

F. Tension between Institutional Integrity and Electoral Reality: Theoretical Discussion

This study's findings open a broader theoretical discussion on the relationship among institutional integrity, media framing, and political reputation. First, empirically measured institutional integrity does not automatically translate into a homogeneous positive reputation—media framing functions as a non-neutral filter [6]. Second, the paradox between a high integrity score and low electability challenges the linear assumption in political branding theory that integrity-based brand equity directly increases electoral support [17], [19]. Third, this study reinforces the relevance of the mediatization perspective [14]: political parties no longer have full control over their own narrative, even when they possess an externally validated achievement such as IIPP.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Answers to the Research Question

This study yields three interrelated main findings. First, national media coverage of PKS following the 2026 IIPP does not form a single coherent narrative but consists of four competing frames: the institutional legitimacy frame (45%), the electoral paradox frame (30%), the political instrumentalization frame (15%), and the systemic critique frame (10%). Second, the mechanism constructing PKS's reputation through framing operates via three simultaneous pathways: symbolic capital amplification, legitimacy contestation, and comparative contextualization. Third, there is a structural gap between the logic of the reputational event and the logic of media framing—the IIPP announcement, designed as a clear integrity signal, underwent significant transformation of meaning once it entered the framing arena of Indonesia's national media.

B. Theoretical Implications

This study offers three contributions to political communication theory. First, it extends the application domain of Entman's [5] framing theory into the realm of party reputation construction through coverage of external institutional indicators. Second, it challenges the linear assumption in political branding theory that externally validated integrity capital automatically increases party brand equity [19], [17]. Third, it contributes to the literature on political mediatization in the context of transitional democracy by showing that, in Indonesia, what operates is not a single dominant media logic but a plurality of editorial logics [31], [14].

C. Practical Implications

For PKS and political parties in general, this study underscores that an externally validated institutional achievement needs to be followed by a communication strategy responsive to the diversity of media framing logics. For journalists and editors, this study provides a reflective mirror on how editorial choices cumulatively shape public perception of a political institution [12]. For IIPP organizers, greater attention should be paid to the public-communication design of IIPP results, since the way BRIN and Kemenko Polkam communicate the results also shapes the initial frame subsequently adopted or contested by media [25].

D. Limitations and Future Research Agenda

This study has three main limitations. First, data coverage is limited to news text from eight national media outlets and does not include social media platforms [31]. Second, it does not examine the reception dimension by audiences [10]. Third, the three-month period is insufficient to analyze long-term frame evolution. Based on these limitations, further research is recommended in three

directions: (a) comparative framing studies encompassing social media; (b) framing-effects research using an experimental design; and (c) a longitudinal study extending to the 2029 general election.

E. Closing Remarks

Media do not merely report political reality—they construct it. This study has shown that the 2026 IIPP announcement, methodologically designed as a measurable and unambiguous integrity signal, underwent a significant transformation of meaning once it entered the framing arena of Indonesia's national media. From a single event emerged four distinct frames with differing reputational implications for PKS. For the study of Indonesian political communication, these findings open a broad space for exploration: how integrity can—and fails to—be communicated; how media mediate the relationship between party institutionalism and public trust; and what it means to build an authentic political reputation within an information landscape that is never neutral.

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