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The supports and challenges of political Islam during reformation Indonesia

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Abstract

This article aims to elaborate and describe the supports and challenges towards the development of political Islam during reformation Indonesia. This qualitative research used literature reviews methods of data collection. After validating and removing irrelevant data, the collected data were analyzed using Nvivo 12 Plus as an analysis tool. The authors found that some supports of political Islam during reformation Indonesia are the emergence of Islamic groups supporting Islamic law, Islamic values in various fields, and the favorable Islamic pop culture. On the other hand, the challenges of political Islam are in the form of the anti-Islamization movements and the issues of Islamic terrorism. Moreover, the supports for the existence of actors bringing the ideas of political Islam developed significantly in the era of President Habibie, which was the earlier phase of changing from the Suharto authoritarian regime, for instance, by the emergence of various Islamic political movements. However, the development has steadily declined following the increasing challenges towards political Islam during reformation Indonesia, especially since the second era of Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) government, such as by the emergence of the anti-Islamization movement and the issue of Islamic terrorism. In the future, the field research through survey and interview is expected to validate the findings of this article.

1. Introduction

As a country with a majority Muslim population, political Islam does not necessarily color political development in Indonesia (Mietzner, 2014, p. 435). It is related to many variables influencing the existence of political Islam in a country. Nevertheless, in the historical aspect, Islam's presence has already played a crucial role in every regime in Indonesia. Here, it is merely political Islam defined as the efforts to foster Muslim aspirations and put the Islamic ideology into law and governance through the democratic process and representative (legislative) institution (Anies Rasyid Baswedan, 2004).

The reality indicates that in each period of the Indonesian government regime, political Islam in Indonesia has a long history with a relatively similar pattern in which it tends to be used as a political tool. The impression of elites trying to gain the sympathy of Muslims when they have political interests has continued even until after the reform era.

During the independence era, Sukarno approached Islamic groups because he understood that Islam was against all forms of colonialism. By using the name of jihad, Muslims willingly united against the colonialists. Moreover, Soekarno approached Daud Beaureuh by asking him to protect the Acehnese people while being united with the Republic of Indonesia. As a consequence, Sukarno gave Aceh special privileges (Salim, 2004, p. 91). However, in determining the form of the state, Sukarno believed that Indonesia should be built neither as an Islamic state nor as a secular one (Seo, 2012). According to him, the diverse background of the Indonesian people needs to be maintained as a uniting force by placing Pancasila as the basis of the state (Anwar, 1981, p. 41).

In its development, Sukarno supported the concept of Nasakom (nationalist, religious, and communist). This close relation between Sukarno and the communist supporters was challenged by various Islamic groups, especially those who wanted to enforce Islamic sharia in Indonesia.

Some of them, like Kartosuwiryo, had even carried out a rebellion movement (Formichi, 2012, pp. 203–204). Furthermore, he also banned Masyumi as an Islamic party (Abbas, 2015, p. 209) and imprisoned some Islamic figures such as Buya Hamka and Muhammad Natsir.

After the communist movement murdered several active generals, Muslims finally supported Suharto for taking action anticipating the possibility of a broader influence of communism in Indonesia (Suhelmi, 2006). Suharto used Islam to gain political legitimacy by building justifications that the Sukarno government could threaten Muslims because of its proximity to China. Suharto made the narrative that Chinese communism, as taught by Karl Marx, which considered religion as the opium of the masses, is against Indonesian

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Islamic heritage. As a result, Suharto gained support from Muslims, as he needed. Consequently, Suharto issued several anti-theses from Sukarno's policies, which had been deemed to be not in favor of Muslims. For instance, he permitted the establishment of an Islamic party in 1973 as the merging of four Islamic parties in the era of Sukarno (Hakim, 2016, p. 159) and released some Islamic leaders like Hamka who were imprisoned during Sukarno's period (Bourchier & Hadiz, 2003, p. xvi).

However, after being quite strong, through his strong connection to the military, Suharto seemed to abandon the interests of Muslims. Suharto did not help to develop political Islam as he began his close ties with the army after gaining strong political legitimacy. Almost all strategic positions were controlled by military personnel, both economically and politically. In addition, the economic field in Indonesia during his rule was also dominated by non-Muslim businessmen (Hadiz, 2011, pp. 18–19). Within the political sphere, ministers, regional governments, and many members of parliament are the part of the military personnel (Hamayotsu, 2002, p. 7).

For Suharto, his control in the economic and political fields strengthened his position and enabled him to lead Indonesia for 32 years. With the support of the military, political condition became more stable, without any significant disruption to his regime (Weatherbee, 2002, p. 24). If there were any protests, authoritarian acts would usually be taken, such as kidnapping or torture. Thus, many people, including those from the Islamic movements, preferred to keep silent without criticizing the Suharto government. Moreover, there were some indications that the armed group was not friendly with the Islamic movements at the time (Ramage, 2005, p. 40).

Because of the lack of freedom of the Islamic movements, the New Order government was seen as an anti-Islamic regime (Hamayotsu, 2002, p. 369). It was uncommon to see a woman wearing a hijab or saying greetings with Islamic style. The image of Islam and its culture built by the new order regime was not good.

Nevertheless, the spirit of posing Islam performance, such as the style of clothes and doing on time prayer, emerged among Muslim activists. Many Islamic activists were the product of efforts of M. Natsir in building networks through the Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council. He succeeded in establishing the Islamic and Arabic College of Indonesia (LIPIA) as an Islamic education institution to prepare the Islamic cadres collaborating with the government of Saudi Arabia.

After the Indonesian reformation, those cadres started to publicly announce the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi movements in Indonesia. Some Islamic scholars also began to convey critical thoughts addressing the various policies of Suharto, which were considered colored by corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN). Of those who have loudly spoken for reform, it was Amien Rais, a Muhammadiyah figure and an activist of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (Gibson, 2001).

Amien Rais wanted to build self-consciousness within the society related to various policies adopted by the New Order government. The lack of Islamic nuance within Suharto's regime and his failure to bring justice and welfare for all people were considered as the causes of people's disappointment, especially from the Muslims towards the New Order regime (Barton, 2010). Since Amien Rais and Gus Dur, who

represented two Islamic movements, Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama, had collaborated to fight against Suharto, the wave of protests against Suharto began to spread fast to the whole regions within Indonesia (Azhar, 2016, p. 43).

Finally, an opportunity to bring down Suharto coincided with the wave of global economic crisis, which also profoundly affected the lives of the Indonesian people. The worsened financial condition had caused the increasing number of people affected by poverty and unemployment. This condition provided an opportunity for various Islamic movements to emerge and express their interests. Under the banner of reformation, the Suharto government ended in 1998 (Tanuwidjaja, 2010, p. 32).

This era was called the period of Indonesian democratization. Various Islamic movements emerged and developed concerning politics, economic, and social fields. Moreover, the religious zeal within the society rose, as marked by the increasingly widespread popularity of Islamic culture (Nef-Saluz, 2007, pp. 16–17). Various new Islamic movements had their roots in the intellectual groups in both campuses and political parties (Zarkasyi, 2008, p. 336).

However, various challenges toward political Islam persisted because the spirit of unity among the Islamic movements was low, and the Islamic political road map in Indonesia was unclear. The Islamic movements fought and blamed to each other because of the differences in movement orientation. The Islamic movements in Indonesia vary from radical to moderate, supporting violence to peace, accepting or rejecting democracy, and traditionalists to modernists (Sirry, 2007, p. 469).

In political Islam, all movements agree to follow the Prophet's way of organizing Medina's people by combining the religious and political aspects (Jung, 2007, p. 23). In reality, the same understanding of the political concepts built by the Prophet cannot be quickly agreed upon to face the contemporary context. For example, in the context of democracy being considered as the ideal political system today, there are still differing opinions on whether Islam is compatible with democracy (Ahyar, 2017).

The dynamics that developed in understanding and practicing the concept of political Islam gave their color in the political discourse of Indonesia. Furthermore, global factors also influenced the local politics (Ziaee, 2014, p. 2). Many hoped that the opening of the freedom tap that began with the emergence of many Islamic movements would be a momentum for political Islam in Indonesia. However, despite some opportunities, there are many challenges faced by the Islamic political movements in Indonesia.

Imron Rosyadi noted that the Indonesian da'wah paradigm, which rejects secularism, might be interpreted as a support for political Islam. Meanwhile, their preaching is not concerned with normative aims such as establishing an Islamic state but rather with practical purposes. It is seen as a challenge for political Islam (Rosidi, 2021). As a result, Islamic organizations are typically perceived as intolerant and frequently engage in violent crimes (Sakai & Fauzia, 2014). Islamists in Indonesia are less likely than non-Muslims to embrace liberal notions of democracy. They are more inclined to prioritize economic matters and are more likely to favor regional autonomy and economic redistribution (Fossati & Mietzner, 2019). It is also a problem that the emergence of political Islam in Indonesia do not obtain many votes although Islamic parties are gaining popularity, they (Nastiti & Ratri,

2018). Therefore, previous researches have not explained the broader aspects to discuss the supports and challenges of political Islam during the Indonesia reformation.

Based on these conditions, this article aims to analyze various supports and challenges of the development of political Islam during the Indonesia reformation.

2. Methodology

To analyze the supports and challenges of political Islam during reformation Indonesia, the authors conducted literature research by collecting various references related to the topic, especially those from reputable journals. These references were then analyzed using the Nvivo 12 Plus software. The authors imported, classified, created code and case of the data. In making coding, the authors organized the data into two parts: coding on matters related to support and challenges to political Islam during reformation Indonesia. As for the case, the coding was classified based on the regimes of the Indonesian government, both before and after the reformation, namely Soekarno, Suharto, Habibie, Gus Dur, Megawati, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Jokowi. Subsequently, the matrix framework analysis and crosstab analysis were carried out. The collected and analyzed data were visualized in the form of charts, and interpreted and discussed based on the research findings.

3. Results and Discussion

This section discusses two essential points related to the supports and challenges of Islamic politics that developed after Indonesia's reformation.

Supports for Political Islam in Indonesia

There are some supports for the development of political Islam in Indonesia, especially during reformation era. Some of these supports can be described as follows:

First, the emergence of various groups supporting the implementation of Islamic sharia. After the fall of the New Order, several Islamic movements have been established, and they have a mission to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia or support the application of Islamic law. Not all of them are engaged in politics, but some are engaged in the social and cultural fields. Ideally, they want to bring the color of Islam to various aspects of life, especially those related to public aspects (Sakai & Fauzia, 2014, p. 42).

Some Islamic groups are developed in Islamic parties, and some are created through non-political channels. Partai Bulan Bintang/ Crescent Star Party (PBB), and Partai Keadilan/ Justice Party (PK) - now have changed their name to Partai Keadilan Sejahtera/Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Partai Kebangkitan Nasional/ Nation Awakening Party (PKB), and Partai Amanat Nasional/ National Mandate Party (PAN) are the examples of Islamic political parties. The non-party path, for example, was taken by the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (MMI), Front Pembela Islam (FPI), and Laskar Jihad (LJ), where they carry out various social activities to gain community supports (Karim et al., 2014, p. 83). Meanwhile, some of the non-political groups are

Tablighi and Salafi Jama'ah movements.

In essence, the emergence of various Islamic movements both in the form of parties, and social organizations, even including radical Islamic movements, has become exciting facts after the fall of Suharto (Noor, 2005, p. 13). Ahmad F. Yousif described them as a group of Islamic revivalists who intended to restore the purity of Islam (Yousif, 2004, p. 30). For them, the glory of Islam will reemerge if revolutionary movements can create changes from the current conditions back to pure Islamic teachings according to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (Nasr, 1995, p. 261).

This effort has also shown results in several provinces in Indonesia, especially in the era of decentralization. Some regions have attempted to implement Islamic sharia, for example, in Aceh, Cianjur and Bulukumba (Fanani, 2017, p. 163). Likewise, at the national level, the movements begin to emerge to enact anti-pornography laws with Islamic Sharia measures, which is different from the views of other religions, such as Hinduism in Bali (Epley & Jung, 2016, p. 57). It is related to the mission of the Islamic political movements in Indonesia to restore the Medina charter in Pancasila to implement Islamic law for its adherents in Indonesia (A R Baswedan, 2004).

Second, efforts to develop Islamic values in various aspects of life. Through this strategy, the Islamic groups do not need to show their support directly towards implementing Islamic sharia. However, they still can collect consent from the people who have strong enthusiasm for Islam. In another aspect, this strategy does not cause fear or misunderstanding from groups against Islamization. For them, the values of Islam, such as honesty, anti-corruption, hard work, and service, must be raised without carrying Islamic legal attachments directly. Norris and Inglehart argued that these spirits have improved due to the influence of various problems that cannot be resolved by the current secular system, such as the issue of economic disparity. Therefore, Islamic groups want to restore religious commitment for believing that Islam is the solution to all problems (Norris & Inglehart, 2011, p. 241).

Third, favorable public opinion on the implementation of Islamic law and the development of Islamic pop culture. Based on a survey conducted by the Global Attitude Survey in 2005, 77% of respondents believed that democracy is not conflicting with Islam. Even 85% of respondents stated that Islam needs to play a more significant role in democratization in Indonesia. Thus, they believe that Islam, through the Islamic political concept, can offer better solutions in overcoming various problems within the society (Kohut et al., 2005, p. 2).

In January 2017, the Institute for Islamic and Community Studies Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University also conducted a survey and found that 78% of Islamic religion teachers in Indonesia supported Islamic law implementation. Even 77% of them believed that the conservative Islamic movements would be able to realize this goal. Therefore, Arifianto considered that this view could threaten the unity and diversity of Indonesia (Arifianto, 2017, p. 2). Moreover, Indonesian people who are considered more religious obtained their religious colors from conservative groups and santri (Abuza, 2006, p. 8).

Based on research conducted by the Center for Islamic Studies and Social Welfare, in 2001 and 2004, 77% of Muslims

prayed five times a day (2001), and that number increased to 82% (2004). Moreover, 81.4% of respondents also claimed that they were fasting for a whole month in Ramadan. Also, 28% of respondents claimed to routinely and often read Al Qur'an every day. Even in 2001, 61% of respondents considered Islamic law to be implemented among their adherents (Abuza, 2006, pp. 8–9).

The growing Islamic culture and identity within the society can be seen through the wearing of middle-eastern style clothing to justify religious teachings. It is also easy to find women wearing hijab, performing prayers and studying Islam in various mosques, especially in urban areas. Such phenomena were rarely seen before the reformation era.

Therefore, based on the analysis using Nvivo 12 plus, it appears that the development of political Islam in the reformation era has had more significant supports than before. The development of support for political Islam after this reform has been influenced by the opening of freedom of expression after the confinement of Suharto's authoritarianism. As Suharto's successor, Habibie provided more fantastic space for freedom for every citizen to participate in organizations. Therefore, the support for political Islam has reached its peak, i.e. 18% under Habibie. In its development, support for political Islam has declined, even at the lowest point in the Jokowi era with only 7%. It can be described in Figure 1.
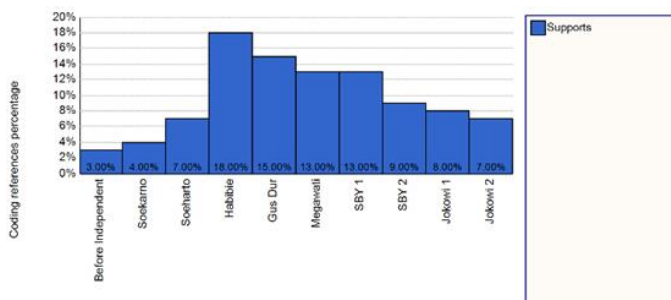

Figure 1. Supports towards Political Islam All Periods

This freedom also affects the field of the orientation of the Islamic political movements. Before the reform, they were more focused on exerting influence in the bureaucratic and economic fields. Then, post-Suharto efforts began to emerge to influence the formal legal, socio-cultural, and political areas. It happened because the Indonesian reform concerned the issues of politics and law. Moreover, the social-cultural aspects were influenced by the development of freedom during the Indonesian democratization. Figure 2 describes these conditions.
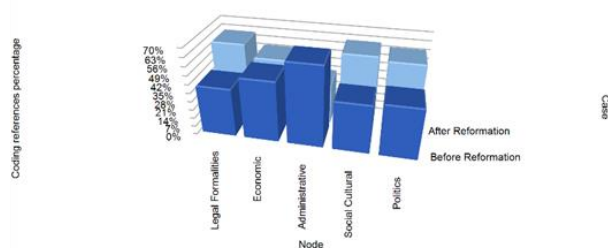

Figure 2. Supports in All Fields before and after Reformation

Challenges towards Political Islam in Indonesia

Although quite many supports have emerged for the

development of political Islam in Indonesia, the challenges cannot be eliminated. Instead, it even increases along with the development of various Islamic movements and political circumstances. Some of these challenges are:

First, in several provinces in Indonesia, anti-Islamization movements have emerged, especially those from minority Muslim areas, such as Papua and Bali. For them, if Islamic law is accommodated in some areas, they also want to apply their religious teachings, such as Christianity in Papua and Hinduism in Bali.

The development of these movements is also influenced by the condition of the disadvantaged local population due to various central government policies, especially in the economic, infrastructure development and human resources aspects. Papua, rich in natural resources and an essential source of income for Indonesia, is seen as receiving less attention from the government. For them, this is a form of oppression carried out by the Indonesian government, of whom the majority has an Islamic background. Therefore, it is not easy for Muslim migrants in Papua to be close to the native Papuans (Pamungkas, 2015, p. 39).

As in Bali, people have confidence that before the arrival of Islam, most Indonesian people were Hindu. According to them, the glory of Indonesia can be achieved again by discovering the true identity of the Indonesian people. Especially so far, Islam is considered a religion that supports violence. Bali feels like a victim for being the target of bombings carried out by terrorist groups twice. Also, the Balinese people oppose the anti-pornography and porno-action bill, which are considered the hegemonic effort by Islamic groups towards Balinese people's knowledge and local culture (Rozi, 2006, p. 82).

In addition to regional challenges, there is a view, especially from scholars considering that Islamization should not be developed in Indonesia to maintain a sense of cohesion in Indonesia's diversity. Islamization is supposed not to appreciate the wealth of the Indonesian people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Second, Islamic political challenges emerge from the image of Islam as a religion that supports violence and leads to the development of terrorism. Almost all terrorist attacks have been associated with Islam, especially after September 11, 2001, attacks and the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings (Nurdin, 2005, p. 21). As a consequence, every attempt is indicated to be affiliated with the Islamic movement and can develop because of the development of radical Islamic teachings.

Thus, various Islamic movements also find it challenging to describe the mission they carry freely. Even Islamic parties such as PKS declares itself to be an open party so that they can be accepted by all groups and minimize the negative stigma, which has developed related to the mission behind the Islamization project. It was in response to PKS facing declining support during the 2014 election (Ridwan & Kamarudin, 2019, p. 414).

The media's position favoring the anti-Islamization group has created an unfavorable perception towards political Islam among the public. Declining in support and votes has been experienced by Islamic parties in Indonesia. If Islam is described as a solution to various problems developed within the community at the beginning of the reform, slowly, the district considered that Islamic parties are no different from

other pragmatic parties. Even their support for the Nationalist Party has grown higher than that of the Islamic Party.

Therefore, the decline in votes and support towards Islamic parties is noticeable from the beginning of the reforms until Jokowi's era. During the 2004 election, Islamic parties won 38.1% of votes, and the figure continued to fall to 27.8% of votes in the 2009 election (Mietzner, 2008, p. 12). The PPP received 11% of votes in 1999, but the ballots shrank to 8% and 5% in 2004 and 2009, respectively. The PKB had a drop from 13% in 1999 to only 11% in the 2004 election and a drop to 5% in elections for 2009. In the same way, in 1999, PAN received 7% of votes, and in 2004 it dropped to 6.4%, and in 2009 it received only 6%. Only PKS showed slight growth from 1.4% in 1999 to 7.3% in 2004 and 15% in 2009 (Post, 2013). This number, however, declined in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

Meanwhile, support for secular and nationalist parties, such as Golkar, PDIP, and Democrats, experienced a significant increase. Golkar won 22% of votes in the 1999 and 2004 elections, respectively. Likewise, PDIP won 34% of the 1999 elections and 19% of the votes in the 2004 elections. However, in the 2009 elections, Democratic votes jumped to 21%, and Golkar and PDIP votes dropped to 14.4% and 14% (Fealy, 2009, p. 154).

Nevertheless, in general, the challenges to political Islam in Indonesia after the reformation have also declined. Based on all Indonesia president's administration periods, the highest challenges towards political Islam in Indonesia occurred in the New Order era. After the reforms, the challenges towards political Islam in the era of President Habibie dropped significantly. However, the challenges to political Islam have again increased, especially in the second period of the SBY government and during Jokowi's era. The two leaders used the image of Islam to strengthen their political legitimacy and had several problems with the Islamic movements.
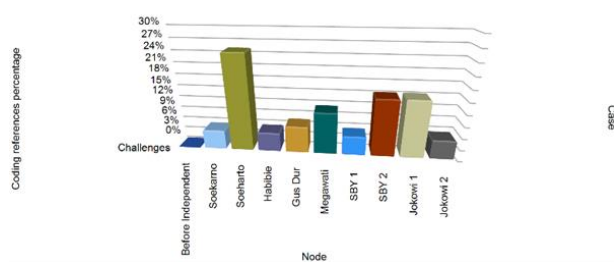

Figure 3. Challenges to Political Islam in All Periods

Therefore, in the first period of SBY's government and the lead-up to the second term of President Jokowi's election, they intensively conducted education on the basis and voice of Muslims. Opening the channels of communication with Islamic groups was intended to get support and votes from Muslims. During his first period of ruling the government, SBY felt the strength of the Muslim community was fundamental because he was dealing with Megawati, the incumbent candidate who controlled the power and could use the state facilities to be elected for her second period. While for Jokowi, embracing KH Ma'ruf Amin as vice president in the second period of his leadership was considered to get the sympathy of Muslims, especially from the NU group after the case of Ahok, who was convicted of blasphemy. At that time, without approaching Muslims, the chance of Jokowi to win the election was lower than his first-period election.

Figure 3 describes the dynamics of challenges faced for the development of Muslims during different presidential periods from the pre-reform era to the Jokowi administration period.

In addition, there has also been a shift in the field of political challenges during the reformation era in Indonesia. Before the reform, political and socio-cultural challenges were the most influential factors. While, after the reform, the most significant challenges were formal legal and economic factors. The political and socio-cultural challenges have drastically declined because Indonesia's reform process mainly is related to political issues. Also, the religious lifestyle among people has increased. These conditions can be described in Figure 4.
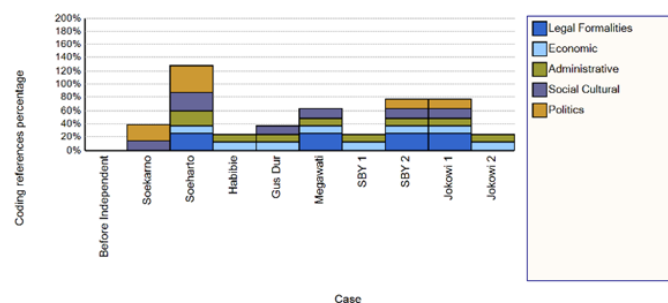

Figure 4. Challenges towards Political Islam in All Fields

4. Conclusion

Based on the above explanation, it is seen that the development of political Islam in Indonesia is strongly influenced by the supports and challenges that develop in each regime. In post-New Order Indonesia, the development of political Islam has been raised by the support to implement Islamic sharia in some regions, the Islamic style of people with the higher spirit of Islam in their lifestyle, and various values of Islam in various aspects of life.

However, in the political context, the massive development of Islam in the socio-cultural life of the community does not necessarily have a positive influence on the existence of political Islam and support toward Islamic political parties. The development of massive anti-Islamization movements has determined such conditions. In addition, terrorism, which is considered to have a close relationship with conservative Islamic groups, has posed fear among the people towards bringing Islam into the realm of political life. Thus, the political Islam in Indonesia has not been able to be massively developed.

Acknowledgements

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