The Role of Islamic Political Parties in Public Policy Formation in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Indonesian House of Representatives

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the role of Islamic political parties in public policy formation in Indonesia, with a focus on a case study of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). Three major parties, namely the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the United Development Party (PPP), and the National Mandate Party (PAN), were analyzed based on their historical backgrounds, ideological approaches, and concrete contributions to the legislative process. Using descriptive qualitative methods and document analysis, this study finds that these three parties actively promote policies that represent Islamic values, such as strengthening the sharia economy, religious education, and family protection. However, they also face challenges in balancing ideological aspirations with the reality of Indonesian pluralism and internal party dynamics. The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic political parties act as a constructive force in Indonesian democracy, while highlighting the dynamics of the relationship between religion and the state in the process of public policy formation.

Keywords: Islamic political parties, public policy, DPR RI, PKS, PPP, PAN, democracy, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

In a democratic system, political parties play a central role as a bridge between the interests of the people and decision-making at the government level. Among the various types of political parties that have developed, Islamic political parties have distinctive characteristics because they uphold Islamic values as the basis of their ideology and

direction. In Indonesia and in various countries with Muslim-majority populations, Islamic political parties have long been important actors in the dynamics of national politics.

Islamic-based political parties exist as a form of representation for the aspirations of a segment of society that wants Islamic values to be reflected in the life of the nation and state. These parties do not only focus on religious issues, but also seek to apply Islamic principles in the management of the state, such as the enforcement of public ethics, social justice, and clean government. Thus, the presence of Islamic political parties enriches Indonesia's democratic dynamics, which are open to various ideological views.

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the United Development Party (PPP), and the National Mandate Party (PAN) are three parties that have strong affiliations with Islamic values, albeit with different ideological styles and political approaches. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) is an Islamic political party in Indonesia that was founded in 1998. PKS focuses on social justice and community welfare. PKS is known for its consistent Islamist ideology in voicing policies that reflect moral and religious values. The United Development Party (PPP), or P3, is a political party in Indonesia.

When it was declared on January 5, 1973, this party was the result of a merger of four religious parties, namely the Nahdlatul Ulama Party (NU), the Islamic Unity Tarbiyah Party (PERTI), the Indonesian Islamic Union Party (PSII), and the Indonesian Muslim Party (PARMUSI). As the oldest Islamic party after the New Order, the PPP has a long history of fighting for Islamic law in the state system. Meanwhile, the National Mandate Party (PAN) is a political party in Indonesia that was founded in 1998 by Amien Rais and other figures. PAN is based on the principle of religious political ethics and aims to create a more just and prosperous Indonesia. Although more moderate, PAN accommodates modernist Islamic views and has historical ties to the Muhammadiyah organization.

PKS, PPP, and PAN hold important positions in the legislative process in Indonesia, particularly in promoting policies that incorporate Islamic values. PKS, with its strong Islamic ideology, is often the main driving force behind the drafting of bills that refer to the application of sharia principles, such as in the areas of Islamic banking, religious education, and public morality. This party actively proposes and oversees various bills that are in line with Islamic teachings and monitors their implementation in parliament.

The PPP, as the oldest Islamic party with long experience, plays a role in maintaining Islamic political traditions in the legislative system. This party contributes to the discussion and formulation of policies that support Islamic values in national life, such as the development of Islamic boarding schools, Islamic family law, and the role of religion in society.

The approach taken by the PPP tends to be moderate and inclusive, allowing it to serve as a bridge between traditional Islamic interests and the diversity of Indonesian society. Meanwhile, the PAN, which originated from modernist Islamic groups, acts as a driver of reform and modernization in lawmaking. The PAN seeks to harmonize Islamic values with the principles of democracy and human rights. In practice, PAN often occupies a middle ground that accommodates diversity while strengthening Islamic moral and ethical values in the legislative process. Thus, these three parties together make a unique contribution to the formation of Islamic-oriented public policy in the Indonesian parliament.

Islamic political parties such as PKS, PPP, and PAN face various dynamics and challenges in their efforts to integrate Islamic values into public policy in pluralistic Indonesia. This process often sparks debate among stakeholders regarding the extent to which religious teachings can be applied in a democratic and multicultural legal and governmental system. The main challenge for these parties is how to maintain a balance between their ideological aspirations and the need to respect the cultural diversity and beliefs of Indonesian society. In addition, they also have to deal with political pressure from other groups and resistance from people who are concerned about the potential exclusivity or domination of certain religious values in the public sphere.

Islamic political parties not only serve as a forum for the aspirations of the people, but also strive to realize Sharia values in public policy. Their involvement in the legislative process, government oversight, and policy advocacy is often characterized by a spirit of synergizing Islamic principles with the needs of a pluralistic society. However, this role often gives rise to debates regarding the boundaries between religion and the state, as well as challenges in maintaining a balance between religious values and democratic principles.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

1. To what extent do PKS, PPP, and PAN play a role in the legislative process related to the application of Islamic values

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This paper aims to critically examine how Islamic political parties play their role in public policy-making by tracing their historical background, ideological approaches, and concrete contributions to the system of government. A comprehensive understanding of this role is important to assess the extent to which Islamic political parties can be a constructive force in modern democracy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to understand the role and dynamics of Islamic political parties in Indonesia's democratic system, a strong theoretical foundation is needed as a basis for analysis. This theoretical framework aims to explain the main concepts that serve as a basis for examining how Islamic political parties carry out their representative functions, play a role in the public policy process, and interact in the context of Islamic politics and state institutional structures. With reference to the theories of political representation, public policy, political Islam, and institutionalism, this framework helps explain how Islamic parties represent their constituents, influence policy, and operate within the political and institutional structures of the Indonesian House of Representatives.

Political representation theory emphasizes the role of political actors, including Islamic political parties, in carrying out the mandate of their constituents in a democratic system. Political parties function as intermediaries between the people and the state to channel public interests through policy-making mechanisms. According to Pitkin in his book The Concept of Representation, representation is not only symbolic but must be accompanied by substantive actions that represent the interests of the people in the legislative and policy-making processes. In the context of the DPR RI, Islamic political parties not only represent the aspirations of Muslim constituents, but are also required to transform Islamic values into inclusive and constitutional public policies.

Public policy theory explains the interaction between actors, institutions, and ideologies

in the process of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Islamic political parties are important actors in advocating policies that reflect Islamic values. Thomas Dye, in Understanding Public Policy, states that public policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do. With legislative power, Islamic parties can actively determine the direction of state policy through involvement in legislative committees, commissions, and parliamentary forums, especially on issues of morality, religious education, and family law.

Political Islam theory examines the role of Islam as a political ideology in modern state systems. In Indonesian democracy, Islamic political parties function not only as electoral vehicles but also as instruments for translating Sharia principles into pluralistic legal and policy systems. Asef Bayat, in Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn, explains that political Islam is not merely the formal application of Sharia law, but rather how Islamic values influence public life in a democratic and contextual manner. Parties such as PKS and PPP carry out their Islamic mission in the legislation of the Anti-Alcohol Bill, the revision of the Criminal Code, religious education, and family protection.

Institutional theory asserts that political behavior and policy-making are influenced not only by actors but also by institutional structures and norms. The DPR, as a legislative body, has rules and procedures that can either benefit or limit the influence of Islamic parties. According to March and Olsen in The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life, political decisions are often influenced by institutional logic, not merely the rationality of individual actors. Therefore, even though Islamic parties have a specific agenda, they must compromise within the pluralistic and multiparty institutional framework of the DPR RI.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of Islamic political parties in the public policy-making process within the Indonesian House of Representatives. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine contextually how Islamic values are represented in national legislative discourse and practice.

In this study, data collection techniques were carried out through document analysis,

namely the examination of official state documents directly related to the process of forming legislation. The documents examined included: draft bills (RUU), enacted laws (UU), minutes of plenary and commission meetings of the DPR RI, and official records of Islamic political party factions related to the national legislative agenda.

Some of the main documents that are the focus of analysis in this study include Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, the Bill on the Prohibition of Alcoholic Beverages (proposed by the PKS and PPP factions), and the 2020–2025 National Legislation Program of the Indonesian House of Representatives, which contains legislative priorities with religious nuances. These documents were selected based on the relevance of their content to the articulation of Islamic identity politics in the formal arena of parliament.

The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques. This method aims to identify the themes, narratives, and arguments used by Islamic political parties in influencing policy substance. The analysis process was carried out in stages, beginning with the selection of relevant documents, the coding of content containing expressions of Islamic values, and the compilation of thematic categories based on the research objectives. Interpretation was carried out inductively to capture the meaning behind each political maneuver in the legislative process.

Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, which involves comparing information from official DPR documents with academic publications, policy opinions from credible mass media, and supporting documents from the official websites of political parties. In addition, the researchers also cross-checked documents to ensure consistency in the narratives and political positions taken by the Islamic parties that were the subjects of the study. With this approach, it is hoped that the study can make a theoretical and practical contribution to understanding the relationship between religion and the state in the context of Indonesian legislative democracy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profiles of PKS, PPP, and PAN in the Indonesian House of Representatives

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the United Development Party (PPP), and the National Mandate Party (PAN) are the three main Islamic political parties that have significant influence in national political dynamics, particularly in the formation of

public policy in the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). The PKS, which was founded during the reform era, is known as a party that is very consistent in promoting Islamic values in all of its political activities. Since first winning seats in the DPR in 2004, the PKS has continued to demonstrate its commitment to fighting for agendas oriented towards the implementation of sharia values and the welfare of the people.

In the 2019-2024 period, PKS has around 40 seats in the DPR RI, despite experiencing a decline from the previous period which reached 57 seats, but it remains a political force to be reckoned with in the legislative process (General Election Commission, 2019). PKS actively initiates and supports various bills related to strengthening the economy of the people, family resilience, and controlling the prices of basic necessities, all of which are rooted in Islamic values and social justice. In addition, PKS has a strong cadre base through its tarbiyah (education) da'wah network, which makes politics one of the means of da'wah to improve the social and moral conditions of the nation (Jazuli Juwaini, 2021).

Meanwhile, the PPP, as the oldest Islamic party in Indonesia, has a long, rich, and complex history. Originating from the merger of several Islamic parties during the New Order era, the PPP represents a broad spectrum of Muslims with diverse schools of thought and views. This diversity is both a challenge and a strength in enriching the discourse on Islamic politics in the Indonesian House of Representatives. The PPP acts as a bridge for the aspirations of Muslims who want to see Islamic values integrated into national policy, particularly in the areas of sharia economics, Islamic education, and Islamic law. In the context of legislation, the PPP is active in pushing for the passage of laws that support the development of a sharia-based economy and social protection for the Muslim community. However, internal dynamics caused by plurality of schools of thought sometimes affect the consistency of the party's policies, so the PPP must continue to consolidate in order to remain effective in fighting for the Islamic agenda in parliament (Mietzner, 2015).

On the other hand, PAN, which was founded by Muhammadiyah leaders, is also an Islamic political party that has a big influence in the Indonesian House of Representatives. PAN promotes moderate Islamic values and focuses on ethics and morality in national and state life. This party seeks to integrate Islamic principles into

public policy with an inclusive and nationalist approach, so that PAN often acts as a bridge between the interests of Muslims and broader national interests. PAN is also active in promoting the application of Islamic law in various aspects of legislation, especially those related to the protection of women's rights, education, and economic empowerment of Muslims (Buehler, 2016). Through its active role in the legislative, supervisory, and budgeting functions of the DPR RI, PAN contributes to ensuring that public policy is based not only on political interests but also on Islamic moral and ethical values relevant to the Indonesian social context.

Overall, PKS, PPP, and PAN play a central role in shaping public policy in the DPR RI by promoting Islamic values as the main foundation in the legislative and oversight processes. These three parties do not only focus on the narrow interests of Muslims, but also contribute to inclusive and socially just national development. They are active in promoting policies that support the sharia economy, social protection, and the strengthening of Islamic law, while also acting as a social control to ensure that the policies produced provide broad benefits for all Indonesians.

Despite their different backgrounds and internal dynamics, the synergy of these three parties in the DPR RI reflects the important role of Islamic political parties in enriching Indonesian democracy and shaping public policy rooted in religious values and nationalism (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019). Thus, a study of the role of PKS, PPP, and PAN in the DPR RI provides a comprehensive picture of how Islamic political parties contribute to the political process and public policy in modern Indonesia.

Strategies and positions of Islamic parties in the legislative process

1. Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)

Mass Base and Network Strengthening Strategy

The mass base strategy is the main foundation of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) to strengthen its political position. The PKS mass base is built through an extensive religious network, which involves religious gatherings, Islamic-based community organizations, and educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools and schools under the auspices of the party. In addition, several intensive cadre programs run by PKS aim to produce militant and loyal cadres who are expected to understand the party's vision and mission and are ready to play an active role in the

community. PKS also utilizes social media and modern digital platforms to expand its political communication reach, especially among the younger generation.

This strategy is not only used to strengthen political *engagement*, but also to build PKS's image as an adaptive and progressive party. This approach effectively bridges the gap between religious tradition and the need for modernization of political communication. In addition, PKS actively forms cross-party coalitions, both with other Islamic parties and secular parties, to strengthen its bargaining position in the Indonesian House of Representatives. These coalitions are mainly formed on strategic issues that require cross-party consensus, such as the social welfare budget, education, and sensitive socio-cultural issues. PKS strives to become an Islamic party with strong negotiating and bargaining power.

Ideological Moderation and Inclusion

Since the 2009 elections, PKS has slowly implemented a strategy of ideological moderation by including groups that are broader than its original conservative Islamic base. This is done in an effort to expand its voter base without abandoning its Islamic characteristics. PKS strives to present itself as an inclusive party that is not closed to non-Muslim or non-conservative groups, with the aim of becoming a competitive political force in a multicultural national context. This inclusion strategy is accompanied by political communication that emphasizes universal values such as social justice, eradication of corruption, and improvement of people's welfare.

PKS continuously maintains a balance between preserving its Islamic ideological base and pragmatic political needs in a moderate position. In terms of ideology, PKS adheres to three principles: first, the comprehensiveness and finality of the Islamic system; second, the authority of Sharia law derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and ijtihad; third, the contextual and dynamic nature of the application of Islamic systems and solutions in line with developments in time and place. Thus, PKS demonstrates its ideological flexibility within a dynamic Sharia framework.

Legislative Process and Policy Agenda

In the legislative process, PKS plays an important role as a critical but constructive opposition party. PKS is known for its selective and sharp stance on bills

proposed by the government or the House of Representatives. A concrete example is PKS's rejection of the Job Creation Bill, which was considered to be biased against workers and the poor, and whose formation process was deemed to lack transparency and democracy. PKS is also active in promoting policy agendas related to child protection, education, poverty alleviation, and social welfare based on the values of humanity and nationalism.

On controversial issues, PKS strives to maintain consistency in its political stance by remaining pro-people and upholding Islamic values. Professional and transparent organizational management is an important part of PKS's strategy in gaining and maintaining public trust. PKS uses intensive political communication mechanisms through mass media and social media as a means of strengthening the party's image and brand, while maintaining the loyalty of its constituents.

Post-Internal Conflict Strategy

After internal conflicts that gave rise to modified or splinter parties such as Gelora, PKS responded with offensive and defensive strategies to reinforce the organization's identity and stability. This strategy includes comprehensive organizational restructuring, renewal of the cadre system, and capacity building for party officials at the regional and central levels. PKS also intensified its digital and open campaigns to repair its public image, which had been damaged by the internal conflict. This approach aims to maintain voter confidence and strengthen autonomy in political decision-making, as well as maintain internal cohesion amid increasingly fierce competition between Islamic and nationalist parties.

2. United Development Party (PPP)

Islamic and National Bridge Strategy

The United Development Party (PPP) has a strong historical identity as an Islam-based party, but since the reform era, the PPP has developed a strategic approach to present itself as a political force capable of bridging Islamic values with the spirit of nationalism. The PPP seeks to position itself as an inclusive and adaptive middle actor in Indonesia's pluralistic political landscape. With its main base among traditional Muslims (nahdliyin), the PPP has developed a political strategy that is rooted in the

community, especially in rural areas and Islamic boarding school communities.

The PPP strengthens its position by strengthening its party infrastructure down to the branch level, approaching religious and community leaders as key partners in socializing its policies. This strategy has enabled the PPP to become one of the relatively stable Islamic parties in maintaining its support base amid increasingly complex political competition. In addition, the PPP has also adapted its political narrative by not only promoting religious issues, but also raising national themes such as the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, interfaith tolerance, and regional development.

Legislative Process and Strategic Issues

In the legislative process in the Indonesian House of Representatives, the PPP plays a role as the proponent of substantive Islamic values that are integrated into public policy formats compatible with the national legal system. Some of the legislative initiatives promoted by the PPP include the Draft Law on Zakat, Productive Waqf, and sharia-based economic protection for the people. The PPP emphasizes the importance of the state's role in facilitating the economic empowerment of the people through Islamic financial mechanisms such as sharia cooperatives, zakat institutions, and cash waqf.

In addition, the PPP is also actively fighting for a budget for Islamic education, strengthening Islamic boarding schools, and incentives for religious teachers, with an approach that prioritizes partnership between the government and the community. Issues such as strengthening the economy of the Muslim community, family resilience, and moral protection of the younger generation are themes that the PPP consistently fights for in every legislative session.

Legislative Agenda and Coalition

In the arena of coalition politics, the PPP is known as a party that is adept at building cross-party communication, both with Islamic and nationalist parties. The moderate character of the PPP allows it to act as a mediator in sharp differences of opinion in parliament, including in debates on sensitive issues such as religious education, anti-divorce bills, and other social policies. The PPP is also active in cross-faction forums that discuss social agendas and socio-economic reform.

The PPP has demonstrated its capacity to build long-term cooperation through strategic political alliances, including with major parties such as the PDIP and Golkar on development and economic issues. Such coalitions can strengthen the PPP's bargaining power in legislative negotiations and provide space for the party to direct policy substance in accordance with inclusive Islamic principles. Thus, the PPP is not only a complement, but also a driver of public policy that stems from the aspirations of the people and is in line with national interests.

3. National Mandate Party (PAN) Moderate and Inclusive Approach

The National Mandate Party (PAN) was born out of the spirit of reform and has an ideological background rooted in Muhammadiyah, one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. However, PAN does not position itself as an exclusive religious-based party, but rather builds an image as an open party that upholds the values of inclusiveness, democracy, and pluralism. PAN's strategy emphasizes a rational, moderate, and contextual approach in responding to national socio-political dynamics.

PAN strives to attract support from various social groups, ranging from modernist Muslims and professional groups to the urban middle class. In this regard, PAN not only offers a religious political identity, but also promotes programs based on accountability, government efficiency, and respect for human rights. In addition, PAN is also active in establishing communication with civil society organizations, academics, and interfaith leaders as part of its strategy to consolidate a broad political base.

Legislative Process and Functions of the DPR

In carrying out its legislative functions in the House of Representatives, PAN pays great attention to the aspects of transparency, effectiveness, and accountability of public policy. PAN strives to create laws that favor the people, particularly in the sectors of education, health services, and social protection. One of PAN's strengths is its consistency in promoting bureaucratic reform and improving the quality of public services through progressive and long-term legislation. The party is also active in its supervisory function (control over the executive), emphasizing the importance of checks and balances in the presidential system.

In the budget drafting process, PAN plays a role in overseeing the allocation and distribution of the budget to ensure it is more equitable and fair, as well as ensuring state intervention for vulnerable groups such as farmers, fishermen, and the urban poor. PAN also pays attention to increasing public participation in the legislative process through community involvement in hearings, public consultations, and

dialogue forums between the DPR and constituents. Thus, every policy that is produced is not only legal and formal, but also has strong social legitimacy.

Legislative Agenda and Coalition

In its legislative agenda, PAN has promoted many bills that focus on increasing the competitiveness of human resources, equitable development between regions, and innovation and technology-based economic development. For example, PAN supports strengthening regulations in the vocational education sector, incentives for startups and MSMEs, and laws protecting informal workers. In the realm of coalitions, PAN has a reputation as a pragmatic party that nevertheless upholds its reformist principles.

PAN often acts as a bridge between Islamic and nationalist parties in formulating a joint policy agenda, especially in the areas of human development and the people's economy. PAN also plays a role in forming a "substantive coalition" outside the formal government coalition, namely cross-faction cooperation to discuss strategic bills such as the Personal Data Protection Bill, the Social Workers Bill, and the New and Renewable Energy Bill. Through an inclusive and rational approach, PAN continues to strive to build a strategic position in the national legislative process, emphasizing that politics should be an instrument of public service, not just a struggle for power.

Case Study: The Role of PKS, PPP, and PAN in the Formation of the Pesantren Law (Law No. 18 of 2019)

Islamic boarding schools have long been an integral part of the Islamic education system in Indonesia, playing a role in character building and the dissemination of Islamic values. However, prior to the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Islamic Boarding Schools, these institutions did not receive the same legal recognition as other formal educational institutions. The absence of a strong legal basis meant that Islamic boarding schools often faced challenges in management, funding, and curriculum

development. This situation prompted various parties, including Islamic-based political parties such as PKS, PPP, and PAN, to fight for the legitimacy of Islamic boarding schools through legislation.

They played an active role in the formulation and enactment of the Islamic Boarding School Law, which not only provided legal recognition to Islamic boarding schools but also established a framework for the development of religious education in Indonesia. The involvement of these three parties reflects their efforts to integrate Islamic values into public policy through democratic mechanisms. With this background, it is important to examine in depth the role of PKS, PPP, and PAN in the legislative process of the Pesantren Law, as well as its implications for strengthening the position of pesantren in the national education system. This analysis will provide an understanding of the political dynamics in the formation of Islamic-based education policies in Indonesia.

Implementation

In the process of forming Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, the involvement of PKS, PPP, and PAN was not only symbolic but also evident in the legislative steps they took. These three parties used their positions in the Indonesian House of Representatives to fight for legal recognition of Islamic boarding schools, both through the preparation of academic papers, the initiation of draft laws, and active involvement in discussions at the commission and working committee (panja) levels. Thus, the implementation of the roles of PKS, PPP, and PAN in the formation of the Islamic Boarding School Law reflects the synergy between ideological aspirations, legislative strategies, and the interests of the people. Their efforts have not only succeeded in bringing about new regulations, but also marked the strengthening of the political position of Islamic boarding schools in national education policy.

Social Impact

The enactment of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Pesantren has had a significant social impact, especially for the pesantren community and the Muslim community in general. With a clear legal framework, pesantren now receive official recognition from the state as part of the national education system, equivalent to other

formal education institutions. This strengthens the social position of pesantren, not only as religious educational institutions but also as centers for character building and drivers of community development based on Islamic values.

In addition, the enactment of this law has also fostered a sense of confidence among students and administrators of Islamic boarding schools. They feel that the contribution of Islamic boarding schools to the nation is legally recognized and given room to develop more broadly, including in terms of funding, curriculum, and human resource development. As a result, the interaction between Islamic boarding schools and the community has become closer, and the existence of Islamic boarding schools is no longer considered as alternative education, but as part of a social and cultural system that has strong legitimacy.

Challenges and Public Discussions

Although the Islamic Boarding School Law has been passed, the legislative process was not without challenges and public debate. One of the main issues that arose was the concern of some groups in society about the potential dominance of certain religious ideologies in the national education system. In a diverse society, the implementation of policies based on religious values often raises concerns about exclusivity and discrimination against other groups. In addition, debates have also arisen regarding the autonomy of pesantren. Some circles question the extent to which state intervention through this law could interfere with the independence of pesantren, especially in terms of curriculum and institutional management.

There are concerns that the state will instead direct Islamic boarding schools to align with the formal education agenda, which could obscure the distinctive identity of Islamic boarding schools as traditional Islamic educational institutions. The developing public discussion also reveals a tug-of-war between political and ideological interests and the practical needs of the Islamic boarding school community. Although this law has been generally well received, various elements of society continue to call for its implementation to take into account the values of inclusiveness and not restrict the diversity of pesantren traditions in Indonesia.

Analysis of the Influence of Islamic Parties on Policy Outcomes

Islamic political parties such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the United Development Party (PPP), and the National Awakening Party (PKB) have a strategic role in the national legislative process, one of which is the formation of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools. Their involvement reflects an ideological commitment to prioritizing Islamic values in public policy, particularly in the field of education. The Islamic Boarding School Law is an important milestone that strengthens the position of Islamic boarding schools as formal educational institutions with distinctive Islamic characteristics, which were previously only recognized administratively under the regulations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs without a strong legal framework.

The role of Islamic political parties in this process can be seen from their legislative initiatives and political advocacy in parliament. The National Awakening Party (PKB), as a party with a strong base among Nahdliyin and traditional Islamic boarding schools, was one of the main proponents of this law. Supported by PKS and PPP, they constructed a narrative that pesantren are not only religious educational institutions, but also centers of social and cultural development that contribute greatly to national development. This collaboration between Islamic political parties demonstrates ideological-based political power that is capable of influencing state policy in the field of Islamic education.

The formation of the Islamic Boarding School Law is clear evidence of the strategic role of Islamic political parties in integrating Islamic values into the national legal system, which is in line with the concept in Political Representation Theory. Islamic political parties do not only function as symbols or conveyors of the aspirations of the people, but also act substantively in representing the interests of Muslim constituents and transforming Islamic values into inclusive and constitutional public policies. In this process, Islamic parties use democratic mechanisms as instruments of policy advocacy, as explained in Public Policy Theory, in which political actors utilize their legislative positions to determine the direction of state policy. Their involvement in legislative committees and parliamentary forums enabled the passing of the Pesantren Law, which recognizes pesantren as multifunctional institutions—education, da'wah, and community empowerment—that contribute to inclusive and moderate national development.

From the perspective of Islamic Political Theory, this Pesantren Law demonstrates how

Islamic values can be translated democratically and contextually into a pluralistic state legal system, in which Islamic political parties such as PKS and PPP carry out their ideological missions without neglecting the principles of nationalism and pluralism. Furthermore, this success is also inseparable from the institutional dynamics of the Indonesian House of Representatives, which are governed by certain norms and procedures, as explained in Institutional Theory, which requires Islamic parties to compromise and build consensus with other parties within a pluralistic and multiparty framework. Thus, the formation of the Pesantren Law demonstrates the political maturity of Islamic parties in framing religious issues into inclusive, moderate, and adaptive public policies, while also proving that identity politics managed constructively through parliamentary channels can strengthen the nation's social and cultural integration, not the opposite. Overall, this process confirms that Islamic political parties are capable of playing a dual role as representatives of the people and strategic actors in Indonesia's political system, producing policies that not only fulfill the aspirations of Muslims but are also in line with the principles of a pluralistic democratic state.

Challenges: Coalition Dynamics, Secular Group Resistance, Internal Fragmentation.

Coalition Dynamics

Islamic political parties in Indonesia, especially PKS, PPP, and PAN, are often involved in coalitions to strengthen their position in the Indonesian House of Representatives. However, these coalition dynamics face major challenges due to differences in ideology, political approaches, and strategic interests between parties. PKS is known for its consistent and conservative Islamist ideology, while PPP is more moderate and inclusive, and PAN takes a middle position by accommodating modernist and nationalist Islamic views. These differences often hinder the achievement of consensus in decision-making, especially on strategic issues such as Sharia-based legislation, religious education, and public morality.

In addition, the Islamic party coalition was expected to be an alternative to the dominance of nationalist parties, but its implementation has not always been smooth. Pragmatic interests in maintaining the stability of the coalition often force Islamic parties to compromise on issues that are important to their voter base. As a result, there

is dissatisfaction among constituents who feel that Islamic values are not being fought for to the fullest extent possible. An unstable coalition also causes uncertainty in the legislative process, making it difficult for Islamic parties to push through important agendas without strong support from coalition partners.

Resistance from Secular Groups

Amidst the plurality of Indonesian society, secular groups both from political parties and civil society—often resist legislative proposals that are considered to overly promote Islamic values. Bills containing elements of Sharia law, for example, are often rejected on the grounds of preserving the principles of a secular and pluralistic state. This resistance comes not only from secular political parties, but also from civil society organizations and NGOs that believe strengthening Islamic values in public policy could threaten diversity.

To overcome this resistance, Islamic parties must negotiate and compromise in the legislative process. They often need to adjust the content of bills so that they are acceptable to all parties, which ultimately creates a dilemma between maintaining ideological principles and meeting political demands to gain broader support. In addition, resistance from secular groups also requires Islamic parties to build a strong narrative and educate the public about the benefits of their proposed policies in order to minimize the negative stigma attached to the Islamic agenda.

Internal Fragmentation

Internal fragmentation is a significant challenge faced by Islamic parties. Differences in views and interests among party members, such as between conservative and moderate groups in the PKS, often lead to internal conflicts. This has an impact on the instability of the party and reduces its effectiveness in the legislative process. Fragmentation is also prone to causing divisions, as happened in the PKS, which gave rise to splinter parties such as the Gelora Party.

Internal conflicts and leadership crises have also been experienced by other Islamic parties such as PAN and PPP, which have resulted in a decline in votes and party legitimacy. Leadership uncertainty has caused confusion among cadres and constituents, as well as reduced public trust. Efforts to strengthen institutions and consolidate

internally have been made, but this process requires considerable time and resources, and must be carried out carefully so as not to trigger new conflicts.

Comparison with recent studies and debates in the literature

The role of Islamic political parties in public policy-making in Indonesia, particularly in the Indonesian House of Representatives, is one of the central themes in contemporary political studies and continues to be a subject of comparison and debate in the latest academic literature. The study in the journal you attached highlights in particular the roles of three major parties PKS, PPP, and PAN which, although all based on Islamic values, display different ideological styles and political strategies. PKS is known for consistently promoting an Islamist agenda, with a focus on the implementation of sharia in the fields of economics, education, and public morality.

This party actively initiates and oversees various bills rooted in Islamic values and has a strong cadre base, making politics a means of da'wah to improve the social and moral conditions of the nation. The PPP, as the oldest Islamic party, plays a role in preserving Islamic political traditions and serves as a bridge for the aspirations of Muslims who want to see Islamic values integrated into national policy, especially in the areas of sharia economics, Islamic education, and Islamic family law. However, the internal plurality of the PPP often poses challenges in maintaining the consistency of party policies. Meanwhile, the PAN, which was born from Muhammadiyah, brings a moderate and inclusive modernist face of Islam, seeking to harmonize Islamic values with the principles of democracy and human rights, and often occupies a middle ground as a bridge between Islamic and nationalist interests.

A comparison with recent studies and debates in the literature shows that the role of Islamic political parties in Indonesia cannot be separated from the dilemma between maintaining ideological consistency and the need for pragmatic compromise in a pluralistic multiparty system. Recent literature emphasizes that Islamic-based parties, such as PKS, PPP, and PAN, must be able to balance ideological aspirations with political realities and the diversity of Indonesian society. Issues such as the Alcoholic Beverages Prohibition Bill, the revision of the Criminal Code, and the Islamic Boarding School Law have become battlegrounds between Islamist aspirations and the need to maintain the inclusiveness of public policy. This debate is also reflected in international

literature discussing the phenomenon of post-Islamism, in which Islamic parties strive to remain relevant in an increasingly pluralistic and democratic society. Methodologically, the studies in this journal use document analysis and triangulation. Sources, in line with contemporary qualitative research practices, to ensure data validity and consistency in the political narratives of Islamic parties in parliament.

Theoretically, this discussion adopts the framework of political representation, public policy, political Islam, and institutionalism, which is also widely used in recent studies to explain how Islamic parties not only become channels for the aspirations of the people, but also must adapt to institutional logic and national political dynamics. The findings confirm that PKS is the most consistent in carrying out its Islamist agenda, while PPP and PAN tend to be more moderate and pragmatic. This is in line with findings in the latest literature that highlight the challenges faced by Islamic parties in maintaining their ideological relevance amid the demands of democracy and pluralism. Thus, its contribution is not only to enrich the understanding of the dynamics of Islamic political parties in Indonesia, but also to strengthen academic discussions on the relationship between religion and the state in the context of an evolving legislative democracy.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Islamic political parties, in this case the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the United Development Party (PPP), and the National Mandate Party (PAN), play a strategic role in the dynamics of public policy in Indonesia, particularly through their representation in parliament. The three parties are not only channels for the aspirations of Muslims, but also function as legislative agents that actively formulate policies that reflect moral, social, and religious values in a pluralistic and democratic state context.

Ideologically, the three parties display a spectrum of different approaches: PKS is known for its consistency in voicing an Islamist agenda, PPP plays a role as a bridge between Islamic tradition and national needs, while PAN takes a more moderate and contextual position, accommodating modern Islamic values within the framework of nationalism. These differences enrich the political landscape of Islam in Indonesia's multiparty system and show that Islam in politics is not singular, but rather flexible to

social contexts and democratic demands.

One concrete achievement of the synergy between these three parties can be seen in the legislative process and the passing of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic boarding schools. Their success in promoting the legalization of Islamic boarding schools as an integral part of the national education system demonstrates the ability of Islamic parties to articulate Islamic values into national legal norms without disrupting the principles of diversity and inclusiveness. This is also proof that ideological aspirations can be translated into public policy in a deliberative and constitutional manner through a democratic political process.

This study shows that Islamic parties face internal challenges such as ideological fragmentation, leadership conflicts, and strategic differences. Externally, they must face resistance from secular groups, nationalist parties, and the reality of Indonesian pluralism, which demands adaptation and compromise. In addition, the changing dynamics of political coalitions force Islamic parties to balance idealism and pragmatism in order to remain relevant in the legislature.

Using the approaches of political representation theory, public policy theory, political Islam theory, and institutionalism, this study shows that Islamic political parties are not merely electoral tools or symbolic entities, but also substantive actors in the legislative process capable of influencing the direction of state policy. They utilize formal channels in the democratic system to fight for Islamic values that are substantive and transformative in nature. In this case, Islamic parties have played a dual role: as guardians of public morality derived from religion, and as rational political actors who must submit to democratic mechanisms and positive law.

Overall, this study concludes that Islamic political parties in Indonesia play an important role in democratization and public policy formation. Despite facing political dilemmas, they continue to uphold religious values in national life. Strengthening the capacity and integrity of Islamic parties needs to be continued so that their strategic role can be sustained in facing the challenges and aspirations of society.

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