

# Moving towards a Normalised Path: Political Islam in Contemporary Indonesia

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## **ABSTRACT**

As the largest predominantly Muslim country of the globe, Indonesia nearly achieves two decades of its democratisation wave since the downfall of the Authoritarian Rule in 1998. Most scholars argue that the democratisation in Indonesia today is situated by the fact that it is unlikely to suffer a regression, but its developments have slow paces towards an embedded democracy for years to come. Political parties, one of the crucial democratic institutions, have a significant responsibility to maintain the democratic system as they are the sole official representatives to create leaders and policies in the government. In accordance with this, political Islam nonetheless has its strategic role to establish the fate and future of Indonesia as a Muslim state outside the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. This paper portrays the trajectory of political Islam in Indonesia particularly Islam-based parties slightly under two decades since Post-New Order regime. Islam-based parties have a potential to be a moderate-official force in the government. It could be proven by the threefold indicator. First is the ripeness of Islam-based parties in coping with both internal and external stimuli such as the leadership change and elite conflicts, the constitutional reform and the electoral result. Second is the role of Muslim political forces in the parliament particularly in addressing the policy-making of controversial bills. Third is the involvement of Islam-based parties in the administration cabinet. To sum up, by applying the analytical framework on the party goal, political Islam in Indonesia has three distinctive features: As “the vote-seekers” in the election, as “the issue-advocates” in the legislature and as “the office-seekers” in the executive. These denote to a normalised path of political Islam in reaching out the embedded democracy.

*Keywords: Islam-based parties, democratisation, normalisation, Indonesia*

## **ABSTRAK**

Sebagai suatu negara dengan mayoritas Muslim terbesar di dunia, Indonesia hampir mencapai dua dekade gelombang demokratisasi sejak jatuhnya peraturan kewenangan otoriter pada tahun 1998. Sebagian ulama berpendapat bahwa demokratisasi di Indonesia saat ini terletak oleh fakta bahwa itu adalah

kemungkinan untuk mundurnya kemenderitaan, tetapi perkembangan perusahaan memiliki langkah lambat untuk menuju tertanamnya demokrasi selama bertahun-tahun yang akan datang. Partai politik, salah satu lembaga demokrasi yang penting, tidak memiliki jawaban signifikan untuk mempertahankan sistem demokrasi karena mereka adalah perwakilan resmi tunggal untuk menciptakan pemimpin dan kebijakan pemerintah. Oleh karena itu, Politik Islam tetap memiliki peran strategis untuk membangun nasib dan masa depan Indonesia sebagai negara Muslim di luar Timur Tengah dan negara-negara Afrika Utara (MENA). Makalah ini menggambarkan lintasan Islam politik di Indonesia sebagai pihak yang terutama berbasis Islam sedikit dibawah rezim Pasca Orde Baru. Partai berbasis Islam memiliki potensi untuk menjadi kekuatan resmi moderat pemed dalam pemerintahan. Hal ini dapat dibuktikan dengan indikator tiga kali lipat. Pertama, adalah kematangan partai berbasis Islam dalam menghadapi stimulus internal dan eksternal seperti perubahan kepemimpinan dan konflik elit, bentuk ulang konstitusi dan hasil pemilu. Kedua, adalah peran kekuatan politik Islam di parlemen khususnya dalam menyikapi pembuatan kebijakan kontroversial. Ketiga, adalah keterlibatan partai berbasis Islam dalam kabinet pemerintahan. Singkatnya, dengan menerapkan kerangka analisis pada tujuan partai, Politik Islam di Indonesia memiliki tiga ciri khas: sebagai “pencari-suara” dalam pemilu, sebagai “isu-pendukung” di legislatif dan sebagai “pencari kantor” di lembaga eksekutif. Ini menunjukkan jalur normal politik Islam dalam menjangkau demokrasi yang diterapkan. Kata Kunci; Politik Islam, Demokrasi, Normalisasi, Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

Despite late, Indonesia had met Huntington’s democratisation wave in the end of 1990s by the downfall of the New Order regime. Therefore, the least democracy can be defined as the death of dictatorship regime by replacing with democratic regime to establish free and fair elections where people could choose its political leaders to achieve stability at all degrees of life. At the simplest level, democratisation comprises three stages: the end of an authoritarian regime, the installation of a democratic regime and the consolidation of the democratic regime ([Huntington, 1991: 9-12, 35](#)).

In the case of Indonesia, as was depicted by [Feith \(1962: xi\)](#), the democratisation waves can be traced back to the era of parliamentary democracy in 1949-1957. This period however is not a part of the study analysis. The following democratisation was occurred on May 21, 1998 as a sign of the downfall of Soeharto as the second president through a reformation movement. Applying [Schumpeter’s \(2008\)](#) theory that the procedural standard of democracy is “free competition for a free vote” and [Dahl’s \(1972\)](#) criteria on democracy are related with contestation and

inclusiveness, this study believes that Indonesia passed the first and second stages of democracy.

Most scholars concur that the development of democratisation in contemporary Indonesia is going to move slowly towards consolidation. It is caused by, on the one hand, it has a lot of progresses, but, on the other hand, it is still fraught with many weaknesses ([Hefner, 2000: xviii](#); [Abuza, 2007: 35](#); [Abdulbaki, 2008: 242-244](#); [Bünthe and Ufen, 2009: 22-23](#); [Ufen, 2009: 153; 221](#); [Hefner, 2009a: 27-28](#); [Hefner, 2009b: 281-298](#); [Mujani and Liddle, 2009: 575-590](#); [Hilmy, 2010: 65](#); [Aspinall, 2010: 103-123](#); [Liddle, 2013: 83](#); [Aspinall, 2013: 126-146](#); [Liddle and Mujani, 2013: 25-50](#); [Winters, 2013: 11-33](#); [Magnis-Suseno, 2013: 30-35](#); [Mietzner, 2014: 124](#)). Thus, some scholars give different labels to Indonesia. [Ragame \(2007: 152\)](#) classifies Indonesia in 2006 as “a normal country” and quite strong on the politics, security and democracy. [Hadiwinata and Schuck \(2007: 18-19\)](#) postulate that Indonesia is “oscillating between a defective and an embedded democracy”. [Merkel \(2007: 46-47\)](#) prefers to categorise Indonesia into “domain democracy” which reveals that ‘veto powers’ such as the military, guerrillas, militia, entrepreneurs, landlords, or multi-national corporations take certain political domains outside the hands of democratically elected representatives. Meanwhile, according to [Mietzner \(2009: 124-146\)](#), “low-quality democracies” is a precise name for Indonesia. These distinctive epithets denote to the fact that democracy in Indonesia today is in *the scenario of stability* ([Merkel and Croissant, 2004: 207-211](#)) where it is unlikely to suffer a regression or rollback, but its developments have slow paces towards an embedded democracy for years to come.

These Indonesianists were mentioned above, nonetheless, have no doubt that Indonesia will meet to the embedded democracy as quickly as possible. In spite of a regression by reaching the status “partly free” in 2014, Freedom House already rated Indonesia as “free” in 2010 and called it as the most consolidated democracy in Southeast Asia. In addition, the Freedom

House's finding stated that Indonesia is still a leading state for political rights category in Southeast Asia in 2014. Thus, Indonesia more or less shall be considered to be the largest Muslim democratic country in the world.<sup>1</sup> It also denotes to the successful compatibility between Islam and democracy. In accordance with this study, political Islam within the country plays a vital responsibility and will be examined on to what extent its role in underpinning democratisation process nearly two decades since 1998. Islam-based parties as the sole official representatives of political Islam in the constitutional manner are the main concern of the study.

Methodologically, this study applies qualitative research. More specifically, the case study is more appropriate for its analysis. For data-gathering, the study utilises the documentary analysis. There are three steps of data analysis: reducing data, displaying data and drawing and verification. Moreover, the study aims to present the trajectory of political Islam in Indonesia by explaining Islam-based parties since post-New Order regime until present. Although a number of Muslim radical movements and local separatist deeds seemingly tend to cultivate their anti-democratic agendas, conversely, Islam-based parties have a potential to be a moderate-official force in the government. It is appealing to be examined further why they are able to participate with the rule of the game of the democratisation.

## **POLITICAL PARTY AND ITS CHANGE AND GOALS: THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

Plenty of political scientists have a similar concept that the political party is groups of people who bounded by similar belief, interests, commitment to struggle their ideal goals whether offering an alternative policy for the administration or occupying vital public positions in a constitutional manner ([Ostrogorsky, 1902](#); [Michels, 1915](#); [Neumann, 1963: 352-353](#); [Eldersveld, 1964: 1](#); [Sartori, 1976: 41](#); [Mainwaring, 1991: 41](#); [Maor, 1997: 10-14](#); [Scarrow, 2006: 21-22](#)). Moreover, [Randal \(1988\)](#) and [Mainwaring](#)

(1991: 21-43) presume that studies on the political party in developing countries correlates with issues around democratisation, ideology, party system, and institutionalism. Political parties in Indonesia broadly are quite in line with democratisation values and they can participate in the elections peacefully. Nonetheless, [Ambardi \(2008: iii, 327-328\)](#) posits that in the era of new democracy with multiparty system the party competition will end after the election and would be followed by the creation of a cartel. The origin of the cartelised party system is the parties' collective dependence on rent-seeking to meet their financial needs. Therefore, [Ufen \(2009: 160-168\)](#) posits that Islamist parties are no longer actively support the introduction of Islamic *sharia* or the establishment of an Islamic state.

The term "Islam-based parties"<sup>2</sup> which employed in this study indicates an obvious definition that the party related to a religious ideological foundation, to a set of symbols of Islam, to the history of its establishment and to Muslim society as their functionaries, supporters and members. More clearly, applying [Al-Hamdi's \(2013: 19\)](#) concept, the Islam-based party can be defined as an organisation which strives a set of Islamic values and Muslim society's interests through occupying the government institutions both legislative and executive wings in the constitutional manner. Gaining power can be earned by participating in the election encompassing doing political campaign, expanding popular supports and votes, and promoting various programmes and agendas which based on Islamic teachings.

This study intends to categorise Islam-based parties into two main groups. First is the nationalist Muslim parties.<sup>3</sup> This group uses religious values as the political base. Its supporters, members and functionaries are coming mainly from two major Muslim organisations: Muhammadiyah and Nadlatul Ulama (NU) due to historical reasons. Nevertheless, the party prefers to implement the substance of Islamic universal values rather than formalistic-symbolic ways. Despite employing Islamic tenets and symbols to attract popular votes, the party obviously rejects the

establishment of *sharia*. Therefore, it adopts *Pancasila*<sup>4</sup> as its ideological foundation and establishes more inclusive platforms. Second is the nationalist Islamist parties.<sup>5</sup> The party evidently adopts Islam as its ideological foundation, but it no longer imposes *sharia* as a main goal. It in turn prefers to underpin democratic and governance issues and revises its image by focusing on the issues of prosperity and justice, corruption eradication, religious tolerance, bureaucratic reform and the like. Their main linkage are *Jemaah Tarbiyah*, the Islamic Union (Persis) and a few in Muhammadiyah and NU.

In this context, Islam-based parties will be scrutinised by a theory which introduced by Harmel and Janda on the change and goals in a political party. [Harmel and Janda \(1994: 275\)](#) define party change as any variation, alteration, or modification in how parties are organised, what human and material resources they can draw upon, what they stand for and what they do. Thus, [Harmel and Janda \(1994: 266-268\)](#) convincingly provide three driving variables which determine a change in the party. First is *leadership change*. The shifting in party elites may be part of main indicator to change, where new leadership is considered to accomplish changes which have already been decided upon. Second is *change in dominant factions*. All parties have identifiable factions within them. Even some parties are partially can be classified as groups of rival factions. However, although the leadership change can occur without factional displacements, rather, the factional displacement cannot occur without changes in the leadership. In brief, the factional displacement is a result of the leadership change. Third is *external stimuli*. It denotes to an external shock which immediately correlated to performance considerations on a party's main goal which it causes the party's decision makers undertake a vital re-evaluation of the party's effectiveness on that goal dimension. It embraces a range of factors in environmental changes outside the party such as constitutional reforms, provision for public funding, birth of relevant new parties and changes in the proportions of votes and seats obtained

by the party (electoral or parliamentary threshold).

Regarding the party's goals, combining the thinking of [Strom \(1990: 570\)](#), [Downs \(1957: 35\)](#), [Deschouwer \(1992: 9, 16\)](#) and [Price \(1984: 112, 205-206\)](#), [Harmel and Janda \(1994: 269-271\)](#) employ a fourfold treatment of possible primary goals for political parties: vote maximisation, office maximisation, policy advocacy, and intraparty democracy maximisation. Firstly, for vote maximisers. The most obvious shock wave for the party is the electoral failure. The impact is the party will debate on how to wake up from dismal situations and seek another way to improve the party's achievements. Secondly, for office maximisers. It is only occurred in a country which adopts multiparty systems, not in pure two-party systems. If in the latter system, one cannot distinguish between vote maximisers and office maximisers as winning the election embraces controlling the government. Office maximisers focus on reaching power in a coalition government. Thirdly, for policy/issues/ideology advocates. In fact, the shock directly related to the party's policy positions is more important than the electoral failure and loss of participation in the administration. Such a shock can cause the alteration of the party's identity and the losing of the party's confidence. Fourthly, for intraparty democracy maximisers. The source of change for these parties occurs in their choice as an active representation which articulates members' majority wishes. External changes such as societal or party system changes could alter the makeup of the party's membership.

As the result, [Harmel and Janda \(1994: 272-273\)](#) identify four party goals. First is *winning votes/elections*. The victory in vote seeking is measured by the percentage of votes or seats which the party wins in the legislative elections. Second is *gaining executive office*. There is distinction between winning elections and gaining executive office. For an illustration in Indonesia, the Golkar Party won seat majorities in the parliament for period of 2004-2009, but it lost its president candidate. The success of office seeking typically is measured by participation in the administra-

tion cabinet and by numbers of ministries held. Third is *advocating interests/issues/ideology*. Some parties pursue the office whether through a coalition or not as a means of influencing policy. Fourth is *implementing party democracy*. As a matter of fact, only a small set of parties which want to do this goal. The German Green Party in 1980s and the US Democratic Party in 1972 are instances for this goal. It could be called also as *democracy-seeking*.

By applying [Harmel and Janda's \(1994\)](#) theory on the party goal as the analytical framework, the following discussions will examine the feature and role of Islam-based parties in three distinctive democratic arenas: election, parliament and administration.

## THE RISE OF ISLAM-BASED PARTIES AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA 1998-2015

The aftermath of the breakdown of Authoritarian Rule in 1998, plenty of Islam-based parties emerged in the political stage. According to [Salim \(1999: 7\)](#), there were at least forty-two Islam-based parties in 1999 with different features. Nevertheless, the Election Committee (KPU) decided merely twenty Islam-based parties which can be allowed to participate in the 1999 election, seven parties in the 2004 election, nine parties in the 2009 election and five parties in the 2014 election. During these four cycles of election, Islam-based parties were came on gone, because their fate is determined primarily by the required electoral or parliamentary threshold. It reveals that Indonesia's Islam-based parties have no vigorous influences to attract Muslim communities across the country despite million Muslims within. In the electoral performance, they are unable to dominate majority votes for more than 50 percent. It can be proven that Islam-based parties reached merely 37.53 percent in 1999, 38.35 percent in 2004, 29.21 percent in 2009, and 31.41 percent in 2014.

As the analysis object, this study selects five major Islam-based parties: The National Mandate Party (PAN), the National Awakening Party (PKB), the United Development Party (PPP), the



Justice and Prosperous Party (PKS), and the Star and Crescent Party (PBB). The considerations are based on a twofold plausible reason. Firstly, they represent major forces of political Islam and Muslim political aspirations in post-New Order regime. Secondly, they participated in four cycles of election respectively and have seats repeatedly in the parliament.

PAN was set up on August 5, 1998 and in turn declared itself in Jakarta on August 23, 1998 ([www.pan.or.id](http://www.pan.or.id)). Due to promoting inclusive and nationalism principles, this party adopts *Pancasila* as its ideological foundation. The party relies itself on Muhammadiyah linkages both at national and regional levels.<sup>6</sup> The current development shows that, based on the 2014 election result, the voter base of PAN is prevalent in almost majority districts across the country. The KPU's data proved that PAN in the 2014 election is the ruling party in Southeast Sulawesi. In spite of not dramatic, the electoral performance of this party declined during two cycles of election respectively by earning 7.12 percent in 1999, 6.44 percent in 2004 and 6.03 percent in 2009, but it rose slightly by 7.59 percent in 2014.

PKB was founded and declared in Jakarta on July 23, 1998 ([www.dpp-pkb.or.id](http://www.dpp-pkb.or.id)). With regard to its supporters and members, PKB tends to rely with Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) particularly from poor and lower-class people in rural areas of Central and East Java ([Evans, 2003](#)).<sup>7</sup> Despite encouraged by NU, the party officially adopts *Pancasila* as its ideological foundation. Therefore, PKB disseminates universal values of inclusivism, nationalism and humanism. With regard to its voters, the 2014 election depicted that major voters of PKB were remained centralised in East and Central Java. Since the early 2000s, this party frequently suffered internal conflicts and elite leadership changes. Consequently, the electoral performance of PKB decreased dramatically during two cycles of election by reaching 12.61 percent in 1999, 10.57 percent in 2004 and 4.95 percent in 2009, but it increased significantly by 9.04 percent in 2014.

PPP was established on January 5, 1973 ([www.ppp.or.id](http://www.ppp.or.id)) and

Islam is its ideological foundation. The party obtains popular votes from Muslims who already enrolled with the NU Party, Parmusi, PSII and Perti ([Aziz, 2006: 92-93](#)). Moreover, based on the 2004 and 2009 elections, it could be identified that the voter base of PPP is highly fragmented among elderly Muslim men scattered throughout rural and urban areas both in Java and outside Java ([Hwang, 2014: 68](#)). The 2014 election demonstrated that PPP was the dominant party in Madura Islands. In the electoral performance, the party obtained popular vote by 10.71 percent in 1999, but it decreased in two following elections by 8.15 in 2004 and 5.33 percent in 2009. By 2014, its vote improved slightly by gaining 6.53 percent.

PKS is a metamorphosis from the Justice Party (PK) which was created on July 20, 1998 and did not succeed to pass the required 2.5 percent electoral threshold in the 1999 election. Due to the influences of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the party adopts Islam as its ideological foundation ([Damanik, 2002; 2004; Machmudi, 2006; Permata, 2008; Noor, 2012](#)). By 2002, PK re-invented itself with a new name PKS which founded on April 20. The party is identical to young people, urban, educated, pious middle classes and students ([Hamayotsu, 2011b: 971-972, 975; Hassan, 2009: 25](#)). Since 2004, it made inroads among working class voters in urban and rural areas particularly in Central and East Java. Although it declared itself as an open party in 2008 and invited non-Muslims to join, there is no evidence to date that non-Muslims are enrolling within the party in significant numbers ([Hwang, 2014: 67](#)). The 2014 election reveals that the voter base of PKS can be found in urban areas of Java and outside Java. In the electoral performance, the party succeeded to increase its popular vote spectacularly from 1.4 percent in 1999 to 7.3 percent in 2004 and 7.89 percent in 2009. Sadly, in the 2014 election, its vote decreased slightly by 6.79 percent.

PBB was instituted on July 17, 1998 and was declared on July 26, 1998 in Jakarta ([www.bulan-bintang.org](http://www.bulan-bintang.org)). To find out its supporters, the party relies on former members of Masyumi and

members of Persis particularly in rural areas of West Java, Sumatera and Kalimantan ([Evans, 2003](#); [King, 2003](#): 105-120). The party also claims that itself is the only successor of the Masyumi Party. Due to compelling the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of *sharia*, this party accepts Islam as its ideological foundation ([Platzdasch, 2009](#): 40-46). The 2014 election demonstrated that major voters of PBB came from West Java, South and North Sumatera, West Nusa Tenggara and South Kalimantan. This party obtained 1.94 percent in 1999 and 2.62 percent in 2004 and earned parliamentary seats. Unfortunately, the party merely gained 1.79 percent in 2009 and 1.46 percent in 2014 and was unable to pass the required 2.5 percent of parliamentary threshold.

Generally speaking, there are some appealing perspectives concerning these five Islam-based parties. [Sukmajati \(2011: 246-263\)](#) believes that under a democratic system, Islam-based parties have hybrid features and rely on rational calculations rather than ideological considerations when they organise the party. Because of its rational calculations, [Woischnik and Müller \(2013: 78-79\)](#) presume that Islam-based parties have a potential to transform into democracy-friendly political actors and have a responsibility in democratic institutions. They also tend to tolerant and open to democratic principles as well as seek out partners in the area of party cooperation. As a result, [Priamarizki \(2013: 1\)](#) assumes that the formal establishment of *sharia* eventually is no longer a primary objective in Islamist parties' goals. These evidences, according to [Lee \(2004: 101-104\)](#), affect to the collapse of Islam-based parties in gaining majority votes. The driving factor is the incapability to manage and solve two main issues faced by Indonesian people: economic weakness and political turmoil. Afterwards, [Mustarom and Arianti \(2009: 2-3\)](#) posit that there are other determining factors which can be attributed to the decreasing of Islam-based parties in the electoral performance. First is the separation of piety and politics in Indonesia. Second is that the channel to implement Islamist agenda is not merely

found in political parties but also it can be earned through civil society and Islamic movements.

TABEL 1. THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF FIVE MAJOR ISLAM-BASED PARTIES IN INDONESIAN ELECTIONS, 1999-2014

No	Name of Party	The Amount of Vote (%)			
		1999	2004	2009	2014
1	PAN	7.12	6.44	6.03	7.59
2	PKB	12.61	10.57	4.95	9.04
3	PPP	10.71	8.15	5.33	6.53
4	PKS	1.36	7.34	7.89	6.79
5	PBB	1.94	2.62	1.79	1.46

Source: [www.kpu.go.id](http://www.kpu.go.id).

In other perspective, [Tanuwidjaja \(2010: 44\)](#) explains that the defeat of Islam-based parties in the electoral competition is not caused by the declining influence of religion in politics but instead by the increasing influence of religion in politics in where some nationalist parties are more accommodative to religious agendas and policies and by doing so they are able to capture the support base of Islam-based parties. In the context of electoral contest, [Buehler \(2009: 60\)](#) argues that Islam-based parties have been weakened by fierce intra-party competition which triggered by the most-open party list system. Consequently, Islam-based parties in many regions will likely come and go, their fates are determined primarily by the individuals and families to whom they hook their carts. Nevertheless, the electoral decline of Islam-based parties, according to [Woischnik and Müller \(2013: 79\)](#), are not meaning that political Islam is losing generally. A number of factors can play a role here, from the increasing Islamisation of formerly secular-nationalist parties to the loss of credibility due to entanglement in scandals.

In the different view, [Nasr \(2005: 13\)](#) precisely views these phenomena as a blessing in disguised on the rise what he called as “Muslim Democracy” in a number of Muslim countries outside Arab land since the early 1990s. Muslim Democrats tend to enroll other secular parties’ coalition to serve collective interests

as well as do not seek to enshrine Islam in the politics. Thus, [Nasr \(2005: 26\)](#) suggests that the model of Muslim Democracy as a moderation way should be implemented in the Muslim world. This model offers the whole world as the best hope for an effective bulwark against radical and violent Islamism. Nevertheless, in the case of the triumph of PKS particularly in the 2004 and 2009 elections attracts some scholars to examine entirely. [Hadiz \(2011: 17-18\)](#) and [Hidayat \(2012: 3\)](#) portray the victory of Islam-based parties in Indonesia (represented by PKS) compared with Turkey (represented by AKP) although they have different contexts of social and political environments. Both parties principally can adjust themselves with political systems within the country. They are relatively successful in convincing their members to trust the party and its leaders in different ways.

Institutionally, [Hamayotsu \(2011a: 133\)](#) demonstrates that Islam-based parties in modern Indonesia grew as a product of the permeation of personality-based clientelistic and ascriptive relations as well as lack of party institutionalisation as revealed by PKB. On the other hand, Islam-based parties succeeded to invent organisational cohesion achieved through party institutionalisation. It can be shown by the political survival of PKS. In the same vein, [Noor \(2012: 2\)](#) postulates that the more a party has been institutionalised there is a bigger chance of the party to preserve its cohesion. In contrast, the less a party has been institutionalised there is more possibility for the party to be fragmented. In the local stage, [Fionna \(2013: 187\)](#) posits that the organisational superiority of one party over another depends on the commitment and skills of local party elites and resources. More institutionalised party branches have greater capacity to conduct the party's agendas and provide channels for political participation. Meanwhile, less institutionalised branches, similar to the disfunctional New Order parties, tend to be passive and ineffective.

From empirical data, indeed that among other Islam-based parties, PKB is the party which frequently suffered internal clashes

by at least three main moments, i.e. between Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur and Matori Abdul Jalil in 2002, between Gus Dur and Alwi Shihab in 2005 and between Gus Dur and Muhaimin Iskandar in 2008. Moreover, PPP also has a critical conflict after the 2014 election between Suryadarma's faction and Romahurmuziy's faction. Meanwhile, PAN and PBB are more stable which indicated by neither significant conflicts nor leadership change outside the congress. With regard to PKS, although this party never suffered crucial conflicts and could be categorised also as a consolidated party, but some concealed conflicts are a tangible e.g., critical attitudes of Yusuf Supendi (2013), one of the PKS founders and the case of beef bribery which suffered by Lutfhi Hasan Ishaq in the early 2013 which influences to vague internal circumstances of the party.

Moreover, [Permata \(2008: 275\)](#) depicts that the discrepancy between the Islamist party's ideological aspirations and its actual behaviors as shown by PKS is not a result of a deliberate plan or hidden agenda to cheat democratic game. But, conversely, it indicates an unavoidable influence of institutions on the behaviors of rational actors. Likewise, [Machmudi \(2006: xvii-xviii\)](#) trusts that Islamist parties prefer to choose pragmatic ways in order to attract popular supports. They no longer impose *sharia* but, rather, it attempts to revise its image by focusing on the issues of prosperity and justice. Thus, as was studied by [Nurdin \(2009: 251-263\)](#), the Islamist party like PKS admits that democracy is the precise way for current Indonesia. As the result, political participation of Islamist parties in Indonesia increasingly normalised. According to [Hwang \(2014: 82-83\)](#), there are some indicators of Islamist normalisation. All Islamist parties participate regularly in elections, often forming electoral and legislative coalitions with nationalist parties to increase the likelihood of winning elections and to leverage their influence in the legislature. Thus, [Baswedan \(2004: 690\)](#) proposes four variables which will shape the future trajectory of Islam-based parties. First, the party should keep the distance from certain national figures.

Second, the party has to emphasise on party's activities rather than pragmatic deeds. Third, the party must involve its members and supporters in mobilising party's forces. Fourth, the party has to make an obvious position to the agenda regarding *sharia*. Baswedan believes that Islam-based parties are able to retain their majority in future elections.

From the data and analysis which were presented earlier, ideologically speaking, Islam-based parties in contemporary Indonesia can be classified merely into two main groups. First is "the nationalist Muslim parties". PAN and PKB can be embraced in this group. Second is "the nationalist Islamist parties". They are PPP, PKS and PBB. Nowadays there are no longer so-called as Islamist parties in Indonesia.

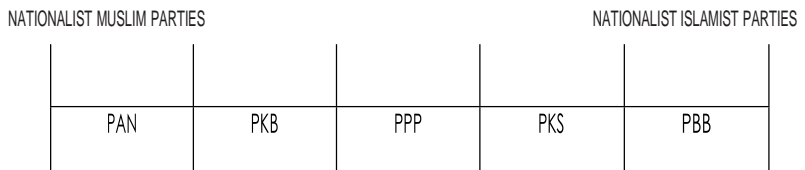


FIGURE 1. THE IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM OF ISLAM-BASED PARTIES

Therefore, it can be concluded that there are some features of Islam-based parties in contemporary Indonesia. Firstly, they have hybrid features. Secondly, they rely on rational calculations rather than ideological considerations. Thirdly, the introduction to *sharia* and the establishment of an Islamic state are no longer their main objective. Fourthly, they are potential to become democracy-friendly actors. In addition, it is also important to mention that although Islam-based parties tend to be "the vote-seekers" in the electoral arena, the fact demonstrated that Islam-based parties are unable to be the ruling party so that applying [Feith's \(1957: 61\)](#) theory on the degree of parties, "the middle player" is a precise epithet for them.

With respect to the driving factors of inability of Islam-based parties in leading in the election, this study provides a fivefold reason. Firstly, they are unable to deal with two main public is-

sues in Indonesia: economic weakness and political turmoil. Secondly, secular-nationalist parties are more accommodative and supporting to Muslim and Islamist agendas. In fact, Muslim elites enroll not merely with Islam-based parties but also with other potential parties. Thirdly, the channel to implement Islamist agendas is not only in Islamist parties but also it can be obtained through civil society and Muslim organisations. Fourthly, in the electoral stage, Islam-based parties have been weakened by fierce intra-party competition which caused by the most-open party list system. Fifthly, elites in Islam-based parties no longer have credibility and charisma because of the entanglement in scandals whether material or moral.

In the context of the party institutionalisation, this study classifies Islam-based parties into three sorts of group. First is the failed party namely PKB and PPP. Second is the successful party. They are PAN and PBB. Third is in a vague circumstance. It denotes to a situation that in particular cases the party is solid and consolidated but in other circumstances they are unstable. PKS could be encompassed in this group. Thus, more institutionalised, parties have greater chances to carry out party's agendas. In contrary, less institutionalised, parties tend to be passive and ineffective. Nevertheless, the normalisation of Muslim politics in recent developments draws a positive impact for democratisation in Indonesia as a democratic-Muslim state.

## **RELAYING ON ISSUES: MUSLIM POLITICAL FORCES IN THE PARLIAMENT**

Broadly, the percentage of seats of Islam-based parties in the House of Representative (DPR) was 35.40 percent for 1999-2004, 42.60 percent for 2004-2009, 30.16 percent for 2009-2014, and 31.24 percent for 2014-2019. Comprised with secular parties, indeed, Muslim political forces did not yet dominate the parliament. More specifically, Table 2 depicts that among Islam-based parties, PPP was the dominant party than others in two first periods of DPR while PKS and PAN were dominating in 2009-



2014 and 2014-2019 respectively. Although PKB was the leading party in obtaining popular votes in three different elections, in truth, its dominant votes were primarily from East and Central Java, not prevalent in all electoral districts across the country.

TABEL 2. THE PARLIAMENTARY SEATS OF FIVE MAJOR ISLAM-BASED PARTIES, 1999-2019

No	Name or party	The Amount of Seats							
		1999-2004		2004-2009		2009-2014		2014-2019	
		Seat	%	Seat	%	Seat	%	Seat	%
1	PAN	34	7.36	53	9.63	46	8.21	48	8.57
2	PKB	51	11.04	52	9.45	28	5.00	47	8.39
3	PPP	58	12.55	58	10.54	38	6.78	39	6.96
4	PK/PKS	7	1.52	45	8.18	57	10.17	40	7.14
5	PBB	13	2.81	11	2	-	-	-	-

Note: There are 462 parliamentary seats in the 1999 election, 550 seats in the 2004 election, 560 seats in the 2009 and 2014 elections respectively. Source: www.kpu.go.id.

*Muslim political forces in 1999-2004.* The 1999 election was followed by forty-eight parties. Of them, twenty were Islam-based parties. PDIP was the winner of the election by reaching 33.74 percent. The total of parliamentary seats were 462 which consists of twenty-one parties. Of the parties, ten were Islam-based parties. They were PKB, PPP, PAN, PBB, PK, PNU, PP, PPII-Masyumi, PSII and PKU. For the last four parties, each of them obtained merely one seat. Although PDIP earned dominant votes and seats in the parliament, it was unable to gain any positions whether as the spokesperson of DPR or MPR.

To create a fraction in DPR, some parties have to unite themselves with other parties. As a result, ten fractions were made: PDIP, Golkar, PPP, PKB, Reform, Military-Police, PBB, KKI, PDU and PDKB. The last fraction dissolved itself after it suffered internal conflicts and cannot fulfilled the DPR rules which should each fraction has minimum ten parliamentarians. Thus, during this period, DPR eventually has nine fractions. Of the fractions, five were Muslim political forces: PPP, PKB, PBB, Reform-Fraction (PAN and PK) and PDU encompassing PNU, PSII

and PKU. Meanwhile, two others Islam-based parties (PP and PPII-Masyumi) united themselves to KKI.

It is important to be stressed that the role of Amien Rais, a central figure surrounding the 1998 tragedy, was extremely significant in controlling and maintaining Muslim fractions' movements in DPR. It can be seen in the case of the rise and downfall of Gus Dur as the president. Through a strategic coalition 'Poros Tengah' movement, Amien Rais et al were able to rise Gus Dur as the elected president and defeated Megawati as other candidate. Refers to most scholars, the rise of a number of Muslim elites in the national political stage demonstrated the political resurgence of *santri* group after for roughly four decades was alienated by previous regimes. However, in the middle 2001, a terrible moment suffered by Muslim forces when Gus Dur was impeached through MPR due to his guilty in the case of *Bulog*.

In the same vein, it is undeniable that Muslim political forces in DPR had different thoughts in the debate of the amendment of the 1945 Constitution Article 29 on religion. On the one hand, the Islamist fraction comprising PPP and PBB concurred to apply the Jakarta Charter in the Constitution because not only Indonesia as the most populous Muslim country of the world but also *sharia* is an alternative way to solve public problems such as corruption, prostitution and casino. They proposed that "*The state shall be based upon belief in the One and Only God with the obligation upon Muslims to carry out Islamic laws*". On the other hand, the combination factions between nationalist-Muslim parties and secular parties refused the Jakarta Charter as this notion is no longer relevant with current Indonesian circumstances. The last group believed that the implementation of the Charter merely destroys Indonesian unity and creates disharmony among people who have distinctive beliefs. The notion was supported by major fractions: PDIP, Golkar, PKB, and the Reform-Fraction ([Sumarjan et al, 2002: 37, 42; Badan Pekerja MPR, 2000](#)). It is appealing to be noted that PK which has minor seats in the Reform-Fraction is imposed to reject *sharia* although this deci-

sion is contrary with its main goal. PK at the time suffered a dilemma.

*Muslim political forces in 2004-2009.* There were twenty-four parties which involved in the 2004 election. Of them, seven were Islam-based parties: PKB, PPP, PKS, PAN, PBB, PBR and PPNUI. Golkar reached the highest votes in the 2004 legislative election by 21.58 percent. It automatically led DPR 2004-2009. The total of parliamentary seats were 550 encompassing seventeen parties. However, to create a fraction in the parliament, some parties have to unite themselves with other parties. Consequently, ten factions were made: Golkar, PDIP, PPP, Democrat, PAN, PKB, PKS, BPD, PBR and PDS.

It could be seen that there were six Muslim fractions in DPR for the period of 2004-2009 which represented by PKB, PAN, PKS, PPP, PBR and BPD. Especially for the last faction, despite led by PBB, this fraction embraced five multi-color parties: PBB by eleven seats, PPK by four seats, the *Pelopon* Party by three seats, PPDI by one seat and PNIM by one seat. In addition, PBR is a new party headed by Zainuddin MZ, a prominent Muslim elder, and instituted on January 20, 2002. As this party was the result of internal conflicts within PPP, its ideological foundation is Islam. The party succeeded to obtain fourteen seats in DPR. A sparkling achievement. Nevertheless, this party was unable to maintain its political performance in the following elections due to not reaching the required 2.5 percent parliamentary threshold.

During this period, Muslim fractions created a dominant coalition in DPR along with Democrat and Golkar under the leadership of SBYJK who succeeded in winning the 2004 presidential election. Thus, in the case of the bill of pornography between 2005 and 2008, although two other fractions (PDIP and PDS) rejected this bill, all Muslim political forces in DPR forcefully concurred with this policy due to a fivefold reason. First is maintaining social moral and glorious human values. Second is perpetuating the values of cultures, customs and religious wor-

ship. Third is educating people on the importance of morality. Fourth is providing legal certainty for citizens from pornography particularly for children and women. Fifth is preventing the increase of pornography and sexual commercialisation among society ([Risalah Resmi DPR RI, 2006](#)).

This coalition nevertheless does not run very well. In particular cases there are distinctive views among of them. It can be seen when SBY's administration decided to increase the fuel price in 2005. Various attitudes and responses emerged in DPR. In the commencement, seven fractions (PDIP, PKB, PAN, PPP, PDS, PKS and PBR) rejected the increase of the fuel price. The rest (PD, PG, and BPD) approved this policy. However, the real politics in fact is always changing every time. Some fractions altered their policy. PDIP, PDS, PAN, PKB and PBR vehemently refused the increase, conversely, only PD and BPD were in the approval side. Meanwhile, PG, PKS and PPP were in a vague position. The last three parties, on the one hand, criticised the government policy, but, on the other hand, they can understand this controversial policy ([www.detik.com](http://www.detik.com), 15 March 2005; [www.balipost.co.id](http://www.balipost.co.id), 16 March 2005; [www.suaramerdeka.com](http://www.suaramerdeka.com), 22 March 2005; [Press Release PKS, 22 March 2005](#)).

*Muslim political forces in 2009-2014.* There were thirty-four parties and four local parties only in Aceh which participated in the 2009 election to pursue 560 seats in DPR. Of the parties, nine were Islam-based parties: PKS, PAN, PPP, PKB, PBB, PKNU, PBR, PMB and PPNUI. The highest votes in the 2009 legislative election was reached by the Democrat Party. It earned 20.85 percent. Consequently, DPR 2004-2009 was headed by this party. The total of parliamentary seats were 560. Due to the different of the rule of the game with previous elections that each party has to fulfil the minimum requirement 2.5 percent of the parliamentary threshold, nine parties succeeded to pass this threshold. They, in turn, automatically can make their own fractions. As a result, nine factions were made: Democrat, PDIP, Golkar, PKS, PAN, PPP, PKB, Gerindra and Hanura.

Four Muslim political forces in DPR re-invented the same coalition with the ruling party, i.e. the Democrat Party (including Golkar Party) under the leadership of the elected president SBY. Although this dominant coalition has made a common headquarters and regular coordinations, internal conflicts were frequently suffered by them in particular cases such as in the *Century Bank* gate and the rise of fuel price. In the case of the investigation to the *Century* gate in 2010, there were at least three kinds of view in DPR. First are Democrat and PKB. They believed that the policy to give the Short-term Loan Facility (FPJP) is appropriate with the regulation based on Perppu No. 2/2008 where the Bank of Indonesia has its own right to make and change its policy so that Indonesia succeeded to pass the economic crisis. Second are PKS and PPP along with Golkar, PDIP, Gerindra, and Hanura. They found empirical evidence concerning the indication of engineering in providing FPJP to the *Century Bank*. In fact, this way is not fulfilling the prerequisites in providing FPJP so that it eventually violates to the regulation. Third is PAN which argued that principally providing FPJP to the *Century Bank* is a proper way, but any deviation in the implementation ([Risalah Resmi DPR RI 2010](#)). By 2013, in the following case, Muslim political forces dealt with different attitudes concerning the rise of fuel price. On the one hand, six fractions were PAN, PKB, and PPP along with Democrat, Golkar, and Gerindra agreed with the increase of fuel price. On the other hand, PKS as well as PDIP and Hanura were in the refusal position ([www.viva.co.id](http://www.viva.co.id), 14 June 2013).

*Muslim political forces in 2014-2019.* The number of parties which participated in the 2014 election were twelve parties (national level) and three local parties in Aceh Province. They competed to pursue 560 seats. The winner of the election was PDIP by reaching 18.95 percent. Nonetheless, this party can not hold the spokesperson of DPR because majority of members in DPR which dominated by the KMP-Coalition concurred to elect Setya Novanto (Golkar). It was a terrible tragedy which suffered twice

by PDIP. Of the twelve parties, ten were passed the required 2.5 percent parliamentary threshold. They were PDIP, Golkar, Gerindra, Demokrat, PKB, PAN, PKS, PPP and Nasdem.

There were four Muslim political fractions in DPR 2014-2019. These four fractions nonetheless are in different coalition. On the one hand, PAN-Fraction and PKS-Fraction unite themselves with the KMP-Coalition together with Gerindra, Golkar and Demokrat. On the other hand, PKB and PPP move closer to the KIH-Coalition along with PDIP, Nasdem and Hanura. Although they are in the opposite coalition, in particular cases they have similar views and attitudes. For an instance, in the case of the proposal of the head of Indonesia's police around January 2015, they are in fact having a similar position to propose the sole candidate Budi Gunawan. From ten fractions in DPR, Gerindra is the sole fraction which rejected the candidate.

It can be glimpsed that in distinctive cases, Islam-based parties in the parliament tend to give a decision relying on an issue/interest. It denotes to the fact that there is no eternal in politics embracing coalition in political parties. Each party has its own policy in different issues. It could be that Islam-based parties have a similar policy in particular case, but it is likely if they have an opposite decision in another case such as in the case of the Jakarta Charter, the increase of the fuel price, and the *Century* gate. This fact also underlines to the importance of the party's identity which differentiate itself from other. As the result, it is a positive remark that the democratic system within the party moves in a good way, they have an autonomous attitude and do not usually rely on the big coalition, although they utilise "people power" as a legitimate trick for their last decision.

## **THE OFFICE-SEEKER: THE INVOLVEMENT IN THE ADMINISTRATION**

During reformation era Islam-based parties in general are a part of the government actor. Compared with other administrations, Islam-based parties reached the highest number of seats in

the cabinet is under Gus Dur's administration. The following is under SBY by eleven ministers in both Volume I and Volume II respectively. Meanwhile, the least number is under Megawati and Jokowi by five ministers each of them. Under Gus Dur's administration, the ministry of Islam-based parties was dominated by PKB's cadres by eight of fifteen ministries. Afterwards, PKS in fact does not involve into the government when the elected president was originated from PDIP. It can be seen by the absence of its cadres in the Megawati and Jokowi's cabinet. Meanwhile, PKB and PPP consistently seem to involve in the cabinet. In addition, due to its inability in maintaining the electoral performance since 2009, PBB never gained any positions in the administration under SBY Volume II and Jokowi.

Although it can not to be generalised since the political weather among political parties can shift rapidly, as a matter of fact, there is a common tendency in formulating the cabinet. Islam-based parties broadly tend to obtain the ministry of labour and transmigration (except under Megawati), the ministry of social affairs (except under Gus Dur) and the ministry of religious affairs. Especially for the last ministry, the government inclines to approve a minister which originated from NU, PKB or PPP, as they have close linkages each other. In can be seen that Tolchah Hasan, Said Agil Husin Al Munawar, Maftuh Basyuni, Suryadharma Ali and Lukman Hakim Syaifuddin who already headed this ministry were affiliated structurally and culturally with NU. Likewise, for the ministry of education, the government tends to appoint a minister which originated from Muhammadiyah or PAN. In can be shown that Yahya Muhaimin, Abdul Malik Fadjar, Bambang Sudibyo and Muhadjir Effendi who already headed this ministry were functionaries in the central board of Muhammadiyah.

More specifically, PKB and PPP tend to chase lower and poorer class-oriented ministries. It can be proven by PKB's experiences in the ministry of labor and transmigration and in the ministry of the development of disadvantaged regions. These two posi-

TABLE 3. THE INVOLVEMENT OF ISLAM-BASED PARTIES IN THE CABINET, 1999-2019

No	Name of Ministry	Administration				
		Gusdur	Mega	SBY I	SBY II	Jokowi
A	<i>Politics, Law, and Human Rights Sectors</i>					
1	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	√	—	—	—	—
2	Ministry of Defense	√	√	—	—	—
3	Ministry of Law and Human Rights	√	√	—	—	—
4	Ministry of Communication and Informatics	—	—	—	√	—
5	Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucracy Reforms	—	—	—	√	—
B	<i>Economic Sectors</i>					
6	Coordinating Ministry of Economy	—	—	—	√	—
7	Ministry of Finance	√	—	—	—	—
8	Ministry of Agriculture	—	—	√	√	—
9	Ministry of Forestry	√	—	√	√	—
10	Ministry of Transportation	—	—	√	—	—
11	Ministry of Labour and Transmigration	√	—	√	√	√
12	Ministry of Research and Technology	√	√	—	√	—
13	Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises	√	√	√	—	—
14	Ministry of Development of Disadvantaged Regions	—	—	√	√	√
15	Ministry for Investment and State-owned Enterprises	√	—	—	—	—
C	<i>People Welfare Sectors</i>					
16	Coordinating Ministry of People Welfare and Poverty Alleviation	√	—	√	—	—
17	Ministry of Health	√	—	—	—	—
18	Ministry of Education	√	—	√	—	—
19	Ministry of Social Services	—	√	√	√	√
20	Ministry of Religious Affairs	√	—	—	√	√
21	Ministry of Women Empowerment	√	—	—	—	—
22	Ministry of People Housing	—	—	—	√	—
23	Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs	—	—	√	—	√
D	<i>Administrative Sectors</i>					
24	Ministry of State Secretary	√	—	√	—	—

Source: Compiled by the Author.



tions were under the administration of SBY Volume I and II respectively and Jokowi. Meanwhile, PPP's experiences were in the ministry of cooperative and middle and small enterprises (under Gus Dur, Megawati and SBY Volume I) and in the ministry of social affairs (under Megawati and SBY Volume I). Undeniably, the ministry of religious affairs was theirs by turns, under Gus Dur was belonging to PKB and under SBY Volume II and Jokowi was belonging to PPP. This tendency cannot be separated from the social background of their main devotees which originated from lower and poorer people particularly in rural areas. On the other hand, PAN and PKS prefer to obtain middle and educated class-oriented ministries. It can be shown by PAN's experiences in the ministry of education (under Gus Dur and SBY Volume I), in the ministry of law and human rights (under Gus Dur and SBY Volume II), in the ministry of research and technology (under Megawati's administration), in the ministry of state secretary and in the ministry of transportation which both under SBY's administration Volume I as well as in the coordinating ministry of economy, in the ministry of forestry, and in the ministry of administrative and bureaucracy reforms. The last three positions were under SBY's administration Volume II. Meanwhile, PKS' experiences were in the ministry of research and technology and in the ministry of communication and information (both under SBY's administration Volume II), in the ministry of agriculture (under SBY's administration Volume I and II respectively), and in the ministry of forestry and plantation (under Gus Dur's administration). Meanwhile, PBB's experiences were more or less similar with PAN and PKS. PBB gained the ministry of law and human rights under Gus Dur and Megawati's administration as well as the ministry of state secretary and the ministry of forestry both under SBY's administration Volume I. This trend indicates the reality that PAN, PKS and PBB prefer to approach middle and educated people who dwell in urban areas.

To find out the involvement of Islam-based parties in the cabi-

net, they have been reaching twenty-four kinds of ministry by fifteen ministries in Gus Dur's administration, five ministries in Megawati's administration, seventeen ministries in SBY's administration and five ministries in Jokowi's administration. There are four sorts of ministry sector which already led by cadres of Islam-based parties as was displayed in Table 3.

In summary, this section portrays that Islam-based parties repeatedly took a part in the big coalition of government. In doing so, applying [Harmel and Janda's theory \(1994\)](#) on the party's goal, Islam-based parties can be typified as "the office-seeker". It denotes to a tangible proof that under democratic system Islam-based parties prefer to involve themselves with the administration cabinet rather than in the opposition side or outside the power.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

By applying the analytical framework as was explained earlier, this study provides three main findings. First is the rise of five major Islam-based parties in post-Authoritarian Rule 1998 and its development nowadays. It shall be simplified that Islam-based parties in Indonesia can be categorised into two main groups: The nationalist-Muslim parties (PAN and PKB) and the nationalist-Islamist parties (PPP, PKS and PBB). Therefore, there are no longer Islamist parties in contemporary Indonesia and they are in turn in a normalised situation. Additionally, due to its inability to become the ruling party in the electoral performance, Islam based-parties are middle players in Indonesian democratisation process.

Second is concerning Muslim political forces in the parliament. Although all fractions of Islam-based parties are continuously together with other secular parties in the big coalition, in fact, they have a different decision in loads of controversial issues such as the establishment of the Jakarta Charter, the rise of the fuel price and the Century gate. Each fraction has a distinctive attitude in each issue. It also demonstrates that intraparty

democracy can be found in Islam-based parties.

Third is the engagement of Islam-based parties in the government cabinet. During four distinctive presidents since 1999 until 2019, Islam-based parties continuously earned seats in the cabinet. Thus, it can be underlined that Islam-based parties have a power-oriented paradigm in the political stage. In other words, Islam-based parties in current Indonesia are office-seekers and have no potential to become the opposition fighters. These findings also demonstrate that Harmel and Janda's theory is relevant in developing countries especially in Indonesia.

All in all, this paper concludes that Islam-based parties have three features in three different political arenas. In the electoral arena, they tend to become "the vote-seekers". In the parliament, they are "the issue/interest advocates". In the meantime, they prefer to play the role as "the office-seekers" in the government. Those imply to the fact that political Islam in contemporary Indonesia is moving towards a moderate path. It is already in line with democratisation principles. Muslims within the country have to cultivate and promote this trajectory and avoid all sorts of unconstitutional manner including violence ways so that Indonesia in the imminent future is moving to meet the embedded democracy, social justice and people prosperity.

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