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The Influence of Poverty on the Politicization of Islam in Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the influence of poverty as a socioeconomic cause of political Islam. Using Indonesian survey data, it explores how Muslims come to support Islamic political parties, and whether the variable of poverty or low income predicts politicization of Islam with other variables under control.

KEYWORDS: political Islam, poverty, income, piety, voting behavior, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

A conventional political norm in the process of modernization is the establishment of a secular nation-state. The politicization of Islam—the emergence of a political party that aims to build an Islamic state and the popular support for such a party—appears to be a serious challenge to this norm. This political Islamism may be a simple expression of Islamic religious ideology, which advocates that religion and politics are inseparable. However, it is not always an attractive idea to every Muslim or every Muslim society. It may be possible only in a specific socioeconomic context. However, there are few studies on the socioeconomic context of Islamic politics. This is largely because of the scholarly tendency to dismiss political Islamism as a mere matter of religious conviction apart from its socioeconomic foundation. Nevertheless, the socioeconomic context of such a movement has to be re-examined if Islamism is more than a merely religious movement.

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This study aims to examine the politicization of Islam in post-authoritarian Indonesia, which is the largest democracy among Muslim countries. It examines the socioeconomic factors of the politicization of Islam, especially focusing on whether or not poverty (or low income) is accountable for it. In the next section, it reviews a limited number of existing studies. This is followed by the third section, on research methods and data. It then presents the analytical results of an ordinal regression model. It concludes by summarizing key findings and implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW: POVERTY AND THE POLITICIZATION OF ISLAM

Our study attempts to deal with the problem of poverty or low income as being among the factors affecting the politicization of Islam. In doing so, it will focus on economic issues that have been neglected in the existing studies on political Islam in general and the political cleavage and voting behavior of Indonesia in particular. It will explore how poverty or income levels are reflected in the politicization of Islam. From this perspective, there are not many significant political-economic studies on the politicization of Islam in general or political Islam in Indonesia. Before reviewing the limited volume of literature, we have to qualify the terminology. Since the politicization of Islam generally has many different meanings, its meaning needs to be narrowed in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Unlike the popular conception of political Islamism, the term "politicization of Islam" in this study does not mean radical or extreme violence, such as terrorism, practiced by some Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab countries. Indonesia, of course, is not exempt from terrorism by such fundamentalists. The Bali bombings are a good example. However, terrorism is certainly difficult to generalize or institutionalize as a normal political activity. It is simply a means, not a final political goal. Rather, this study focuses on the process of institutionalizing the politicization of Islam. The legalization of sharia, as part of the normal institutionalization, is considered an ultimate goal of the politicization of Islam. In this regard, the politicization of Islam in this study refers to political attempts to turn sharia into a state law and implement it, including the establishment of political parties having such a long-term goal in mind and the popular support for such political activities. The legalization of sharia is still ambiguous in some ways. More specifically,

to what extent sharia, as the total package of civil and criminal laws, should be approved as state law remains nebulous. It is controversial whether all the criminal laws of sharia should be incorporated into state law or whether some parts should be modified to meet present demands. For example, we can ask whether the penalty of hand amputation for theft should be made a state law or should be modified in any way in order to reflect high awareness of human rights.

Some additional remarks are also in order concerning the view that religious piety is separable from religious politicization.[1] A greater number of Muslims or heightened religious piety in society does not necessarily strengthen the politicization of Islam, however likely that result may seem. Although Islam advocates theocracy, or the inseparability of politics and religion, emergence of a political party using this religion for political gain is a different matter. However, the often-cited variables such as education and poverty in the separate literature on social secularization can also be employed to explain the politicization of Islam. One relevant argument for the purpose of our study posits that participation in religious activities in an agricultural society is the highest among the least-educated and poorest social groups. In addition, religious piety in an industrial society is higher among socially vulnerable classes, including poor households, than among well-to-do groups.[2]

Having said this, there seems to be no study that examines the direct influence of poverty, income level, or economic factors on the politicization of Islam, measured in terms of support for Islamic parties. However, there are some cases in which either income or education plays the role of a control variable with regard to the issue of religious intervention in politics. Driessen examines which variables affect support for sharia using World Value Survey data.[3] According to him, religious piety surprisingly has a negative correlation with support for sharia, while income has a positive correlation. However, this income variable is not statistically significant.

One strand of political-economic studies that prefers to interpret political Islamism itself as a variety of socialist theory tends to link poverty, problems

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1. Similarly, lower political influence of a religion and lower religious piety in society are two different matters. Michael D. Driessen, *Religion and Democratization: Framing Religious and Political Identities in Muslim and Catholic Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 22.

2. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 69.

3. Driessen, *Religion and Democratization*, 244.

of capitalism, and anti-imperialist movements to Islamism.[4] Even though this Islamic-socialist literature was built up independently of Indonesian politics, it arose from efforts to project Islam as an alternative socialist theory to communism, as well as a critical theory against capitalism. It is greatly concerned about the social penetration of anti-religious communism and the rise of serious social inequities as a consequence of exploitative capitalist development and imperialism.

Even though its terminology and targets of criticism differ, Islamic socialism shares some arguments with so-called communitarianism. Davis and Robinson indeed suggest that support for sharia is related to communitarian cosmology.[5] This sort of worldview goes against individualism and aims at economic communitarianism. In other words, people with this worldview support state intervention in the economy and claim that the state should care for the poor and deal with inequality. This worldview is not directly critical of communism and capitalism, but it is incompatible with today's prevailing neoliberal worldview. In addition, Davis and Robinson believe that this religious communitarianism is a feature not only of Islam but also of other religions. They claim that orthodox religious people, whether Muslim or not, have a communitarian worldview that shows a great interest in the welfare improvement of the lower classes as part of the same community. In this way, Islamism is arguably linked to concerned efforts that address poverty issues.

The existing studies on Indonesia's political cleavage structure deal mostly with the conflicts between Java and the peripheral provinces, confrontations between secular nationalism and Islamism, or clashes between traditionalist Islam and modernist Islam. As a result, it is difficult to find in-depth studies on how economic issues affect politics in Indonesia. In one of the few existing studies on the politicization of Islam in Indonesia, Hadiz explains that if a Western-style leftist party dealing with the contradictions or problems of capitalist development could not be formed properly in a Cold War situation, political Islam was likely to take its place.[6] In other words, he argues that

4. Charles Tripp, *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

5. Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson, "The Egalitarian Face of Islamic Orthodoxy: Support for Islamic Law and Economic Justice in Seven Muslim-Majority Nations," *American Sociological Review* 71.2 (April 2006): 167–190.

6. Vedi R. Hadiz, "Indonesian Political Islam: Capitalist Development and the Legacies of the Cold War," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 1 (2011), 3–38. The influence of the Cold War and that of its end are controversial. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*

political Islam took root because the establishment of a normal leftist party was suppressed during the Cold War.

The Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), which was the first communist party in Asia, gathered great support in the first popular elections (in 1955) after independence. The PKI took a leading role in Indonesian politics at that time in cooperation with Sukarno, who was the first nationalist and anti-imperialist president in Indonesia. However, a combined attack by the Indonesian army and Islamic forces eliminated the party in 1965.[7] It is true that capitalist development during the Cold War prevented the otherwise plausible growth of socialism and other leftist parties in Indonesia. However, why Islam, among many other movements, had to fill the political vacuum needs further explanation. Islamic parties only temporarily filled the vacuum after the fall of the Communist Party, and political Islam in Indonesia subsequently faded away under military rule. Therefore, the Islamic parties and the Communist Party were not substitutes for each other during the Cold War. Indeed, Islamic political parties were feeble in the New Order, but non-political Muslim social organizations and their social welfare and education networks played a significant role in coping with various social problems, such as the income gap between the rich and the poor, during rapid capitalist development. Hence, Hadiz's structuralist Cold War theory does not sufficiently explain the emergence of an Islamic party as a substitute for a leftist party. Yet, it is still significant in that it attempts to link Islamic politics to economic issues.

In another empirical study of the correlation between economic issues and Islamic politics, Hicks argues that the politicization of Islam does not come from purely religious motives but is related to the effort to resolve problems of social welfare.[8] She attributes the support for political Islam to the welfare-delivery function of Muslim social organizations. In addition, she implies that political Islam has weakened not because of the diminished attractiveness of Islam itself, but because of the weakened power of Muslim social

(New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), Samuel P. Huntington suggests that Islamism arises, above all, as an alternative to communism as the conflicts between the Islamic world and the West are intensified not by the Cold War itself, but in the wake of its end.

7. Jungug Choi, *Governments and Markets in East Asia: The Politics of Economic Crises* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 28–29.

8. Jacqueline Hicks, "The Missing Link: Explaining the Political Mobilization of Islam in Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 42.1 (2012): 39–66.

organizations to mobilize the public and act as the outreach organizations of political Islam. According to Hicks, the welfare-related role of these organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (Muslim Association, NU) and Muhammadiyah (Way of Muhammad) has diminished, while the welfare function of formal bureaucratic organizations has strengthened. Her theory explains, with reference to a welfare-delivery-system process, why the power of Islam to engage in political mobilization has weakened since Indonesia's democratization. This explanation does not directly deal with the influence of poverty on Islamic politics, but it might give some clue as to why the poor tend to be attracted to Islamic politics.

Nevertheless, Hicks's welfare-benefit theory is still disputable. It cannot sufficiently explain why support for Islamic parties was rather weak during the period of authoritarian rule, when Muslim social organizations were supposedly more deeply involved in the national welfare-delivery system. Nor does it explain why Islamic politicization became a serious social problem only after the democratic transition of 1998–99, when the direct power of state welfare organizations was enhanced, as claimed by Hicks. Since the role of the developmental state is relatively weakened and the function of the welfare state is enhanced in the wake of democratization, the welfare-delivery system of state organizations is understandably reinforced. Consequently, the existing Muslim social organizations are becoming less popular.

However, this cannot explain why the weakening role of Muslim social organizations in the state welfare-delivery system directly affects even the politicization of Islam. In order for Hicks's welfare-benefit hypothesis to be tenable, the emergence of Islamic parties should be directly related to the popularity of Muslim social organizations in Indonesia. However, there is no strong evidence for a political link between Islamic parties and Muslim social organizations. Indeed, it is difficult to explain how Muslim social organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah are connected with Islamic parties during Indonesian popular elections. It is known that the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party, PKB) is based on NU, and the Partai Amanat National (National Mandate Party, PAN) on Muhammadiyah. However, these two Muslim social organizations have never declared their support for any party. They are not outreach organizations of any particular party. Actually, it is difficult to define these two political parties as Islamic parties, since they do not adopt Islam in their party platforms.

An Indonesian party that has apparently adopted Islam in its official platform, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party, PPP), has worked with figures from the two largest Muslim social organizations, but these persons have been involved in party activities simply in a personal capacity. The Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party, PKS), another Islamic party prioritizing the Islamization of society over the legal enforcement of sharia, employs some Muslim social organizations for its political gains, but has recently clashed with members of existing Muslim social organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah.

Some other scholars even argue that the existence of civil Muslim social service organizations contributes to the moderation (not reinforcement) of political Islam in Indonesia. This sort of argument can be found in the study by Mujani and Liddle.[9] They posit that the biggest Muslim organizations in Indonesia (NU and Muhammadiyah) may hinder the expansion of Islamism because their leaders have moderate views and their general members also do not indulge in rigid Islamism. If this argument is true, it means that there is no correlation between the reinforcement of Islamic politics and the welfare activities of Muslim social service organizations such as anti-poverty and education services.

Some Indonesian studies deny that Islam has a trademark of policy friendliness toward the poor or that it is inherently related to socialist policies or populism. Instead, they argue that these welfare policies and populism are among the strategic alternatives that Islamic parties can employ to achieve electoral victory, since they are extrinsic to and separable from Islam. This interpretation assumes that Islamic parties can select a particular economic policy instrumentally and temporarily without their own economic policy. This assumption is contrary to the popular perspective that Islamic parties definitely have what we may call "economic policy," such as Davis and Robinson's view that Islamism is automatically connected with a particular economic policy (anti-liberalism, anti-market ideology, and anti-individualism). Furthermore, it is said that even if an Islamic party selects a populist policy, this Islamic party cannot benefit from it if another, non-Islamic party adopts a similar policy. In other words, these studies argue that Islam is not helpful in engaging in anti-poverty or socialist politics if other conditions are the same.

9. Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, "Politics, Islam, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Democracy* 15.1 (2004): 109–123.

In the strict sense, this means that an Islamic party has no "patent rights" or exclusive claims to a form of populism that addresses social issues such as poverty. According to Pepinsky et al., Islamic parties can benefit more from the economic sphere than non-Islamic parties only when these Islamic parties have ambiguous economic policies or do not have an actual economic policy at all.[10] When Islamic parties present apparently populist policies, these do not give them an electoral advantage over non-Islamic parties presenting similar policies. Pepinsky et al. conclude that Islamic parties can benefit more than non-Islamic parties when their economic policies are highly uncertain.[11] Even though they deny the correlation between Islamism itself and a particular economic policy, their study is noteworthy in its finding that Indonesian Muslims do not cast a vote simply according to their religious faith, regardless of its instrumental benefits.

Our study does not presume a proper relationship (either positive or negative) between Islamism and economic issues (especially poverty), but will examine it with an open mind through empirical data. In theory, either a positive or negative relationship is possible. If Islamism is understood as another form of "welfarism," we can assume that the lower classes will support Islamic parties as an alternative when no appropriate socialist party is available. On the other hand, it is possible that support for Islamic parties has its origin in religious piety, not in the poor living conditions of the mass public. Furthermore, one can argue that support for Islamic politics should be found not only in the lower classes, but also in the new affluent middle class, since these new classes growing in the middle of economic development have been leading Islamic revivalism in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA

This study deals with the politicization of Islam, which is one of the biggest political issues in Indonesia. The politicization of Islam has two aspects: the

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10. Thomas B. Pepinsky, R. William Liddle, and Saiful Mujani, "Testing Islam's Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia," *American Journal of Political Science* 56.3 (2012): 584–600.

11. It is difficult to agree that ambiguous economic policies result in support for Islamic parties. If voters are interested in economic policies, they may be rational and calculating. These voters may naturally consider whether such policies are practical and whether their contents are specific. In this regard, it is difficult to agree that these "rational" voters may support Islamic parties simply because of their ambiguous economic policies. Rather, this kind of voter will consider the policy ambiguity disadvantageous.

political-leadership aspect refers to the leadership role of elites in Islamic politics, and the mass-public aspect refers to popular support for these political elites. In this statistical analysis, we refer to public support for a party that engages in Islamic politics. However, issues of the nature of Islamic politics and how to determine whether or not a party pursues Islamic politics remain problematic.

It is especially difficult to solve these problems in Indonesia, whose politics overall remains highly ambiguous. Indonesia does not have any party that follows Islamism strictly, advocating theocracy. In this regard, the term "Islamic politics" in Indonesia does not refer to setting Islam as a total guideline for life without separation of politics from other spheres, advocating caliphal politics, or substituting the Quran, sharia, or ruling by a council of Islamic religious leaders for the existing secular constitution. Islamic politics in this narrow sense is seldom found among registered Indonesian parties nowadays. Of course, like Islamic parties in other countries, Indonesian Islamic parties put emphasis on the establishment of Islamic values and worldview, as well as on the daily practice of sharia. However, they keep silent or remain ambiguous about the details or the application range of sharia and its proper relationship with existing state law.[12]

Nevertheless, we can distinguish many different Indonesian parties by their positions toward sharia and Islam-related issues. First, the PPP and the Partai Bulan Bintang (Crescent Star Party, PBB) adopt Islam in their political platforms explicitly and do not accept the total national ideology of Pancasila as their guiding philosophy.[13] They were the most-Islamic parties in the debate on the constitutional amendment in 2002. Only these two parties and some other minor Islamic parties proposed to insert the Jakarta Charter provision of compulsory enforcement of sharia on Muslims into the 1945 constitution. Today's biggest Islamic party, the PKS, previously known as the Partai Keadilan (Justice Party, PK), adopted Islam in its political platform at an early stage of its formation and initiated its activities under the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is an Egyptian Islamist movement. Since the late 2000s, however, it has adopted Pancasila in its political platform and no

12. Bernhard Platzdasch, *Islamism in Indonesia: Politics in the Emerging Democracy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

13. Pancasila refers to the five basic principles of the Indonesian state: belief in one supreme god; just and civilized humanity; the unity of Indonesia; consultative and consensual democracy; and social justice.

longer publicly advocates the introduction of sharia into state law. It has presented general social norms such as anti-corruption and social justice as its major policies, rather than sharia-related issues. This party wishes to adopt sharia as state law in the end, but it prioritizes the social acceptance and practice of sharia over its ultimate adoption as coercive state law. In addition, this party did not agree to insert a controversial constitutional provision into the Jakarta Charter during the debate on the constitutional amendment in 2002.

The PAN and the PKB are more ambivalent than this party. These two parties can be defined simply as Muslim-friendly or Muslim-based parties, even though some studies do not classify them as Islamic parties at all. Neither party has as its major political goal a short-term or long-term introduction of sharia into state law. The policy platforms of these two parties are little different from those of other secular parties. Since their voting bases consist of NU and Muhammadiyah, respectively, the majority of their voters are Muslims. However, these two parties were not established by the two Muslim social organizations, which are politically neutral and not under control of any particular party.[14]

Apart from these pan-Islamic parties, even the parties that are usually considered part of the so-called nationalist camp do not completely exclude Islamic elements. The Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P), the representative nationalist party, tries not to completely exclude Islamic values, but embraces Islamic forces to a certain degree. Golkar, which was launched promising the unification of nationalist and Islamic camps, is even more accommodating of Islam. In this regard, Golkar includes an Islamic intellectuals' group. It is also one of the parties, including PDI-P, which actively supported the introduction of sharia in some local councils. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that the political parties in Indonesia are qualitatively different in terms of Islamism, since it is completely a matter of degree. Some parties are more Islamic, while some others are less Islamic,

14. Muhammadiyah, especially, attempts to get rid of non-Islamic traditions and adhere to Islam's inherent values, but this cannot be equated with a claim to stand for Islamic politics. Its objective is not to drive its members to follow *sharia*, but to make a Muslim more like a real Muslim, since its members acknowledge a genuine Muslim as someone who acts based on the Quran and Muhammad's teachings. NU completely rejects the anachronistic application of *sharia* to today's situations in Indonesia without any reinterpretation because it deems the localization of Islam in Indonesia to be important.

and there are differences in the degree of Islamism even in the nationalist camp.

Some Indonesian parties centered on the personalities of presidential candidates may also be counted as catch-all parties to overcome the fundamental confrontation between Islamic and nationalist camps and achieve their political unification. Accordingly, the PDI-P can be viewed as the least Islamic party, while Golkar can be considered a more Islamic-tolerant one. Lastly, the personality-driven parties established by powerful presidential candidates, such as the Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (People's Conscience Party, Hanura), Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia Movement Party, Gerinda), and Partai Demokrat (Democratic Party, PD), are more tolerant of Islamism than the PDI-P, and they accommodate Islamism as much as Golkar does.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, this study does not divide the Indonesian parties into two groups—Islamic parties and non-Islamic (or nationalist) parties. Rather, this study strives to rank them according to their affinity for Islamic politics and examines which variables affect their levels of electoral support. This will lead us to identify what the function is of electoral support for Islamic politics and how this is related to poverty or other economic variables. The present study estimates parties' affinity for Islamic politics with reference to their political platforms and their positions on sharia. While it is virtually impossible to quantify the Islamic affinity of each party accurately, it is easier to rank all the parties. For example, it is hard to measure and quantify the degree of affinity for Islamic politics of the PKS, PAN, and PKB. However, it is plausible to say that the PKS is more favorable to Islamic politics than the PAN, while the PAN is more supportive of Islamic politics than the PKB.

The dependent variables are set by ranking the Islamic parties in this way and then assigning a code value to each party. Since the key issue here is why Indonesian Muslims support Islamic parties more than non-Islamic parties, we begin by eliminating the non-Muslims from our analysis, so that our sample includes only Muslims. In the matter of party choice by Muslim voters, the most important independent variable of our interest is income. In other words, our study explores whether Muslims come to support Islamic politics as their income decreases or they become poorer.

It is highly likely that the effect of this income variable is twofold. On the one hand, the social penetration of Islam in Indonesia has been remarkable

during the unprecedented economic development of the New Order. This means that unorthodox Indonesian Muslims have become more socially Islamized during the same period.[15] Social Islamization and Islam's revival have strengthened predominantly among the urban middle class, in the wake of Indonesian urbanization and industrialization. The Islamic *dakwah* (preaching of Islam) movement represents this new phenomenon, which started on university campuses and later deeply penetrated society. This movement is not based on traditional religious organizations, nor is it active in poor rural areas. The PKS is the very political expression of this new Muslim movement. On the other hand, it may also be hypothesized that Islamic parties are more persuasive to the socially vulnerable classes, bearing in mind that Islam, in particular its *zakat* (religiously mandated alms-giving) practice, is considered friendly to the lower classes. Islamic parties also obtain votes from the existing patron–client networks, as most other Indonesian parties do.

Aside from the important independent variable of income, various control variables are also used in this model. One of them is education. Arguably, people are more easily attracted by others' arguments if they are less educated. The less-educated Muslims, whose political views do not exist or are at best flimsy, can be easily victimized by the radical arguments of well-educated Islamic intellectuals or doctrinarians. In contrast, considering that the emerging better-educated middle class is taking the lead in the Islamic revival in Indonesia, this politicization of Islam possibly enjoys more support as the education level becomes higher.

The political choice of Indonesian Muslims may be based not only on their economic difficulty or prosperity, but also on other socioeconomic factors. One such factor is whether they live in urban or rural areas. Indeed, one study argues that the major political base of Islamic parties is among rural voters, even though Islamic party leadership is urban in nature.[16] The level of support for political Islam might also depend on whether Indonesian Muslims are deeply embedded in the Javanese tradition. The more Muslim voters are influenced by Javanese culture, the less likely they are to be fascinated by political Islam.

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15. Greg Fealy and Sally White, eds., *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008).

16. Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, "Politics, Islam, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Democracy* 15.1 (2004): 109–123.

The more pious a Muslim is, the more likely s/he is to support political Islam, regardless of whether s/he accepts Islamic fundamentalism. In this way, the more strictly a Muslim observes the basic daily Islamic rituals, the more sympathetic s/he can be to political Islam. This hypothesis is the most powerful alternative to the hypothesis of poverty or income. In the hypothesis, the support for Islamic parties may be simply a manifestation of one's religious creed and piety, not a product of other socioeconomic influences. This is in line with the popular understanding that Islamism is nothing other than a type of purely religious expression. However, when buying an Islam-related commodity or symbol such as a hijab, Muslims consider how practical it is, rather than how Islamic it is; the same may be true of the choice between Islamic parties and other parties.[17] Muslim voters might choose a party after considering the tangible benefits they can obtain by voting for Islamic parties. In this case, their dominant consideration will definitely be a possible improvement of their living conditions.

Apart from these factors, an age factor may also have some influence; however, there is no solid evidence for it. The supporters of the PKS are predominantly young people who have completed college, but this is not necessarily true of other Islamic parties. Volatile social issues that pop up from election to election may also influence the politicization of Islam. One such example is the corruption issue during the 2004 elections in Indonesia. When corruption is perceived as the greatest national problem at hand, people might be more sympathetic to political Islam. This may result from a common perception that Islamic parties are less corrupt than secular parties. However, even if they politicize the corruption issue as they do the anti-prostitution and anti-gambling issues, Islamic parties cannot monopolize the issue. Other non-Islamic parties can also raise the same issue and take equal credit for anti-corruption. Thus, the influence of corruption on the politicization of Islam needs to be examined empirically.[18]

With these independent and dependent variables in mind, an ordinal regression model is selected from among various statistical models. With regard to statistical data, this study will use the Comparative National Elections Project data for Indonesia's 1999 legislative elections, and the Comparative

17. Greg Fealy, "Consuming Islam: Commodified Religion and Aspirational Pietism in Contemporary Indonesia," in Fealy and White, *Expressing Islam*, 31.

18. The main interest here lies in identifying the influence of corruption on Islamic politics, not on overall election results.

National Elections Project and Asian Barometer Survey Wave 2 data for the 2004 legislative elections; all three are post-election survey data.[19]

RESULTS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

When political parties in Indonesia's general elections in 1999 are ranked according to their degree of political Islamization, the PBB, PK, PPP, and Partai Nahdlatul Ummat (National Nahdlatul Community Party) were the most Islamic-oriented parties (Tier 1) among them, followed by PAN (Tier 2), PKB (Tier 3), and Golkar (Tier 4), in descending order. The least Islamic parties (Tier 5) were the PDI-P and Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia (Indonesian Justice and Unity Party, PKP). Accordingly, the degree of political Islamization of parties in 1999 is divided into five tiers. When we analyze Muslim voters' choices among these different Islamic parties through an ordinal regression model, we find that income is significant in deciding political Islamization (Table 1). Contrary to a common expectation, however, its influence is positive, not negative. In other words, Muslim voters are more sympathetic to political Islam when their income is higher than when it is lower. Aside from this income variable, the more pious Muslims are, the more sympathetic they are to political Islam, which supports the theory that political Islam is no more than a religious manifestation. As some Indonesian cultural-religious studies suggest, Javanese Muslims tend to be less sympathetic to Islamic politics than are other ethnic groups. This shows that the more embedded Indonesian Muslims are in Javanese culture, the less sympathetic they are to political Islam. When other variables such as age, education, and rural residence are examined, it is not possible to conclude that rural Muslim residents are more sympathetic to Islamic politics, as previous studies have suggested. Although the coefficient is positive, it is not statistically significant. The variable of education is not significant either. As for the variable of age, its coefficient is negative, and its p-value is .048. Hence, we may conclude that it is barely significant at a .05 level. In other words, we may say quite cautiously that younger Muslims are more sympathetic to political Islam.[20]

19. For the 2009 election, there were data from the Asian Barometer Survey. However, these data were excluded from the analysis because the results of party choice varied greatly from the actual election results. Election survey data for 2014 were not yet available to the public. Hence, our model has been tested with the data from only the 1999 and 2004 general elections.

20. According to conventional wisdom, parties can be divided into two groups: Islamic and non-Islamic. In this case, the PKB and the other parties that are more Islamic than PKB are grouped

TABLE 1. Political Islam in Indonesia in 1999: Ordinal Regression Analysis

Dependent variable: support for political Islamism

	β (CNEP)	SE (CNEP)	p (CNEP)
Threshold			
Tier 2	3.502	0.327	0.000
Tier 3	2.864	0.321	0.000
Tier 4	2.231	0.317	0.000
Tier 5	0.941	0.311	0.003
Location (independent variables)			
(1) Piety	0.157	0.020	0.000**
(2) Monthly income	0.269	0.085	0.002**
(3) Education level	0.059	0.049	0.228
(4) Age (generation)	−0.148	0.075	0.048**
(5) Rural area	0.145	0.120	0.226
(6) Javanese	−0.379	0.110	0.001**
$N = 1{,}130$; pseudo R^2 Nagelkerke $= 0.117$			

SOURCE: Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP).

NOTES: The CNEP survey data alone are available for the 1999 election. In terms of political Islamism, the first tier is designated as the strongest and the fifth tier as the weakest. This fifth tier practically represents nationalism. Although the dependent variable is divided into five, only four tiers appear in the table because the estimated value is the cut-off or threshold of each tier. Asterisks (**) indicate statistical significance at the .05 probability level.

As the number of meaningful parties was greater in the 2004 elections, the number of parties covered in the survey was greater as well.[21] This resulted in a finer categorization of the parties' support for political Islamism in the 2004 elections. The PK moderated its Islamic stance as it changed its name to the PKS. Consequently, the number of tiers increased from five to six. Personality-driven parties also emerged, and they attempted to unify the nationalist (or secularist) and Islamist movements, or to integrate these opposing streams

together as Islamic parties, and the rest as non-Islamic parties. When we analyze the given data with a binary logistical model, we find that only religious piety is a statistically significant variable in determining political Islam, while the others are not. As a result, we conclude that it is better to interpret political Islam as a matter of degree, rather than a dichotomy, in order to obtain more meaningful results.

21. With regard to the greater number of parties after Indonesian democratization, see Jungug Choi, "District Magnitude, Social Diversity, and Indonesia's Parliamentary Party System from 1999 to 2009," *Asian Survey* 50.4 (July/August 2010): 663–683.

under strong political leadership. This phenomenon predominated after the direct presidential election system was adopted in 2004.

In addition, some existing Islamic and nationalist parties were internally split. The classification of the 22 or 23 parties in the 2004 survey according to their affinity for political Islam gave the following results. The most Islamic parties included the PBB, PPP, Partai Persatuan Nahdlatul Ummah Indonesia (Indonesian Nahdlatul Community Unity Party, previously known as Partai Nahdatul Ummat), and Partai Bintang Reformasi (Reform Star Party, a splinter party of the PPP). They together constitute the Tier 1 group. This group is followed by the PKS (Tier 2), PAN (Tier 3), and PKB (Tier 4), in descending order of political Islamism. Golkar (a nationalist-Islamic united party), the PD, and the PKP (a splinter party of Golkar) constitute Tier 5 in terms of their support for political Islamism. The least Islamic group consists of the PDI-P (a representative nationalist party) and minor parties having few Islamic features or that are almost single-issue parties.[22]

The ordinal regression analysis in Table 2 shows that the likelihood of voting for Islamic parties increases when Muslim voters become more pious or when their income increases. However, the results show that Javanese Muslims tend to be less inclined toward Islamic politics. Where income is concerned, the Asian Barometer Survey data obviously do not support an argument that the poorer Muslim voters are, the more sympathetic they are to Islamic politics. Rather, they show that richer Muslims tend to support Islamic politics. Meanwhile, the Comparative National Elections Project data do not allow a relationship between Islamic politics and income to be established.

For education level, the likelihood of sympathizing with Islamic politics was statistically insignificant in the 1999 elections, while in the 2004 elections, this likelihood increased with voters' education. On the contrary, age was a significant variable in 1999, but it was not in 2004. This phenomenon might be attributable to the PKS's unprecedented success in the 2004 elections. The supporters of the PKS are known to be drawn mostly from the urban middle class and highly educated young Muslims with a college background. Our analysis of the 2004 elections reveals that education better

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22. These minor parties are the Partai Patriot Pancasila, Partai Persatuan Daerah, Partai Pelopor, Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa, Partai Penegak Demokrasi Indonesia, Partai Nasional Banteng Kemerdekaan, Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru, Partai Persatuan Demokrasi Kebangsaan, Partai Merdeka, and Partai Buruh Sosial Demokrat.

TABLE 2. Political Islam in the 2004 Indonesian Elections: Ordinal Regression Analysis

Dependent variable: support for political Islamism

	β (ABS/CNEP)	SE (ABS/CNEP)	p (ABS/CNEP)
Threshold			
Tier 2	3.439/2.995	0.321/0.350	0.000/0.000
Tier 3	3.020/2.282	0.316/0.342	0.000/0.000
Tier 4	2.599/1.913	0.312/0.340	0.000/0.000
Tier 5	2.082/1.304	0.308/0.336	0.000/0.000
Tier 6	0.228/−0.570	0.301/0.335	0.449/0.000
Location (independent variables)			
(1) Piety	0.072/0.213	0.028/0.072	0.009**/0.003**
(2) Monthly income	0.095/0.056	0.046/0.055	0.037**/0.308
(3) Education level	0.250/0.174	0.065/0.068	0.000**/0.010**
(4) Age (generation)	−0.009/−0.027	0.077/0.088	0.911/0.759
(5) Rural area	−0.097/−0.102	0.120/0.132	0.420/0.442
(6) Corruption	−0.109/n.a.	0.310/n.a.	0.724/n.a.
(7) Javanese	n.a./−0.285	n.a./0.122	n.a./0.020**

$N = 1{,}111/893$; pseudo R^2 Nagelkerke = 0.048/0.040

SOURCE: Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP), Asian Barometer Survey (ABS).
NOTES: The figures before and after the slash show the test results from the ABS and CNEP datasets, respectively. In terms of political Islamism, the strongest is designated as the first tier and the weakest as the sixth tier. This sixth tier practically represents nationalism. Although the dependent variable is divided into six, only five tiers appear in the table because the estimated value is the cut-off or threshold of each tier. Asterisks (**) indicate statistical significance at the .05 probability level.

accounts for the incidence of Islamic politics than age, even though most PKS supporters are young.

As in the 1999 elections, rural residence was not a significant variable in 2004. In 1999, this variable had a positive effect on the politicization of Islam, but its effect was not significant. Meanwhile, it had a negative effect in 2004, and it was even more statistically insignificant. In both elections, the variable of rural residence was not statistically significant to the politicization of Islam in any way. The directional change in its effect in the 2004 elections, however, may be related to the PKS's surprising performance. The PKS is primarily popular with urban Muslim residents, not with rural Muslim residents.

Lastly, what is interesting about the 2004 elections is that even though corruption—the biggest campaign issue at that time—influenced the overall results of the elections, our data are not conclusive that the corruption issue

strengthened *or* weakened political Islam. The test results show that, contrary to popular belief, this variable worked against political Islam, but this cannot be confirmed. In other words, Muslim voters who thought corruption was a bigger social problem than any other issue were less likely to support Islamic political parties. However, this estimation was not found to be statistically significant. Our test results imply that many anti-corruption votes for the PKS in 2004 did *not* result from its reputation as an Islamic party, despite the popular belief that it received a tremendous number of votes by highlighting its clean Islamic image in the face of the prevalent anti-corruption sentiments. Former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's PD might have been another beneficiary of this anti-corruption fever in the same election. Thus, it is difficult to claim that the PKS obtained more votes from Muslim voters who prioritized the corruption issue only because they perceived it as an Islamic party.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though studies have addressed various issues about poverty and the politicization of Islam, they have failed to explicitly explain whether poverty is indeed responsible for the politicization of Islam (Islamism) and, if so, how much poverty (or low-income levels) influences these trends compared with other variables. Using an ordinal regression model and survey data from the 1999 and 2004 general elections in Indonesia, this study has explored whether poverty, or low income levels, promotes Islamic politics. The contesting parties were regrouped and ranked according to their support for political Islamism, rather than being simply divided into Islamic and non-Islamic parties as in the conventional typology. This ordinal regression model analyzed how certain characteristics of Indonesian Muslims influence their affinity for Islamic politics.

We find that it is difficult to conclude that poor Muslims are more likely to be sympathetic to political Islam. Rather, Muslims are more likely to be drawn into Islamic politics when their income is higher. This contradicts the implicit argument by some previous studies that poverty may promote political Islamization among Muslims or that Islam may be an alternative to leftist parties for the poor. Meanwhile, it is also difficult to accept another argument, that various material factors such as educational or medical benefits provided by Muslim social organizations induce poor Muslims to vote for those Islamic parties. However, we could not resolve this specific issue

through our survey data alone. This implies that, even though many parties, including Islamic parties, rely on legal or illegal patronage networks to obtain votes in Indonesia's elections, this patronage by itself will not necessarily reinforce Islamic politics. Also, our data analysis confirms the findings of some previous studies suggesting that Islamic parties do not hold any exclusive claim to populist policies for the lower classes.

The politicization of Islam, more specifically why some Muslims are not politically neutral but support political Islam, may be explained by their ideological commitment to Islamism, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Our research used the survey question of how well Muslims observe various religious rituals in their everyday life to measure the degree of their piety or religious commitment. It found that the variable of piety correlates positively with Islamic politics, independently of the income variable. In fact, it is the most reliable and consistent variable among our independent variables, no matter what data are used. This may be good news for those people who believe that the support for Islamic parties may be simply derived from transcendent religious faith, regardless of any socioeconomic environment. Of course, the influence of other socioeconomic variables should not be totally excluded, but our analysis shows that the variable of piety is the most consistently explanatory one.

Norris and Inglehart's global study on Muslims claims that poor Muslims are likely to be more religious, whether in industrial or in agricultural society. To jump from this to the claim that poor Muslims are more likely to make up the voter base of political Islam is unfounded. Our study shows instead that poverty among Muslims is not directly related to support for political Islam, and that political Islamism can be generated simply by strong religious faith, regardless of poverty.[23]

We also doubt Driessen's argument that the support for sharia has a negative correlation with religious piety. Since supporters of political Islam have a strong likelihood of supporting sharia, religious piety may dictate the ultimate support for sharia. However, we still agree with him that income has a positive correlation with support for sharia, even though he failed to show that this correlation is statistically significant. Our study statistically confirms that income is positively correlated with support for political

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23. In addition, our study implies that if income has any effect on political Islamism, rich Muslims are more likely to support political Islam.

Islamism. This implies that the relationship between income and support for sharia is also positive, since sharia is the catchword of political Islamism.

The support for Islamic parties is sometimes claimed to be based on the Islamic understanding of social justice. This conception of justice rejects Western material civilization, stigmatizes hedonistic behaviors such as gambling, prostitution, and nightclubs as anti-Islamic, and upholds Islam as the solution to corruption and other deep-rooted social problems in Muslim society. This sometimes leads even to the outright disapproval of capitalist development and strong antagonism against imperialism. In this regard, Islamic parties often use the term "justice" in their name. Indeed, one of the Indonesian Islamic parties, PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), contains "justice" (keadilan) in its name, and is believed to have received considerable support because of its strong anti-corruption campaign in 2004. To verify this, our study examined whether the awareness of corruption, which is known to have played a prominent role in the 2004 elections, is conducive to Islamism or political Islam. This variable turned out not to be significant compared with others. This finding implies that anti-corruption, anti-prostitution, and anti-hedonistic culture, which are generally believed to represent Islamic justice, are not vote-getting issues exclusively reserved for Islamic parties.

We also explored the influence of the rural-residence variable in order to verify the argument that support for political Islamism varies depending on the location of domicile. However, the residence variable turned out not to be significant to the politicization of Islam in our multi-variable model.

In the case of the education variable, its effect was not significant in 1999, but it turned out that higher education was conducive to the politicization of Islam in 2004. This might have been due to the remarkable increase in the vote share of the PKS, whose electoral support is rooted in the better-educated middle class.

Our study is also significant in that it verified the restraining effect of Javanese culture on political Islamism. In other words, when Muslims are Javanese, they are less likely to yield to the appeals of political Islamism.

In summary, our analysis of the national survey results of the 1999 and 2004 elections in Indonesia shows that it is erroneous to conclude that poor Muslims are more supportive of political Islam. Rather, it turns out that affluent Muslims are more likely to be exposed to Islamic politics. The finding implies that income is a significant variable in the explanation of the politicization of Islam. Apart from this, it also demonstrates that pious Muslims are highly likely to vote for Islamic parties, regardless of their socioeconomic status.