

THE POLITICS OF BENEVOLENCE: Political Patronage of Party-based Charitable Organizations in Contemporary Indonesian Islam¹

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Abstract

The rise of party-based Islamic charities has had a profound impact on the nature of philanthropic activities in contemporary Indonesia, and stimulated a new debate over the issue of the politics of benevolent acts. Over the past few years, in line with the increase of the influence of the Islamic factor in Indonesian politics, there have been a number of political parties which actively engaged with social welfare activities through the newly-established Islamic charitable organizations. The close ties between charitable organizations and political parties may lead to the new patterns of Muslim social and political activism, and to the new forms of political clientelism. This article analyzes the vibrant effort of political parties in sponsoring the inception and operation of Islamic charitable organizations in the post New Order era, and investigates how political clientelism has been established through charity practices. This paper compares the roles of charitable organizations set up by the nationalist and Islamist parties in formulating strategies to promote their political interest. Based on three political parties studied in this article, which are the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Golkar Party, and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), this paper argues that the practice of charity has become a popular way used by politicians to patronize their constituents, but at the same time, this practice has weakened the Muslim perspective of development and social change.

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[Munculnya lembaga-lembaga amal yang dikelola oleh partai politik berpengaruh luas terhadap aktifitas filantropi di Indonesia dan memicu perdebatan seputar politik-kedermawanan. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, selaras dengan semakin meningkatnya pengaruh Islam dalam lanskap politik Indonesia, partai-partai politik juga berlomba-lomba untuk terlibat aktif dalam aktifitas filantropi dengan mendirikan lembaga amal. Ikatan kuat antara partai politik dan lembaga amal tersebut tentu berpotensi melahirkan pola aktivisme sosial-politik Islam dan bentuk baru clientisme-politik. Artikel ini akan mengulas upaya keras partai politik dalam mendirikan dan mengendalikan lembaga-lembaga amal pasca Orde Baru dan menjelaskan bagaimana clientisme dapat terbentuk melalui aktifitas amal. Artikel ini akan membandingkan peran lembaga-lembaga amal yang didirikan oleh partai politik nasionalis dan Islam dalam menyusun strategi untuk menyelesaikan agenda politik mereka. Dengan menganalisis tiga partai politik, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera/ PKS, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan/ PDI-P, dan Golongan Karya/ Golkar, penulis berargumen bahwa aktifitas amal semakin populer di kalangan politisi sebagai cara menarik simpati konstituen, tetapi pada saat yang sama, praktik tersebut semakin memperlemah cara pandang umat Islam mengenai pembangunan dan perubahan sosial.]

Keywords: political parties, patronage, clientelism, charities, and development

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A. Introduction

The politics of charities has been of the most emerging topics among observers in the past few decades. The unprecedented development of Islamic charitable associations in the Muslim world after September 11 has attracted a lot of attention in the scientific community and among policy makers. Islamic charities have been described not only as a Muslim collective altruistic behavior, but also as a way to achieve and promote Islamic political objective. Jonathan Benthall in his observation about the nature of charities in the Muslim world notes that while “some Islamic charities...have unequivocally decided to specialise in relief and

development only, others... have a mixed agenda.”² In his work, Benthall refers to Saudi-based Islamic Relief Organizations (IIRO), which is believed to have promoted Islamic *dakwah* (missionary activities) and “reislamization” in many parts of the world, besides to have run relief and development projects. Islamic charities have also increasingly become ‘political’ when they intersected a political structure, including the state law, government agencies, as well as political parties.

The nature of Islamic charities, like other non-religious charities, can also be seen from the characteristic of the values utilized and promoted by charitable associations, as well as from the social, political and ideological backgrounds of the volunteers, donors, and recipients. In the Muslim world, there have been a bunch of examples of how charity activism is driven by political interest, and how the interest groups attempted to achieve their political objective through non-political activities, such as social work and community services. In a number of Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Malaysia and Indonesia, there are a number of Islamist movements whose social-welfare activities are heavily motivated by both religious and political agenda. The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, the Hizbullah of Lebanon and the Hamas in Palestinian Territories are among examples of how the grassroots movements are active in charitable activities.³

The Muslim Brotherhood has been of the most influential Islamist political movements in the 21th century. It was founded by Hasan al-Banna as a response to colonialism and political authoritarianism in Egypt.⁴ Since its inception in 1928, the Brotherhood has been known as a grassroots movement, and the proponents of this movement were and have been very active in implanting Islamic spirituality and social practices among Muslim families. The advocates of the Brotherhood used Islamic

²Jonathan Benthall, “Introduction: Faith based Organizations as Political, Humanitarian and Religious Actors,” *Proceeding of the Workshop on “Religion, Politics, Conflict, and Humanitarian Action*, Geneva Switzerland, May 18-19, 2005, p. 4.

³See Rana Jawad, *Social Welfare and Religion in the Middle East: A Lebanese Perspective* (Bristol: the Policy Press, 2009); J. Miliard Burr and Roberts O. Collins, *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

⁴Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and his contemporary attempted to reconcile Islamic political ideal and grassroots activism, and disseminated Islamic norms in the social and political spheres as a means of achieving public welfare.

study circles (*halaqah*) to spread its mission among the Muslim middle class and university students. Thank to the Brotherhood's active participation in organizing popular activities beneficial for the communities, such as providing means for Muslim families living in poverty and offering affordable education for low income households, the advocates of the Brotherhood could achieve substantial support from a large part of Egyptian Muslims.⁵ The Brotherhood's style of activism which combined religious discourse and social activism has been widely adopted in many Muslim countries. Subsequent to the fall of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, the Brotherhood movement launched the Freedom and Justice Party (Hizb al-Hurriyya wa al-'Adala) as a new vehicle for Brotherhood's politicians to participate in the Egyptian national politics.

The transformation of the Islamist movement into political parties, as experienced by the Brotherhood of Egypt, can also be seen in the Hamas' experience in Palestinian territories. Hamas is a fruit of a long Palestinian political struggle for independence. It was established by Shaikh Ahmad Yassin, the prominent Muslim Brotherhood leader in Gaza. In its initial stage in the 1970s, Yassin established a charitable organization, al-Mujamma al-Islamiyya whose duties, at that juncture, were to support Palestinian needs of public facilities, such as mosque, school, library, and orphanage. Hamas as an Islamist movement was first launched in the late 1980s as a response to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis that killed a number of Palestinian civilians. In subsequent years, Hamas increasingly witnessed a radicalization, partly evidenced by the inception of Hamas' military wing, named Izz al-Din al-Qassam Bridge in 1991. Since then, Hamas has been seen as the perpetrator of many violent actions in the occupied territories and even labeled 'terrorist' by the Israelis and the West. Although Hamas has attracted widespread criticism from the West, it was and has been praised by Palestinians, especially those residing in Gaza, for its struggle for Palestinian independence. What is interesting is that Hamas has transformed into one of the most important political factions in the Palestinian political history as it achieved a considerable victory in the

⁵ Ziad Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2001), pp. 487-510; Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (2001), pp. 107-121.

2006 election over the Fatah, previously the largest Palestinian political faction. Hamas has received an extensive support from the public not only because of its political struggle against Israelis, but also thank to its vigorous efforts to be directly involved in the community-based welfare activities.⁶ In sum, the social and political roles of Hamas in Palestine and the barnstorming engagement of Muslim Brotherhood with a wide-range of social services in Egypt and Jordan⁷ indicate that the interplay between religion (Islam) and politics as well as the relationship between political parties and charitable associations have resulted in the dynamism of Muslim social and political expression in public space. The abovementioned Islamist movements with their social concern are also comparable with the Hizbullah's extensive social enterprises for the Muslim and Christian communities in Lebanon,⁸ and the popular social services of Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey. Both Hizbullah and AKP have gained strong support from the Lebanese and Turkish respectively.

Such a brief comparative discussion of the proliferation and durability of Islamic charities and the social movements in the Muslim world compelled me to explore the nature of the politics of charities in Indonesia by investigating the roles of political parties in the inception of Islamic charities in post New Order era. It appears that the growth of Islamic charities in Indonesia as the world's largest Muslim country cannot escape from the dynamism of the national politics. In the past ten years, political parties have become very active in running charitable services, such as providing aid for the poor in urban areas and organizing relief operations in disaster affected spots. The relationship between Islamic charities and political parties in post New Order Indonesia is interesting to investigate because there has been a vivid development in Indonesian politics which gives a considerable impact on the nature of

⁶ See Matthew Levitt, *HAMAS: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006).

⁷ See Quintan Wictorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001; Harmsen Egbert, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work: Muslim Voluntary Welfare Associations in Jordan between Patronage and Empowerment* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008)

⁸ Jopoh Elie Alagha, *The Shift in Hizbullah's Ideology: religious Ideology, Political ideology, and Political Program* (Amsterdam & Leiden: ISIM and Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

political patronage and clientelism. This article, in particular, examines the impact of the bonds between Islamic charities and political parties on the nature of Islamic social activism; explores the reason behind the utilization of religious (Islamic) idioms by political parties in underpinning their charitable services; as well as analyzes the types of patron-client relationships between politicians and their party-based charitable associations.

B. Party Politics, Islamism, and Welfare Issues

In identifying the social characteristic of Indonesian Islam, Robert W. Hefner highlights the presence of Muslim social welfare organizations and Islamic educational institutions. The extensive roles played by Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama in organizing social welfare activities and education has shaped the patterns of what Hefner calls “Muslim social imaginary” in Indonesia. Under the concept of “social imaginary,” Islam is associated not just “with individual piety or grand schemes for capturing the state, but also with the practical goals of educating people, treating the sick and, in short, making social institutions more ethical and effective.”⁹ In other words, Hefner notes that Indonesian Muslims, through their associations, have learned how “to link the practice of their faith not just to micro-social devotion or macro-level state politics but to the middle-range ‘civic’ activities of education and social welfare.”¹⁰ Unfortunately, Hefner does not pay a particular attention to rise of Islamic charities in Indonesia that may give us a new picture of the Indonesian Muslim social and political imaginary.

As noted previously, Indonesia has undergone a considerable increase of Islamic charities, partly marked by the rise of both state-sponsored and community-based zakat collectors. According to the 2011 Zakat Law, there are two types of zakat collectors in Indonesia: the first is the state-sponsored zakat collector (BAZNAS), and the second is the community-based zakat collector (LAZ). These two types of zakat collectors are operated by different actors, and, practically, they have

⁹ Robert W. Hefner, “Indonesia in the Global Scheme of Islamic Things: Sustaining of the Virtuous Circle of Education, Associations and Democracy,” in Jajat Burhanuddin and Kees van Dijk (eds.), *Islam in Indonesia: Contrasting Images and Interpretations* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), pp. 54-55.

¹⁰ Robert W. Hefner, “Indonesia in the Global Scheme of Islamic Things,” p. 55.

often competed for the zakat resources in both communities and private companies. Estimated in some reports, the numbers of temporary zakat collectors in present-day Indonesia are more than 700.000 units; while the semi-permanent zakat agencies are about 100.000 units.¹¹ Beyond the roles of both state and community-sponsored zakat collectors, political parties seem to have been interested in running charitable foundations and at the same time in managing zakat agencies.

The close ties between civil society organizations, including Islamic charities, and political parties in Indonesia's social and political landscape is rather complex. This is because, historically speaking, a number of political parties in post New Order era were established by the proponents of the Islamic civil society movements. As the social and political analysts have noted, in post New Order era, a large number of the former advocates of civil society organizations emerged as main "beneficiaries of Indonesia's democracy"¹² by becoming a new "political class". Those activists decided to run for a political position in the bureaucracy.¹³ Unsurprisingly, the widespread civil society networks transformed into new political networks,¹⁴ and, therefore, the "re-engagement" of NGOs and Islamic charities with political parties becomes increasingly prevalent.¹⁵

The 1999 General Election apparently provided wider opportunities for social activists and intellectuals with Islamic background to engage with political parties. Muslim leading personalities, who in Soeharto era became the advocates of civil society, ran for national politics. For example, Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), two largest Islamic civil society organizations in Indonesia, were very instrumental in the inception of new political parties. In the past, in response to the political dynamics in the first decade of Indonesian Independence,

¹¹ "Religious Practices: Zakat (Almsgiving): Indonesia," in Suad Joseph (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*, Brill Online, 2013.

¹² Vedi R. Hadiz, "Democracy and Money Politics: the Case of Indonesia," in Richard Robinson (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Politics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), p. 73.

¹³ Gerry van Klinken & Joshua Barker (eds.), *State of Authority: the State in Society in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2009).

¹⁴ Jacqueline Vel, "Reading Politics from a Book of Donation: the Moral Economy of the Political Class in Sumba," in Gerry van Klinken and Joshua Barker (eds.) *State of Authority: the State in Society in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2009), p. 139.

¹⁵ Edward Aspinall and Meredith L. Weiss, "The Limit of Civil Society," p. 214.

both Muhammadiyah and NU began to be involved in the politics.¹⁶ Muhammadiyah as the modernist movement affiliated with the Masyumi Party, the largest Islamic party in the 1950s-1960s, which was led by a prominent Muslim politician, Mohammad Natsir. The Nahdlatul Ulama also supported the Masyumi, but later decided to form a separate political party from Masyumi. Both Masyumi and the Nahdlatul Ulama gained considerable votes and were listed in 'the big three' political parties in the 1955 Election. Unsurprisingly, some leading figures from the modernist and traditionalist Muslim circles became top-ranking government officers. After facing a great deals of political difficulties in Soeharto era in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Muhammadiyah and NU officially began to detach from political parties, despite the fact that a number of activists of these two organizations were still active in political parties by joining The United Development Party (PPP), the only Islamic party in New Orde era,¹⁷ or affiliating to Golkar, the New Order's political machine.

As soon as Soeharto step down from his power, the former President of Muhammadiyah, M. Amien Rais founded the National Mandate Party (PAN); while Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), the former Chairman of NU, created the National Awakening Party (PKB). In the same way, using parties as political vehicles also became the interest of other Muslim groups such as the Tarbiyah movement. The advocates of the Tarbiyah movement whose political ideology is inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt set up the Justice Party (PK, recently known as the Prosperous Justice Party or PKS). Likewise, the former supporters of the Masyumi Party attempted to reinvent the Masyumi-like party. Their political energy, however, should be channeled to different political

¹⁶ See for further discussion, Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogy of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *South East Asia Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2002), pp. 117-154; Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009); "The Masyumi Legacy: Between Islamist Idealism and Political Exigency," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (2005), pp. 75-99; Rémy Madinier and Andrée Feillard, "At the Source of Indonesian Political Islam's Failure: the Split between the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Masyumi in Retrospect," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 6 No. 2 (1999), pp. 1-38.

¹⁷ The New Order government fused political parties into three: Islamic parties were fused into PPP, while nationalist parties into PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia). These two parties should compete with New Order sponsored quasi-party, Golkar (Golongan Karya).

streams. There were at least three parties claiming as the successor of the Masyumi: Partai Masyumi Baru, Partai Politik Islam Indonesia (PPII) Masyumi, and PBB-Partai Bulan Bintang (the Crescent Star Party). It appears that, in the 1999 and 2004, PBB which was chaired by Yusril Ihza Mahendra gained more votes than the first two parties. This political development among Indonesian Muslims in post New Orde era suggests that the involvement of civil society organizations in the national politics, has shaped not only the future trajectory of political Islam,¹⁸ but also has formed the current types of ideologically and politically-driven social activism among Indonesian Muslims.

The path of Muslim NGO activists with the modernist and traditionalist backgrounds in gaining political power is comparable. Muslim activists among the modernist circle such as Adi Sasono, Dawam Rahardjo, Emil Salim and others played profound roles in fostering the Muslim NGO sector. In the 1970s, they took the initiative to set up LP3ES, a development and research NGO which specifically focuses on economics and social development projects. Other Muslim activists from the modernist group, such as A. M. Saefuddin and M. Amin Azis, both are professors at Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB), were involved in the NGO sector with special programs on agricultural and small-medium economic enterprises. The abovementioned personalities played a considerable part in the early 1990s when the Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association (ICMI) was founded. As the New Order-sponsored organization, ICMI had stimulated Muslim activists from the modernist circle to activate their networks and to accelerate Muslim vertical mobilization.¹⁹ The result was that some ICMI members, such as Adi Sasono and A.M. Saefuddin were appointed in the Habibie's cabinet.²⁰

It appears that Muslim traditionalists also underwent a similar

¹⁸ See Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam and the State in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004); Anis Rasyid Baswedan, "Political Islam in Indonesia: Present and Future Trajectory," *Asian Survey*, vol. 44. No. 5 (2004), pp. 669-690.

¹⁹ Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia (Ithaca)*, No. 56 (1993), 1-35; *Civil Islam: Muslim and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁰ Then, Adi Sasono erected Partai Merdeka (the Party of Independence) in 2003; A. M. Saefuddin who intended to run for Presidency joined PPP; while M. Amin Azis who is now has been active in an NGO specifically working on business incubation was the co-founder of Partai Amanat Nasional.

path to the modernists. In the 1980s Gus Dur, who then enjoyed three terms of chairmanship of the Nahdlatul Ulama since 1984 until the late 1999, was of the most important personalities inspiring younger Muslim activists within the traditionalist circle to disengage from the terrain of political and state bureaucratic activities. Gus Dur also became the mentor of many grassroots-based initiatives and forged an alliance with other pressure groups against the authoritarian regime.²¹ The interests of Muslim NGOs ranged widely, from fostering political reform to creating a just society. There were concerned with such issues as civil society, democracy, gender justice, and poverty eradication. Although Muslim NGOs among the traditionalist circle, which prevailed throughout the regions, especially in Java, could survive, they should also face a new challenge and chance, as a result of the shift in the political atmosphere following the appointment of Gus Dur as the President of the Republic of Indonesia. Some young NU activists accelerated vertical mobilizations: some were appointed as ministers in the Gus Dur's state cabinet. To sum up, NU's activists transformed from the grassroots movements into a new 'political class'.

The transformation of the Islamic movements (informal structure) into a political party (formal structure) has also become part of the contemporary history of the Tarbiyah movement in Indonesia. Since the 1980s, the Indonesian branch of the Brotherhood movement has attracted a large number of Muslim student activists.²² In the 1980s and 1990s, the Tarbiyah movement had played an important role in promoting the notions of social justice, welfare, and the Islamic state. Despite the fact that Muslim student activists showed different tones in conceiving the Brotherhood political ideas, the Tarbiyah movement confidently transformed into a dominant Muslim student movement in the last years of the New Order era.²³ In the 1980s and 1990s, the proponents of this

²¹ Gus Dur actively criticized Soeharto administration for failing to overcome injustice in Kedung Ombo case, World Bank-funded Dam project case, which eradicated many villages while the displaced families did not receive appropriate compensation.

²² See Hilman Latief, "Youth, Mosques, and Islamic Activism: Islamic Source Books in University-based Halaqah," *Kultur: the Indonesian Journal for Muslim Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2010), pp. 63-88.

²³ Some of the *halaqah* activists, through their student organization, the United Indonesian Muslim Student Action (KAMMI-*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*),

movement were concerned with a variety of international political affairs, such as conflicts in the Middle East (Palestine-Israel), Balkan (Bosnia-Serbia) and the like. In 1998, the Tarbiyah movement transformed into a new vibrant Islamist political party named Justice Party. Due to its failure in passing electoral thresholds in the 1999 election, the party was renamed Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).²⁴

It is worth emphasizing that Muslim political activism can be seen not only within the newly-established parties after the fall of New Order era. Instead, there are a number of Muslim activists who decided to channel their political energy and career through the long-established secular-nationalist parties such as Golkar and PDI-P. Ever since, Islam has increasingly become a determinant factor in Indonesian politics, and consequently, the polarization of Indonesian politics into Islamic parties and secular-nationalist parties cannot clearly be seen in contemporary Indonesian politics, to compare with what happened in the past.²⁵ The penetration of Muslim politicians in the secular-nationalist party is fruitful. In fact, the 'Islamic factor' seems to have been influential in the Indonesian politics today, rousing secular-nationalist parties to use 'Islamic expression' in their political discourse. However, the increase of 'Islamic factor' in Indonesia is not necessarily in concert with the increase in numbers of votes for Islamic parties. The Islamic factor does not mean that Islamic parties can easily mobilize Muslim voters. For more than half of the century since the first election was held in 1955, Islamic parties have always been shadowed by secular-nationalist parties in terms of gaining Muslim votes. Islamic aspiration in the parliament never becomes dominant, mainly because Muslim political orientation in Indonesia is highly fragmented.²⁶

in fact had an opportunity to gain victories in the student presidential elections held in private or state-sponsored universities.

²⁴ See Yon Machmudi, "Islamising Indonesia: The Rise of Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Prosperous Justice Party," *Pb.D Thesis*, Australian National University, 2006.

²⁵ In analyzing political streams in Indonesia, observers mainly used Geertz's concepts of *santri* (devout or practicing Muslims), *priyayi* (the nobles of the Robe), and *abangan* (nominal Muslim who adhere to Javanese norms instead of Islamic religion). Islamic parties represented the political aspiration of *santri*, while secular-nationalist parties represented the aspiration of *abangan*.

²⁶ There are Islamist groups struggling to create an Islamic state, to change the Indonesian state philosophy with Islam, or reinvigorate the spirit of the Jakarta Charter

C. The Inception of Party-based Islamic Charities

Now, we turn to our discussion about the rise of political party-based charities and how Islamic idioms are utilized by political parties in their dealing the notions of welfare. First of all, I would like to draw my attention to the role of the Islamist party, PKS, in projecting its politically-driven social imaginary through charitable foundations. PKS has played essential roles in the formation of Islamic charities working on relief and development projects. PKS with its young supporters has tried to associate themselves with “the everyday life” of Indonesians via Islamic charities, just like the Brotherhood’s strategy to be “socially well-connected to societies”.²⁷ The establishment of autonomous organizations by PKS is of the most interesting parts of PKS social and political activism in terms of establishing networks between Islamic charities, political parties and government agencies. Kikue Hamayotsu in her evaluation on the rise of PKS notes that the “strategic collation” between PKS and Islamic charities means a lot in order to expand “grassroots connection” by, at the same time, “depoliticizing” PKS social activities.²⁸

Of the most prominent PKS social wing is PKPU Foundation (Yayasan Pos Keadilan Peduli Umat). PKPU was a social division of PKS, but since 2001, it has become an autonomous relief organization with its own legal umbrella. Recently PKPU has transformed into a well-organized and professional relief organization in Indonesia. In order to finance its activities, PKPU has made various attempts, ranging from activating public fundraising to establishing a partnership with government agencies and private companies. PKPU has functioned as a zakat collector under the recognition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs but at the same time PKPU is a registered charity under the auspices

according to which all Indonesian Muslims are urged to practice Islamic *shari'a*. But they never succeeded partly because Muslim political views are heavily fragmented, See Effendy, *Islam and the State*, pp. 216-217. But now, another form of Islamization of the government administration has taken place in line with the very liberal decentralization policy where local government in many provinces are able to issue Islam-inspired public policies, which are referred to as *Shari'a* by law.

²⁷ Ziad Munson, “Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory,” p. 492.

²⁸ Kikue Hamayotsu, “The Political Rise of the Prosperous Justice Party in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: Examining the Political Economy of Islamist Mobilization in a Muslim Democracy,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 51, No. 5, (2011), p. 983.

of the Ministry of Social Affairs.²⁹ The ability of PKPU to affiliate to two different Ministerial offices (the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry Social Affairs) cannot be detached from the role of the chairman of PKPU at that time, Suryama M. Sastra, who is also a member of the Representative Council from PKS (2004-2009), and from the PKPU's member of Board of Trustees, Salim Segaf Al-Jufri, who in the President of Yudoyono's cabinet, is appointed as the Minister of Social Affairs.

Islamic charities which are linked to PKS, such as the Zakat House (Rumah Zakat), the Indonesian Red Crescent Society (BSMI) function as a way "to forge a link between the party elites and the masses"³⁰ as well as "to strengthen image as a party active in humanitarian and relief operations."³¹ With strong political networks, PKS, through another 'social wing' organization, name the National Committee for Palestinian People (KNRP), has been active in the national and international arena.³² KNRP specifically deals with political issues taking place in Palestine, and aims to support any Palestinian effort to free from Israelis occupation. With other Islamic relief organizations in Indonesia, KNRP actively organized mass demonstration, raised funds, and delivered aid to Palestine by engaging PKS networks in Egypt.³³

It should be noted that the proliferation of political party-sponsored Islamic charities have had wide-ranging impact, both negatively and positively, on the accountability of parties in the public eyes. This is partly because the party system in Indonesia, like observer have noted, are vulnerable to any illicit activities. The party system in New

²⁹ Gaining two different organizational status from two ministerial offices (The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs) enabled PKPU to have double or even multiple functions; as a zakat collector whose task is to mobilize Islamic charity funds, and as a social organizations which make it possible to access government development and social programs.

³⁰ Kikue Hamayotsu, "The Political Rise of the Prosperous Justice Party," 981.

³¹ Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamist Party, Electoral Politics and Da'wa Mobilization among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia," *RSIS Working paper, Singapore*, 2009, p. 18.

³² Hilman Latief, "Islamic Charities and Social Activism: Welfare, Dakwah and Politics in Indonesia," *Ph.D Dissertation*, Utrecht University, 2012, pp. 263-295.

³³ KNRP is led by Suripto, the former agent of the State Intelligence Coordination Board Indonesian (BAKIN-Badan Kordinasi Intelegen Negara) who became a parliament member representing PKS in 2004-2009.

Order and Reformasi eras enabled parties and government officials to cooperate and establish 'patronage coalition' in terms of gaining financial resources from the state's budget. Marcus Mietzer's observation about "financial patronage" in the Indonesian political system suggests that the growing ties between political parties and government offices have resulted in "the commercialization of party politics". Party representatives in the parliament and government offices have to finance the party's expenditures by contributing about 40% of their salaries or by channeling government projects in certain ministerial offices to party cadres. This type of fundraising mechanism of "financial patronage" through political parties and government agencies has become increasingly popular in Reformasi Era.³⁴ Mietzer also notes that the weakness of party in gaining public-fund forced politicians "to raise money by selling key positions in local government to external power brokers."³⁵ While Mietzer' analysis is praiseworthy to examine some kinds of 'illicit' fund-raising organized by politicians to finance parties, this paper would further explore the rise of autonomous organizations which function as 'social wings' of political parties, and how the financial patronage operates in the networks between parties and charities.

In the early 2013, Indonesian political arena was shocked by bribes scandal involving the President of PKS, Lutfi Hasan Ishaq (LHI). He was detained by KPK as he was the prime suspect in the case of beef importation. During the course in trial, he was accused of playing a key role in driving the Ministry of Agriculture to facilitate a local importing company additional beef import quotas. Allegation that LHI received bribe money from the importing company has caused scandal. In the court, the director of the Import Company (PT Indoguna Utama) admitted that that she already donated Rp 300 millions for PKS Dakwah

³⁴This is partly marked with the engagement of entrepreneurs, and also former military generals, in politics. Some major parties were and have been led by major entrepreneurs, such as Jusuf Kalla and Abu Rizal Bakrie from Golkar, and Sutrisno Bachir and Hatta Rajasa from PAN. Surya Paloh, the former Golkar politician, is now chairing National Demokrat (NASDEM), and Harry Tanoe, a Chinese entrepreneur, is also now in charge as a top-leader in HANURA (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat) with the former Indonesian Army Commander, General Wiranto.

³⁵Marcus Mietzer, "Soldiers, Parties, and Bureaucrats: Illicit fund-raising in Contemporary Indonesia," *Southeast Asia Research*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (2010), p. 243.

Tour (Safari Dakwah).³⁶ It was also reported that PKPU and Rumah Zakat gained privileges to import beef from Australia from 2010 until 2013. PKPU and Rumah Zakat have organized the distribution of Qurban meat for the poor by importing the meat from Australia. PKPU as a ‘social’ organization received license from the Ministry of Agriculture, Sarwono (PKS member) to import beef, but then the Directorate of Customs and Excise (Direktorat Jenderal Bea dan Cukai), the Ministry of Finance, found that the license expired. In other cases, Islamic charities became the ‘political machines’ during the election of the local governors and mayors in certain regions by approving and disapproving candidacies of politicians to run for government offices. In the 2008 Mayor election in Bandung, West Java, PKS proposed Taufikurrahman (a lecturer at ITB, Bandung Institute of Technology) and Dedi Triesnandi, familiarly known as ‘Abu Syauqi’ (the founder of Rumah Zakat) as the PKS candidate.³⁷ Ever since, public impression of the Rumah Zakat’s political orientation increase and people started questioning whether Rumah Zakat is a politically autonomous zakat agency or only an arm of a political party.³⁸

In the same way, Golkar Party has been interested in governing Islamic charities. Since its inception in the 1960s, Golkar has been rather accommodative to Islamic aspiration despite its predatory political activism. The uniqueness of Golkar can be seen in its “friendly” attitudes toward Islamic aspiration and its consistency in acting as a guardian of the state ideology, Pancasila.³⁹ Golkar has been labeled a ‘secular-inclusive

³⁶ Surprisingly, the Director of Import company (PT Indoguna Utama), admitted in the court that she already donated Rp. 300 millions for PKS Dakwah Tour (Safari Dakwah).

³⁷ Kikue Hamayotsu, “The Political Rise of the Prosperous Justice Party,” 984; Hilman Latief, ‘Health Provision for the Poor: Islamic Aid and the Rise of Charitable Clinics in Indonesia’, *South East Asia Research*, 18 (3), pp. 503-225; also Hilman Latief “Islam and Humanitarian Affairs: the Middle Class and New Patterns of Social Activism,” in Kees van Dijk and Jajat Burhanuddin (eds.), *Islam in Indonesia: Contrasting Images and Interpretations* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press), pp. 173-194.

³⁸ The head of PKS of Bandung region also admitted that although there is not official relation between PKS and Rumah Zakat, many PKS sympathizers were active to support Rumah Zakat, and vice versa, Rumah Zakat is also supportive of PKS in conduction social and charitable activities.

³⁹ Dirt Tomsa, *Party Politics and Democratization in Indonesia: Golkar in the Post New Order era* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 13.

party' by observers, to distinguish it from another secular-nationalist party such as PDI-P which was labeled a 'secular-exclusive party'.⁴⁰ Unlike Golkar which shows "respective response to Muslim aspiration," PDI-P seems to strictly "exclude any-Islamic-inspired agenda".⁴¹ With a long historical experience in mass mobilization,⁴² Golkar is a skilful in capitalizing its networks in the government bureaucracies and in building coalition with Islamic institutions.⁴³ In the past two decades, the Islamic section in Golkar has enabled Golkar to reinforce informal coalition with Islamic constituents as well as to include Islamic aspiration in their political discourse. Although in post New Order era Golkar can no longer function as an effective political machine of the bureaucracy, it still played a vital role in maintaining its political appeal. In fact, Golkar was still solid and included in the big three parties in the past three elections (1999, 2004, and 2009).⁴⁴

Many Golkar functionaries were also the members of ICMI. This symbolizes the close ties between Golkar and 'Islam'. It can be argued that political patronage was constructed by Golkar through the Islamic section. In Soeharto period, there were a number of Muslim politicians who used ICMI as an "elite lobby" in the State administration.⁴⁵ As the New Order's political machine, Golkar was supported by the

⁴⁰ Anis Rasyid Baswedan, "Political Islam in Indonesia," p. 672.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

⁴² Historically, GOLKAR originates from the 'fusion' of a number of people organizations with strong support from military and Soeharto, such as Kosgoro, MKGR, SOKSI, and Ormas Hankam. These organizations emerged as the anti-communist movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Unsurprisingly, in the past a number of military figures were appointed as top-ranking leaders in these organizations and in the GOLKAR as well.

⁴³ Yusup, Muhammad. Sofia, Adib & Asroni, Ahmad. 2011. "Islam dan Partai Politik: Studi Komparatif terhadap Organisasi-organisasi Islam Sayap Partai Politik PDI-P dan GOLKAR di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengembangan Ilmu-ilmu Agama*, Vol. xx, No. 1, pp. 1-21.

⁴⁴ At that time Golkar was chaired by Akbar Tanjung, the a former President of Islamic Student Association (HMI) in the late 1970s. As a new Muslim influential patron in Golkar, Akbar Tanjung was successful in recruiting significant numbers of former Muslim activists of HMI to become Golkar politicians. The Islamic section in Golkar mainly constitutes the modernist groups, such as HMI and Muhammadiyah, but then, the party also included people from the traditionalist Muslim circles..

⁴⁵ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, p. 140

government bureaucracy and state's funds to run its political campaign. In New Order era, Golkar popularized its Islam-based activities for political mobilization. For example, during the Ramadan month, Golkar functionaries and elites were active to visit their cadres and constituents in many regions throughout Indonesia by organizing politically-embedded tour, which is referred to as "Safari Ramadan" (Ramadan Tour).⁴⁶ Apart from organizing social and charitable activities such as the distribution of assistance to pesantren (Islamic schools) and mosques, this tour also functioned as a way to mobilize mass.

Concomitant with the growing trend among Indonesian Muslims to run zakat collectors, Golkar took initiative to set up its own zakat collector to which Golkar functionaries and elites channel their zakat and charity funds. The establishment of GOZIS (Gerakan Orang untuk Zakat, Infak dan Sedekah-People's Movement for Charity) indicates the complexity of zakat organizing in Indonesia. GOZIS was established in 2011 and initiated by Hajriyanto Y. Tohari, the former Chairman of Muhammadiyah Youth Movement. Through this newly-established institution, Golkar's social and religious activities, such as Safari Ramadhan, religious study groups (*pengajian*) and distribution of aid can be organized in a more systematic way. This is partly because GOZIS has appointed a number of volunteers who are able to directly interact and work with the communities.⁴⁷

The presence of GOZIS with its religious and social activities seems to have complemented other Golkar's autonomous organizations with Islamic orientation, such as MDI/Majelis Dakwah Islamiyah (Islamic Dakwah Board), and SKUI/Satuan Karya Ulama Indonesia (Golkar Islamic Scholars Union).⁴⁸ The inception of MDI and SKUI in the 1970s also indicates Golkar's active effort to strengthen its political

⁴⁶ Harmoko served President Soeharto as the Ministry of Information from 1983 until 1997. Afterwards he was elected as Chairman of People's Representative Council. Reports from the Ministry of Information on Safari Ramadan, from 1984 until 1994, clearly show that political elites in Golkar used bureaucracies, such as certain Ministerial offices and bureaucracy in provincial and district levels, to facilitate their activities.

⁴⁷ Buletin Gozis, at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/95265892/GOZIS> and <http://www.golkarjateng.com/kabar-nusantara/612-lembaga-zakat-golkar-kembangkan-bmt>

⁴⁸ Satuan Karya or Satkar Ulama Indonesia was founded by Soeharto and Golkar's autonomous organizations such as AMPI (Angkatan Pembaharuan Muda Indonesia)

appeal for Muslim constituents. The MDI is led by a parliament member from Golkar; while SKUI was chaired by the late Tubagus Hasan Shohib, a charismatic figure from Banten who is also seen as the founder of a political dynasty in Banten Province. Beside this, recently Golkar has founded Pengajian Al-Hidayah (women Islamic study group) to facilitate women Muslim Golkar activists and sympathizers to carry out religious and social activities. Al-Hidayah is headed by a senior figure of the Fatayat NU, Aisyah Hamid Baidlowi, who is also the daughter of Wahid Hasyim.⁴⁹ The appointment of Aisyah as the chairperson of Al-Hidayah can be seen as Golkar's endeavor to gain support from the traditionalist Muslims.

The establishment of GOZIS is a fruit of the modernist effort to give a new color of Golkar's Islamic nuances. This is partly evidenced by the fact that GOZIS volunteers are mainly former Muslim activists with modernist background. The modernist Islamic movement has a very rich experience in operating social welfare activities. In expressing its "social concern" to get closer with constituents in the grassroots, GOZIS has operated about six Islamic cooperative loans (BM- Baitul Mal) in some regions in West Java such as Yogyakarta (Sleman) and Central Java (Klaten, Sukoharjo, dan Karanganyar).⁵⁰ In recent times, GOZIS has been very active to facilitate the campaign of Abu Rizal Bakrie, the Chairman of Golkar, for the upcoming (2014) Presidential Election. In his visit to Wonogiri-Central java, Bakrie donated 100 million rupiah (US 10.000), claimed as his zakat (almsgiving), to GOZIS of Wonogiri in order to foster 'Community Development' in the form of "revolving funds" in the given region. The presence of Bakrie in Wonogiri was accompanied by the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries who is also a Golkar politician, Sharif Cicip Sutardjo. Together with Bakrie, Sharif channeled the government grant and aid in the form of larval and juvenile fish, tree seedling, and small-business incentive valuing to hundreds of millions

⁴⁹ Wahid Hasyim was the first and former minister of Religious Affairs in Indonesia, who is also the son of Hasyim Asy'ari, the co-founder on Nahdlatul Ulama.

⁵⁰ During the Ramadhan month in 2012, I attended the soft launching of BMT Gozis in Pasar Butuh, Cangkringan Sleman, an area which was severely devastated by the 2010 Merapi Eruption. A number of political elites from Golkar were present in that occasion, such as Fadel Muhammad and Hajriyanto Y. Tohari.

rupiah.⁵¹ As a counter gift to the patron, the director of GOZIS in Wonogiri publicly declared that 900 of GOZIS clients, consisting of the workers in the informal sector and street-vendors in the traditional market are “ready” to support Bakrie in the 2014 presidential election.⁵²

Surprisingly, PDI-P is also involved in the establishment of Islamic social foundation. Since its inception, PDI-P appeared as a secular-nationalist party. The party’s political ideas are often associated with Soekarno’s notions of nationalism and anti-imperialism. PDI-P also claims itself as a party actively advocating the marginalized groups by adopting Soekarno’s concept of ‘Marhaenisme’. In recent times, the term ‘marhanisme’, which is used to mark a pro-poor political ideology, has been widely adopted by Soekarno admirers, including the PDI-P’s supporters, to show their commitment to the *wong cilik* (lower class, the commoners who are politically subordinated).⁵³ Unlike Golkar which seems to be more adaptive to Muslim political aspiration, PDI-P is stick to its views to counter any religiously inspired political aspiration. Having claimed as representing ‘*wong cilik*’, PDI-P gained support mainly from *abangan* and religious minority groups. PDI-P also acted as the guardian of nationalism and the state ideology, Pancasila. In *Reformasi* era, PDI-P won the 1999 election and gained significant votes in the 2004 and 2009 election.

In post New Order era, the image of PDI-P as a secular-nationalist party has a bit changed. In recent times, PDI-P has utilized Islamic issues within the party’s discourse and activities.⁵⁴ PDI-P’s cordial attitude toward Islam is partly marked by the inception of Baitul Muslimin Indonesia (BAMUSI-Home for Indonesian Muslims). BAMUSI was established in 2007 by PDI-P politicians to accommodate “Islamic aspiration” or more importantly, to change Indonesian Muslims’ perception of PDI-P.

⁵¹ <http://www.solopos.com/2013/02/24/datangi-warga-sekitar-wgm-aburizal-bakrie-bagi-bagi-duit-382301>.

⁵² In its road show to East Java, Golkar has also used Majelis Dakwah Islamiyah, Pengajian Al-Hidayah, and Satkar Ulama Indonesia to reach constituents among Muslim traditionalists.

⁵³ The term *wong cilik* is used to distinguish ‘the common people’ from *wong gedhe* (the elites) in Javanese tradition.

⁵⁴ see <http://www.gatra.com/nusantara-1/nasional-1/27145-ultah-keenam-bamusi-diminta-luruskan-sejarah-soekarno.html>

The inception of BAMUSI received positive praise from the activists of Muhammadiyah and NU, as they consider that the presence of BAMUSI will neutralize Muslim perception which tends to confront PDI-P's political stands. From the PDI-P side, the presence of BAMUSI can also facilitate PDI-P to broaden its constituents, especially among Indonesian Muslims (*santri*). BAMUSI promotes the implementation of Islamic values relevant to 'four pillars' of the state: Pancasila (the state ideology), UUD 1945 (the State Constitution), NKRI (The United of the Indonesian Republic), and *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Ideas of the "Unity in Diversity").⁵⁵ BAMUSI is chaired by PDI-P politician who is also a professor of Islamic studies at UIN Alauddin Makassar, Hamka Haq. BAMUSI has three main objectives. The first is to provide religious guidance for *abangan* grouping in Indonesia. Hamka explains that from 200 million Muslims in Indonesia, only half of them (known as the "*abangan*") have a sufficient knowledge about Islam. The second is ideological objective which relates to the efforts of PDI-P to preserve Pancasila as the state ideology by exploring Muslim notions of Islam, nationalism and pluralism. Finally, the objective of BAMUSI is to support Muslim minority groups in certain regions to participate in politics.⁵⁶ In order to accomplish its mission, BAMUSI engaged Muhammadiyah and NU to provide human resources adaptive to the PDI-P's political vision.⁵⁷

So far, there has been no specific program set up by BAMUSI to collect zakat. But like other political party-based Islamic charities, BAMUSI activities are also overwhelmingly characterized by charitable services, such as distribution of aid (*bingkisan*), organizing Qurban festival, religious mass gathering and praying (*shalawatan*), and celebration of Muslim festival days. In framing their activities, BAMUSI activists used the term *wong cilik*, which in a certain context can be juxtaposed

⁵⁵The term 'four pillars' was popularized by Taufik Kiemas, and now is widely introduced and disseminated to public by the MPR.

⁵⁶See <http://www.jpnn.com/index.php?mib=berita.detail&id=113514>

⁵⁷It appears that a number of former youth activists from Muhammadiyah and NU become BAMUSI functionaries, and two leading figures in the modernist and traditionalist circle, represented by Ahmad Syafii Maarif (former chairman of Muhammadiyah) and Said Agil Siradj (the chairman of NU) are appointed as the members of BAMUSI Board of Trustee. The friendship between Taufik Kiemas, a senior PDI-P politician, and many Muslim leaders become a key factor in the inception of BAMUSI.

with the Islamic concept of *dhu'afa* (the oppressed). The way BAMUSI formulated social problems and invented strategies to overcome the perceived problems remain conventional, lack of a development perspective, especially if we compare it with GOZIS whose investments in the operation of BMT are prevailing, or PKPU whose humanitarian actions are equipped and supported by professional volunteers.

Again, as all is about politics, BAMUSI has been faced with a political turmoil when the East Java branch of BAMUSI made political maneuvers during the governor election in East Java. The BAMUSI in East Java publicly declared that they supported the former president of GP Ansor (NU Youth Association), Saefullah Yusuf, to strengthen his candidacy in the election. However, the central board of BAMUSI supported another candidate promoted by PDI-P. This implies that there has been a complex political reality to be faced by political parties and their charitable associations. The diversity of political interest among the advocates of the party-autonomous organizations has also contributed to the failure of parties and their charities to concentrate on a social-political imaginary to be achieved, such as to promote the welfare of society.

D. Conclusion

This article concerns the myriads ways within which benevolent acts are expressed in contemporary Indonesian Muslim political activism. The institutional transformation undergone by political parties gives us a clear picture of the political dynamism of Islamic charities in contemporary Indonesia. The inception of Islamic charities by political parties in contemporary Indonesia, in particular, has marked a new trend in Indonesian philanthropic activism, and I believe, this trend will increase in the near future. This is partly because charitable activities are still believed to have become an effective way for politicians to communicate with their potential supporters as well as to patronize their constituents.

However, from the perspective of development, this paper argues that the prevailed patronage between charitable organizations and political parties have weakened, instead of strengthen Muslim framework in the promotion of collective change. As a matter of fact, patron-client bonds between parties and charitable organizations do not result in the ability of Islamic charities to deliver aid effectively to their intended

beneficiaries, or to fuel party functionaries to address the roots of poverty problems. Instead of promoting change through the high level politics, many parties fall into the trap of social services with has little to do with their responsibility as agents of political change. In other words, the enduring networks between charities and political parties seem to have not functioned effectively to energize the state's apparatus to sharpen their welfare policies. The party-based Islamic charities discussed above espouse a wide range of political goals, and the patronage system has put Islamic charities in a weaker position in front of their political patrons (elites).

The politics of benevolence has far reaching consequences for the future of charitable organizations, in general, and that of democratic political culture in Indonesia, in particular. In an era where the state is still considered weak in providing a proper welfare scheme for societies, charitable organizations will continue to proliferate. The future of party-based charitable organizations is, therefore, very much contingent upon the ability of charitable organizations to preserve their integrity, accountability and professionalism. The case of PKPU is differing from that of GOZIS and BAMUSI. PKPU has appeared as a professional Muslim charitable organization and been equipped with professional volunteers. It attempts to detach from, at least publicly, the party (PKS). Unsurprisingly, PKPU gained a substantial support from public, private companies, and government agencies. In this respect, GOZIS and BAMUSI have to unequivocally become professional relief and development agencies. GOZIS decision to specialize in micro-finance project, for example, may determine its future trajectory as an autonomous development NGO. Becoming an independent organization is imperative for party-based charitable organizations to expand and sharpen their framework of development in Indonesia's social, political and economic setting.

This study has underlined some consequences of political clientelism to democratic culture in Indonesia. Some of the political elites from PKS, Golkar, and PDIP were, in fact, allegedly involved in illicit activities such as corruption, bribes, and gratification. This fact, in turn, will decrease people's loyalty to parties. The complexity of patron-client relationship in Indonesian politics has also put party-based charitable

organizations in a delicate situation, whether their objective is to promote the public good or simply to patronize their beneficiaries. Studies on patron-client relationship in Indonesia have noted that political patronage through charity does not automatically strengthen clients' loyalty to their patrons, nor does it significantly increase the numbers of votes during the election.⁵⁸ Therefore, while the clientelistic political framework does not work well in mobilizing mass, this framework also will reduce the strength of charitable organizations in formulating the idea of the public good for the welfare of citizens.

⁵⁸ See Hilman Latief, "Islam and Humanitarian Affairs," 181-182; Hasrul Hanif, "Politik Klientelisme Baru dan Dilema Demokratisasi di Indonesia," *Jurnal Sosial & Politik (JSP)*, Volume 12 No.3 (2009), pp. 348-349.

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