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# Subnational Islamization through Secular Parties

## Comparing *Shari'a* Politics in Two Indonesian Provinces

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The Arab Spring has reinvigorated debate about the impact of Islamist groups on policymaking, particularly the adoption and implementation of Islamic law (*shari'a*), in democratizing, Muslim-majority countries. Most studies on shari'a policymaking emphasize the causal primacy of Islamist parties operating within formal institutions and describe how, in the context of democratization, Islamist parties press for the adoption of shari'a law in opposition to secular elites who controlled the state. For instance, Islamist parties in Pakistan in the 1960s, in Afghanistan and Egypt in the 1970s, in Turkey in the 1980s, in Central Asia in the early 1990s, as well as in Nigeria and Yemen in the late 1990s pushed for shari'a law after the political systems in these countries had become more democratic.[1]

This narrow focus on Islamist parties operating within the boundaries of formal institutions and party systems may obscure important dynamics behind shari'a policymaking. Concentrating on Islamist parties insufficiently addresses the possibility that elites affiliated with secular parties or the military may pursue shari'a agendas, as has occurred on various occasions in Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Sudan.[2] Focusing on Islamist parties also underestimates the potential of relatively unorganized Islamist groups to influence policymaking. Furthermore, focusing on formal institutions and party systems risks ignoring the potential policymaking influence of groups operating outside the official political arena. Most important, much of the social movement literature on political radicalization in democratizing, Muslim-majority countries implicitly assumes that the changes in political opportunity structures that facilitated Islamic groups to mobilize against the state automatically enable such groups to influence policymaking. However, one almost never has absolute control over the determination of policy agendas.[3] This is especially true for democratizing, Muslim-majority countries where decades of authoritarian rule have allowed secular elites to become deeply entrenched in state institutions. Hence, the role of elites inhabiting the state in shari'a policymaking also needs to be taken into account.

In short, the analytical weaknesses in current accounts on shari'a policymaking suggest the need to look more closely at the dynamics within institutions as well as the interaction of elites inhabiting the state with a broad range of Islamist forces situated both inside and outside the formal political arena.

## Within-Country Comparison of Local Islamization

One way to separate opportunity structures that facilitate the mobilization under the banner of Islam from contexts that allow Islamist groups to influence policymaking is to compare a variety of Islamic actors that managed to mobilize under the same opportunity structures but subsequently had different impacts on policymaking. To this end, a within-country comparison of the roles a variety of Islamist groups' have played in shari'a policymaking seems most promising as it allows controlling for political opportunity structures to a degree impossible in cross-country comparisons.

Statements about causal relationships derived from single-country can be strengthened by increasing the number of observations within a country. Focusing on subnational politics is a way to achieve such an increase in the units of analysis. Comparing shari'a policymaking in local politics also acknowledges the fact that in the context of a global wave of decentralization many countries in the Islamic world have shifted considerable powers to the subnational level. Hence, more research ought to be conducted on if, how, and why shari'a policymaking varies within countries. Few studies have explicitly addressed subnational variance in political radicalization in Muslim-majority countries and none has addressed the theoretical shortcomings identified above.[4] This article contributes to the literature on political radicalization in Muslim-majority democracies that consists mostly of cross-country or single-country national-level comparisons,[5] and to a research agenda on subnational comparative research on democratization.[6]

Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, offers an excellent vantage point from which to address the gaps in the literature. Home to approximately 240 million people, of whom more than 85 percent follow Islam, there are almost as many Muslims in Indonesia as in the entire Arabic-speaking world. After President Suharto's New Order dictatorship collapsed in May 1998, Indonesia became the world's third-largest democracy, after India and the United States. The same year, Indonesia embarked upon one of the world's most ambitious decentralization programs. Indonesian localities, therefore, provide a great opportunity to study shari'a policymaking in the context of democratization.

## State-Islam Relations in Indonesia Since 1945

The relationship between the state and Islam is one of the most pronounced ideological fault lines in Indonesian politics. Following independence in 1945, secular and Islamist

politicians coming together in the Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (PPKI, *Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia*) debated whether Indonesian Muslim should be required to follow Islamic law. A first draft of the Indonesian constitution included a preamble, which stipulated that all Muslims should observe shari'a. PPKI delegates eventually dropped this so-called "Jakarta Charter" in favor of the *Pancasila* ideology that placed the Indonesian state on an ecumenical basis.[7]

Islamic groups that wanted the state to adopt shari'a law established several political parties and participated in politics until President Sukarno declared martial law in 1957. Islamic parties were marginalized further after General Suharto established the New Order dictatorship following the military coup in 1965. Suharto, who ruled until 1998, had an ambiguous relationship with political Islam. At first, he relied on Islamic organizations to help with killing and persecuting alleged communists in an effort to dissolve the Communist Party, the military's main adversary at the time. After Suharto assured the political dominance of the military, Islamic forces were pushed to the margins of the political arena for much of the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, Suharto banned religion from party platforms and also upheld the multifaith *Pancasila* constitution. He also relied on the army to suppress any Islamic challenge to his dominance, and ensured that his secular Golkar party, staffed with military personnel and bureaucrats, "won" every election between 1965 and 1998.

Suharto's posture vis-à-vis Islam changed in the 1990s when he had to deal with faltering military support among army generals who had lost rent-seeking opportunities to Suharto's children and growing civilian opposition that had sprung up among the country's rapidly growing middle class. To counterbalance this opposition, Suharto began to incorporate Muslim with modernist Islamic educational backgrounds and affiliations into the circuits of power and patronage, and began to accord Islam a more visible and prominent place in the public sphere.[8] Emblematic of Suharto's new approach to political Islam was his endorsement of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia*), an organization in which regime critics affiliated with pre-New Order Islamist parties occupied important leadership positions. Suharto also tried to change his public persona and went on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1991.[9] Parties based on a religious platform remained illegal, however.

After the collapse of the New Order following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Indonesia became an electoral democracy. The political opening triggered an increase in religious activism across Indonesia. Several religious-based parties emerged, including five Islamist ones, the Crescent Star Party (PBB, *Partai Bulan Bintang*), the Indonesian Nahdlatul Community Party (PNUI, *Persatuan Nahdlatul Ummah Indonesia*), the National Mandate Party (PAN, *Partai Amanat Nasional*), the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS, *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*), and the United Development Party (PPP, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*). Less-organized religious groups became more visible in politics, too.[10]

Once again, there were debates about whether to abolish the ecumenical Pancasila constitution. Defenders of the secular state, among which Suharto's Golkar party

was one of the most vocal, eventually prevailed and settled the debate about state-Islam relations in national politics in 2002.

State-Islam relations in post-New Order politics at the local level are more complex. In 1999 Indonesia embarked on an ambitious decentralization program that left the center with just a few key responsibilities, namely security and defense, foreign policy, justice, and religious affairs.

At the same time that considerable powers were shifted to the local level, free and competitive elections were introduced for local government heads and legislatures. Local legislative elections have taken place every five years since 1999, held concurrently with polls for the national parliament. Between 1999 and 2005, local parliaments elected governors, district heads, and mayors. Since 2005 direct government head elections have been held in all thirty-three provinces and 497 districts and municipalities.

Despite this political liberalization, the pool of candidates competing for executive posts at the local level consists mostly of bureaucrats who started their careers during the New Order and who derive their political power from their proximity to the state.[11] However, competition among these state elites has become fierce since 1998.

While religious affairs have remained under the national government's authority, decentralization gave provinces, districts, and municipalities the authority to draft and implement local regulations in order to amend higher level legislative instruments. That has allowed local parliaments and government heads to implement numerous regulations that are reminiscent of shari'a law. To avoid interference with the national government on religious matters, however, local governments usually refer to these as public order regulations and try to avoid using Islamic references in both titles and texts.[12] Newspapers, watchdog organizations, and scholars usually refer to these regulations as shari'a regulations, which is also the term I use.[13]

Most scholars have interpreted the emergence of shari'a regulations as indicative of the growing local influence of Islamist parties that formed after Indonesia's political opening in 1998.[14] The PKS, in particular, was said to exploit loopholes in the decentralization laws to "[play] Muslim identity politics."[15] However, claims about Islamist parties being behind the emergence of shari'a regulations in Indonesia sit at odds with the fact that the overall number of votes for Islamist parties has been steadily declining since elections first took place in 1999. Public support for Islamist parties reached an all-time low in opinion polls in October 2012.[16] A careful unpacking of the dynamics behind the adoption of these regulations shows that state elites who are affiliated with secular parties have adopted almost all shari'a regulations. Only two shari'a regulations were adopted in a locality where the PKS has won power.[17]

## Data Collection

There are various challenges to collecting comprehensive data on shari'a regulations: the aforementioned legal ambiguities make classification difficult; local governments

regularly fail to report new regulations to the national level; and new provinces, districts, and municipalities are formed every year.

Hence, estimates range from seventy-eight to 160 shari'a regulations across Indonesia.[18] I was able to identify 169 shari'a regulations and link them to local politicians by examining archival data and material collected at local government offices, as well as by analyzing previous studies, local newspaper clips, and lists from watchdog organizations. Given the controversial nature of the topic, all data presented below are from written sources. I also conducted numerous semistructured, in-depth interviews with state elites and members of Islamist groups between 2005 and 2013 to trace the processes through which shari'a regulations are adopted.

## Secular Parties Dominate Local Parliaments that Issue Shari'a Regulations

In the legislative period between 1999 and 2004, six out of thirty-three provinces adopted at least one shari'a regulation. The secular Golkar party won a majority of votes in one province (South Sulawesi) and a plurality of votes in two provinces (West Nusa Tenggara and West Sumatra). The secular Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDIP, *Partai Demokrat Indonesia-Perjuangan*) collected a plurality of votes in one province (Bengkulu). The Islamist PPP gathered a plurality of votes in one province (Aceh). The formation of the provincial parliament in Gorontalo province was not based on elections.[19] In the legislative period between 2004 and 2009, two provinces (Riau and South Sulawesi) adopted at least one shari'a regulation. The secular Golkar party collected a plurality of votes in both provincial elections in 2004.

The pattern is similar at the district and municipality levels which are the administrative layers below the province. Thirty-two districts and municipalities adopted at least one shari'a regulation between 1999 and 2004. Golkar gathered a majority of votes in the 1999 elections in four and a plurality in ten of these districts and municipalities. The PDIP won a plurality of votes in 1999 in eight districts that later adopted shari'a regulations. The Islamist PAN collected a plurality of votes in two districts, while the Islamist PPP collected a plurality of votes in five districts that adopted at least one shari'a regulation between the years 1999 and 2004. No results were available for the 1999 election in three districts that adopted such regulations.[20] Between 2004 and 2009, twenty-two districts adopted at least one shari'a regulation. In the 2004 elections, the Golkar party collected a majority of votes in one and a plurality of votes in twenty-one of these districts.

To summarize, seven out of thirty-three provinces adopted at least one shari'a regulation between 1999 and 2009. Over the same time period, fifty-one of Indonesia's 497 districts and municipalities adopted at least one shari'a regulation. The strongest parliamentary factions in all provinces that adopted shari'a regulations between 1999 and 2009 consisted of secular parties, with the exception of Aceh province.

The two Islamist parties, PAN and PPP, won a plurality of the votes in the 1999 elections in seven districts and municipalities that issued shari'a regulations between 1999 and 2004.

Secular parties won either a majority or a plurality of votes in the 2004 parliamentary elections in all the districts and municipalities that adopted shari'a regulations between 2004 and 2009. The Islamist PKS, the alleged culprit behind the enactment of these regulations according to the existing literature, controlled neither a majority nor a plurality of the seats in any of the parliaments that issued at least one shari'a regulation over the last decade, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Party Strength in Local Parliaments Adopting Shari'a Regulations, 1999–2009

| **Province** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Party** | **Vote Share** | **Parliaments that adopted shari'a regulations 1999–2004** | | **Parliaments that adopted shari'a regulations 2004–2009** | |
| | | **Absolute** | **Percentage** | **Absolute** | **Percentage** |
| **Golkar** | Majority | 1 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Plurality | 2 | 33.2 | 2 | 100.0 |
| **PDI-P** | Plurality | 1 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **PPP** | Plurality | 1 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **n.a.** | | 1* | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | | **6** | 100.0 | **2** | 100.0 |
| **Districts/ Municipalities** | | | | | |
| **Party** | **Vote Share** | **Parliaments that adopted shari'a regulations 1999–2004** | | **Parliaments that adopted shari'a regulations 2004–2009** | |
| | | **Absolute** | **Percentage** | **Absolute** | **Percentage** |
| **Golkar** | Majority | 4 | 12.5 | 1 | 4.5 |
| | Plurality | 10 | 31.3 | 21 | 95.5 |
| **PAN** | Plurality | 2 | 6.3 | 0 | 0.00 |
| **PDI-P** | Plurality | 8 | 25.0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| **PPP** | Plurality | 5 | 15.6 | 0 | 0.00 |
| **n.a.** | | 3 | 9.3 | 0 | 0.00 |
| **Total** | | **32** | 100.0 | **22** | 100 |

*Gorontalo.

## Government Heads Affiliated with Secular Parties Adopt Shari'a Regulations

It is even more important to examine the backgrounds and party affiliations of sub-national government heads because most of Indonesia's local parliaments lack the capacity to draft local regulations. Hence, governors, district heads, and mayors are the driving force behind the formulation, adoption, and implementation of local decrees, including shari'a regulations.[21]

Prior to running for local government posts, candidates must submit a form to local election commissions with their education and career history, past and current party affiliations, and memberships in government and social organizations. I collected these forms for all the local government heads that have approved shari'a regulations since 1998.

The data show that sixty-five government heads adopted at least one shari'a regulation between 1999 and 2009. Thirty-seven government heads were bureaucrats affiliated with the secular Golkar party. Eight of the local government heads who issued shari'a regulations had a military or police background. Four were affiliated with the PPP party. One had been nominated by a coalition consisting of PAN, PBB, and PKS, but was not a rank-and-file member of any of these parties. Only one mayor who was a rank-and-file PKS member adopted shari'a regulations, one in 2005 and another one in 2011.The data forms were incomplete for fourteen local government heads that had adopted at least one shari'a regulation since 1998.

In short, members of Islamist parties adopted only two of the 169 shari'a regulations that have been adopted across Indonesia since 1998. The overwhelming majority (69.4 percent) of local government heads who adopted such regulations are *ancien régime* figures who followed a career in the New Order military or civilian bureaucracy and who have decade-old affiliations with secular parties, mainly Golkar.

## Comparing Shari'a Politics in West Java and South Sulawesi Provinces

West Java and South Sulawesi are appropriate case studies to examine why secular state elites have adopted shari'a regulations since 1998 because more than 72.64 percent of Indonesia's district- and municipal-level shari'a regulations were adopted in these provinces. The comparison follows a least similar cases design, meaning that the case studies vary with regard to existing explanations for the Islamization of local politics in Indonesia. I compare the similarities of these cases to isolate potential causes for the decision of state elites affiliated with secular parties to adopt shari'a regulations. Hence, the suggested relationship between the independent and dependant variable will not vary across the cases.

The most common explanations for the Islamization of politics besides the presence of Islamist parties are socioeconomic grievances due to rapid urbanization,[22] the presence of a religious minority,[23] and a growing conservative middle class.[24] Yet the two provinces under comparison are remarkably different with regard to these factors.

Urban density is high in most parts of West Java due to its proximity to the capital, Jakarta, while in South Sulawesi 55.76 percent of the total population work as subsistence farmers.[25] In addition, over 90 percent of the population in West Java follows Islam, while there is an influential Christian minority in South Sulawesi.[26] Finally, there are signs of a growing middle class in West Java that are less pronounced in South Sulawesi.[27]

These provinces share a history of political upheaval under the banner of Islam. Revolts under the name "Abode of Islam" (*Darul Islam*) occurred in West Java between 1948 and 1962 and in South Sulawesi between 1953 and 1965. The Islamist networks that formed in the two provinces during these periods continued to exist after the rebellions had officially been terminated. Banned from participating in politics and driven underground, members of these networks founded various religious boarding schools and "foundations," where Islamist agendas survived the New Order years. The new political dynamics that unfolded after 1998 reinvigorated these networks and allowed Islamist groups situated outside the formal political system to influence shari'a policymaking.

## Islamist Networks in West Java 1945–2013

Various Islamist guerrilla units formed in West Java during the war for independence from the Dutch between 1945 and 1949. These militias became very powerful, and after independence their leaders rejected government plans to incorporate them into the regular army. Instead, the Islamist groups started an uprising they called Darul Islam. A military campaign eventually brought the uprising under control, and the government declared the rebellion terminated after it had killed Darul Islam leader Kartosuwiryo in 1962.[28]

After Suharto established the New Order in 1965, the army revived many of the Islamist networks to use as an attack force against left-wing groups in West Java.[29] As soon as the communist threat appeared to have been eradicated in the mid–1960s, state oppression was redirected toward Islamist groups.

Nevertheless, Islamist groups managed to establish a clandestine but dense network of schools and foundations across West Java. These groups were relatively successful in establishing a foothold in the province not least because Indonesia's two mainstream Islamic associations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muahammadiyah, had only a weak presence in the area, while religious school networks with a more puritan outlook, such as the Islamic Union (*Persatuan Islam*) and the Association for Cooperation Between *Pesantrens* (*Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren*), were firmly established.[30] The radical networks assured the survival of an Islamist ideology in the area and became the launching pad for various activities during the New Order era, including a plot by former rebel commanders to reestablish Darul Islam in West Java in 1967.[31]

These Islamist groups became more visible and active after 1998. For instance, a group called Ring Banten emerged in West Java under the leadership of Kang Aja,

who had joined Darul Islam in the 1980s. Ring Banten, whose bases overlapped with some of the areas that most determinately resisted central government authority during the Darul Islam rebellion, made world headlines in 2004 when it detonated a bomb in front of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, killing twelve people.[32] Several other Darul Islam offshoots, such as the Islamic State of Tejamaya (*Negara Islam Tejamaya*) and the Movement of the House of Islam (*Penggerakan Rumah Tangga Islam*), surfaced after 1998.[33] In March 2011, Chep Hernawan, the leader of the Islamist Reform Movement (GARIS, *Gerakan Islam Reformis*), another local radical organization with links to Darul Islam,[34] claimed that his organization had more than 200,000 members in West Java.[35] Ustad Warman, the local leader of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI, *Front Pembela Islam*) in the Ciamis district, stated in an interview that his group had members in over fifty Islamist boarding schools across West Java.[36] Such numbers are undoubtedly exaggerated, but they indicate the unabated strength of these Islamist networks in post-New Order West Java.

## Islamist Networks in South Sulawesi 1945–2013

Local Islamist networks have also existed in South Sulawesi province since the 1940s. Unlike in West Java province, guerrilla units that had fought for Indonesia's independence in South Sulawesi demanded their incorporation into the army after 1945. When the military refused to accommodate the majority of these guerrilla groups, their leaders staged a rebellion and pledged allegiance to West Java's Darul Islam.[37] The upheaval officially ended when the army killed rebel leader Kahar Muzakar in 1965.

As in West Java province, members of these Darul Islam networks continued to be active after the army had officially ended the revolt in South Sulawesi. Radical organizations and boarding schools throughout the province became nodal points in a network that preserved radical ideologies throughout the New Order era. They included the Republic of the Federation of Sulawesi (*Republic Federasi Sulawesi*); the Foundation of Darul Istiqamah Education (*Yayasan Pembinaan Darul Istiqamah*) and its offshoot boarding school *Darul Istiqamah*;[38] Guidance of God (*Hidayatullah*), established in 1971;[39] and the Fathul Muin Foundation (*Yayasan Fathul Muin*), established in 1988.[40] Again, these groups also profited from the absence of a hegemonic, mainstream Islamic establishment. Nahdlatul Ulama, for instance, is almost completely missing in South Sulawesi.

After Suharto's overthrow, figures from these Islamist networks established the Preparatory Committee for the Implementation of Islamic Law (KPSSI, *Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam*) in South Sulawesi in 2000. KPPSI held congresses in 2001 and 2005 to consolidate its position as an umbrella organization for Islamist networks in the province.

While the post–1998 changes in political opportunity structures allowed these groups to mobilize, it was the interaction with state elites that allowed these Islamist groups to influence the policy agenda.

## Competition among State Elites Reinvigorates Islamist Networks

The New Order national leadership appointed local government heads. Subnational elites aspiring to become governor, district head, or mayor were therefore oriented toward the center and strongly tied into the vertical hierarchy of the military dictatorship. The introduction of elections for local government heads after 1998 upset the New Order logic of power accumulation. State elites now have to jockey for popular support among the population in order to win elections. Political parties, however, are ill-equipped to help state elites win mass support. Since parties were prohibited from mobilizing people in between the staged elections of the New Order era, and since they were not allowed to develop branches below the provincial level, the structure of official parties, including Golkar, remains poorly developed in newly democratic Indonesia. Parties are also cash-strapped and cannot pay individuals' campaign expenses.

The weak institutionalization of parties at the subnational level has forced local politicians to rely on a broad range of power brokers to help them win over the electorate. This personalization of local politics can be observed across Indonesia. However, it has acquired a distinct form in provinces where Islamist networks are strong. Here, as a consequence of the dynamics among state elites, exchanges between state elites and radical groups have increased. Shari'a regulations are an outcome of this growing interdependency.

## Growing Interdependence between State Elites and Islamist Groups

The data presented above suggest a causal effect between the presence of Islamist networks and the implementation of shari'a regulations through state elites affiliated with secular parties. Tracing the processes by which state elites and Islamist networks interact reveals the causal mechanisms through which heightened competition among state elites in localities with strong Islamist networks has triggered the adoption of shari'a regulations.

A temporal analysis of the two cases suggests that as competition among state elites increased so did the pace with which such regulations were adopted. In 1968, local officials in some districts in West Java and South Sulawesi tried to adopt the Jakarta Charter and shari'a law.[41] However, after Suharto had consolidated his grip on power, the political fortunes of local elites depended on their influence in national level politics. During the next thirty years of upward orientation, not a single shari'a regulation was adopted in West Java or South Sulawesi.

Shari'a regulations were only adopted after true competition among local state elites had ensued as a consequence of elections and the decentralization of power in 1998. Between 1999 and 2011, a total of 107 shari'a regulations were adopted in West Java and South Sulawesi alone.

Concretely, twenty-four shari'a regulations were adopted in West Java between 1999 and 2003, a period during which local government heads were indirectly elected

through local parliaments. This translates into an annual average of 4.8 shari'a regulations. Direct executive head elections were introduced in 2004, and elites realized they would have to face popular elections from 2005 onward. Since then, forty shari'a regulations have been adopted in West Java, which translates into an average of five shari'a regulations annually. The pattern is even more pronounced in South Sulawesi province, where an average of 2.2 shari'a regulations were adopted annually between 1999 and 2003, totaling eleven shari'a regulations. After direct elections were introduced, state elites adopted an average of four shari'a regulations each year between 2004 and 2011, totaling thirty-two such regulations. Nine shari'a regulations were adopted in 2005 alone, when a majority of districts in South Sulawesi conducted direct elections for the first time and at a time when the KPPSI was at the height of its activity.

The data from archival research and dozens of interviews conducted with both state elites and Islamists support the thesis that the exchanges between state elites affiliated with secular parties and radical groups became more frequent and relations more interdependent as competition among local state elites intensified in the context of democratization.

The political trajectory of the Cianjur district in West Java province is emblematic of the pressure Islamist groups manage to put on state elites and secular parties, thereby shaping their policy agenda. The Darul Islam offshoot, GARIS, which claims to command more than 28,000 followers in Cianjur alone,[42] has exerted pressure on the local government on a regular basis since 1999. That pressure ranges from protesting police action against Islamist groups,[43] to demanding that the government close places of worship used by religious minorities.[44] In 1999, then district head Wasidi Swastomo promised radical groups that he would adopt various shari'a regulations if elected.[45] After he won the election a few months later, he swiftly enacted a regulation that made it mandatory for women living in the district to wear a headscarf. The same year Swastomo changed all the street signs from Latin script to Arabic.[46] Between 2001 and 2006, Swastomo, who had entered the local bureaucracy during the New Order era in 1979 and has been a Golkar party member for most of his life, implemented no less than eight shari'a regulations, ranging from ordinances on Islamic conduct for civil servants to decrees outlawing religious minority groups.

Similar protests by Islamists in Bogor led Mayor Diani Budiarto, who has worked in the city's administration since 1979, to outlaw the activities of the Ahmadiyah, a sect deemed heretical by Islamists, after he was elected in 2004. In 2006, Diani issued another regulation, ordering the closing of a Christian church. In 2009, he campaigned with the support of the secular Golkar party for a second term as mayor and promised to demolish Bogor's Ahmadiyah mosque should he be reelected.[47] The mosque was demolished in July 2010 under police supervision. Similar pledges to implement religious edicts against the Ahmadiyah were made during elections in the West Javanese districts of Kuningan and Tasikmalaya and swiftly followed up by the elected district heads, all of whom were affiliated with secular parties.[48]

The dynamics behind the Islamization of local politics are similar in South Sulawesi province, where the gubernatorial race of 2007 illustrated the growing proximity between secular state elites and Islamist groups. Incumbent Amin Syam, a New Order military general was challenged by his deputy governor, Syahrul Yasin Limpo, a New Order bureaucrat and son of one of South Sulawesi's most influential military commanders. Both sides sought the support of radical groups before and during the race. For instance, Syam visited various Islamist boarding schools, handing out cash and other "contributions." In June 2006, Syam visited the grave of Ahmad Marzuki Hasan, the founder of the radical Darul Istiqamah boarding school. In the presence of a large entourage of religious notables and local media, Syam said: "What has been achieved at Pesantren Darul Ulum [Istiqamah] [is impressive]. I admire [it] because the pesantren continues to exist while many others have failed."[49] Syam omitted that the Indonesian army, of which he had been a member for decades, had suppressed exactly these kinds of radical schools in South Sulawesi during the New Order era.

Syam's challenger, Syahrul Yasin Limpo, whose father Yasin Limpo had actively fought the Darul Islam rebels in the 1960s as a military commander, started to approach radical Islamist networks soon after the demise of the New Order regime. Already in 2001, Limpo, then district head in Gowa, adopted a shari'a regulation that outlawed the production, distribution, and consumption of alcohol in the district in an attempt to gain the support of local religious groups. After Limpo became deputy governor in 2004, he started to regularly invite KPPSI representatives to his residence for "religious debates."[50] In 2005, only a few months prior to the district government head elections in Gowa in which Limpo's younger brother Ichsan Yasin Limpo was running, Syahrul gave the official opening speech at the third KPPSI congress.[51] In 2007, Limpo won the gubernatorial elections against incumbent governor Syam and subsequently adopted an edict that banned Ahmadiyah activities in the entire province.[52]

## Accumulating and Spending Political Capital through Shari'a Regulations

The personal networks local elites need to establish to win elections require capital. In addition to economic capital (money), cultural capital (cultural goods and symbols) and social capital (acquaintances and networks) play an important role in the clientelistic networks that have formed around state elites in the context of Indonesia's democratization. Secular state elites use shari'a regulations as a means to both accumulate and spend these different forms of capital in their fights with one another.

For instance, shari'a regulations allow state elites to wield power over bars, brothels, and gambling dens. Entertainment venues are often permitted to stay in business only if they can reach agreements with local officials. The evidence also indicates that, occasionally, shari'a regulations were used to establish lucrative

alcohol sales monopolies. Furthermore, shari'a regulations allowed state elites to accumulate significant financial capital through the collection of religious alms (*zakat*). More than twenty localities in the provinces examined here have adopted shari'a regulations on alms collection.[53] Local elites usually enjoy great discretionary power over the dispersion of such funds. Written evidence indicates that district heads have used such funds to establish bonds with politically valuable power brokers in contested electoral districts.[54]

State elites have also adopted shari'a regulations to accumulate cultural capital, since public perception has gained new importance in democratizing Indonesia. Through the adoption of shari'a regulations, politicians whose public image has suffered from corruption scandals can shore up their religious credentials, thereby paying off a cultural debt of sorts. They can also attack their opponent's supposed lack of religious sincerity.[55] The "politics of symbolism" has dramatically increased across Indonesia in the context of democratization, as the frequent use of ethnic and cultural markers during elections shows. However, such strategies have acquired a distinct shari'a twist in localities where Islamist networks are strong.

The accumulation of social capital is arguably the most important dividend state elites gain from implementing shari'a regulations. Adopting shari'a regulations on Quran literacy, for example, gives secular state elites the opportunity to disperse money for Quran reading competitions, thereby tapping into Quran reading circles and religious school networks in which millions of voters in West Java and South Sulawesi meet on a weekly basis. In Indonesia, networks of mosques, religious boarding schools, and study groups often form around different styles of Quran recitation. Hence, Quran recitation circles have been described as "machinery of social structure."[56] Adopting shari'a regulations on Quran recitation skills allows local government heads to establish, nurture, and maintain such networks and eventually to mobilize them during elections.

In short, accumulating finances, creating the image of oneself as a local leader with outstanding religious credentials, and expanding one's reach over social networks all help state elites to acquire political capital. Owning such political capital has become a key to success in an environment that is characterized by true electoral competition. Rather than policies intended to directly benefit constituencies, shari'a policymaking should therefore be seen as an investment strategy aimed at establishing and reproducing social relationships that can be used by local state elites to gain or maintain power.

Islamist networks gain from these relationships, too. Shari'a regulations allow radical groups to rid their district of competitors in an increasingly deregulated religious market. More important, radical groups gain material advantages from their proximity to the state. Many Islamist groups have turned their close relationships with local officials into a lucrative enterprise by establishing protection rackets that target religious minorities, local media, civil society organizations, and the entertainment industry.[57] A few individuals from these Islamist groups have also made inroads into formal politics, mostly as candidates for secular parties.

**Variance in Subnational Radicalization: Shari'a Regulations Cluster in a Few Provinces**

A common mistake when selecting cases based on the dependent variable is to assume that a relationship between variables within the cases reflects a relationship in the entire population of cases. In order to strengthen my argument that the presence of local Islamist networks operating outside the formal party system is a potential cause for why state elites affiliated with secular parties adopt shari'a regulations in the context of newly competitive politics, I extended my research to all thirty-three Indonesian provinces.

Alarmist accounts of the "creeping shari'atization" of Indonesia have left many readers with the impression that shari'a regulations are a widespread phenomenon.[58] However, the data show that only 21 percent of all provinces and approximately 10 percent of all districts and municipalities have adopted at least one shari'a regulation since 1998. Furthermore, shari'a regulations cluster in the rural areas of Aceh, South Kalimantan, and West Sumatra, in addition to West Java and South Sulawesi. It is in these five areas that 73.8 percent of all provincial shari'a regulations and 94 percent of all district and municipal shari'a regulations can be found, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Shari'a Regulations Adopted between 1999 and 2012, by Province

| Province | Provincial shari'a regulations | | District/ Municipal shari'a regulations | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Absolute | Percentage | Absolute | Percentage |
| Aceh | 8 | 42.1 | 0 | 0 |
| Banten* | 2 | 10.5 | 12 | 8 |
| Bengkulu | 1 | 5.3 | 1 | 0.7 |
| East Java | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2.7 |
| Gorontalo | 1 | 5.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Riau | 1 | 5.3 | 1 | 0.7 |
| South Kalimantan | 0 | 0 | 10 | 6.7 |
| South Sulawesi | 2 | 10.5 | 42 | 28.0 |
| South Sumatra | 1 | 5.3 | 1 | 0.7 |
| West Java | 1 | 5.3 | 55 | 36.8 |
| West Nusa Tenggara | 1 | 5.3 | 2 | 1.3 |
| West Sumatra | 1 | 5.3 | 22 | 14.7 |
| Total | 19 | 100 | 150 | 100 |

*Part of West Java province until the year 2000 and therefore included in the "West Java" case study above.

A brief analysis of the political trajectory of these additional shari'a clusters supports my hypothesis, since entrenched Islamist networks have been present for decades in all three provinces. Aceh and South Kalimantan joined the Darul Islam

rebellion in 1953 and 1950, respectively. West Sumatra was not part of the Darul Islam movement but shows political cleavages similar to the other shari'a clusters, namely a long history of conflict between proponents of traditional authority that came to occupy the local state and representatives of Islamist reform movements.[59] The rebellion under the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia/ Universal Struggle Charter (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia/ Permesta*) that broke out in West Sumatra in 1958 exacerbated and deepened these conflicts to some degree.[60]

In short, in provinces where Islamist movements have a strong presence, state elites affiliated with secular parties adopt shari'a regulations to recalibrate state-society relations that were stirred up with the onset of democratization in 1998. In provinces in which *ancien régime* figures do not confront Islamist networks in their efforts to maintain power, only a few shari'a regulations or none at all were adopted.

## Discussion of Findings and Future Research

Implicitly based on the rational choice premise that once a collective action problem has been solved collective benefit will automatically follow, many social movement studies assume that the political opportunity structures that enable the mobilization of groups also allow these groups to influence policymaking.

Much of the current literature on the radicalization of politics in democratizing Muslim-majority countries therefore equates the adoption of shari'a law with the emergence of Islamist parties in the context of institutional change. However, the fact that 169 shari'a regulations have been adopted in Indonesia since 1998 while electoral gains for Islamist parties have steadily declined during the same period illustrates the weak explanatory power of studies that equate the mobilization of Islamist parties with the radicalization of politics. Political radicalization in Indonesia has shown that forces in control and not in opposition to the state may use shari'a policies to maintain the existing political order. The Indonesian case also shows that only after dynamics among secular state elites changed in the context of democratization did they become more receptive to pressures from relatively unorganized Islamist groups operating outside the formal party system. In other words, shari'a policies were the outcome of an exchange process between different players both inside the state and outside the formal political arena that occurred after relations among state elites had changed.

An approach that emphasizes the importance of changing relations among elites in control of the state not only illuminates why shari'a policymaking occurred despite the weakness of Islamist parties but also explains the variance and timing of political radicalization in Indonesia better than existing studies. In provinces where Islamist groups are a central component of subnational associational life and therefore constitute an important feature of local society state elites encounter in their effort to establish a basis for the exercise of power, Islamist groups had an impact on policy

agendas. Since formal Islamist parties either have no grassroots support or lack appeal beyond a confined constituency, they are of no use to state elites in their fights against one another. Consequently, Islamist parties had no influence over policymaking. Likewise, the growing interaction between state elites and relatively unorganized Islamist groups after electoral competition among state elites had increased, explains why Indonesian localities adopted shari'a regulations after 1998 but not during the authoritarian New Order years. Overall, it was a distinct political and social context rather than party system dynamics that facilitated Islamists' mobilization and influence over policy agendas.

The Indonesian case confirms findings from social-movement research conducted in consolidated democracies. There, challenger groups have been found to gain influence over policy agendas contingent on electoral considerations of elites controlling the state. Challenger groups that offer no direct electoral benefit to elites controlling the state are often able to mobilize but unable to subsequently influence policy agendas.[61]

A focus on political radicalization that looks at dynamics within the state and the subsequent interaction of state elites with a broad range of actors holds promise for future research. For instance, the assumption that formal institutions and dynamics within political parties are the main determinants of the radicalization or moderation of a polity over time has greatly influenced research on the "inclusion-moderation" thesis.[62] Such a narrow focus may not be very illuminating. The emergence of Islamist parties in the context of democratization does not automatically mean that such parties have an impact on policymaking. If Islamist parties have no influence over policymaking, it may not matter whether they moderate or remain "radical." Even if Islamist parties become more moderate once included in electoral politics, radical forces situated entirely outside formal politics may still pull the party system in their direction. In Indonesia, the decision of state elites and secular parties to adopt shari'a regulations in certain localities has been shaped by dynamics emanating entirely from outside the party system.

More research also needs to be conducted on the broader consequences Islamist movements, once mobilized, have on politics. The impact of Islamist groups should not be understood as "influence over policymaking" only. Social movement theorists working on Western democracies have also conceptualized "influence" as "procedural gains," and "representation," that rests on whether members of social movements manage to occupy posts inside the formal political system.[63] In this context, future research needs to look at what consequences the "functionalization" of shari'a law has on the composition of elites in democratizing Muslim-majority countries. Does the adoption of shari'a regulations (and engagement in the politics of symbolism more broadly) allow state elites to maintain, maybe even expand, their political dominance, or does the adoption of shari'a policies create interstices in the political system that members of Islamist groups manage to occupy eventually? The current politicization of Islam in Indonesia seems to have allowed state elites to shore up authority in much the same way New Order elites did during the Islamic

turn in the early 1990s. While state elites in post-New Order Indonesia have so far managed to keep *homines novi* from entering the formal political system, this may change in the future. In this context, future research also needs to examine why state elites sometimes adopt shari'a policies in cooperation with Islamist groups, as happened in Bangladesh and Indonesia, but also in opposition to Islamist groups, as was the case in Malaysia and Pakistan. Research in Indonesia and beyond needs to show, in short, whether the adoption of shari'a policies leads to a concentration or dispersion of state power.

The Indonesian case also shows that shifting the focus on political radicalization to the subnational level may be advantageous to theory-building. Most important, a national-level focus risks miscoding Muslim-majority countries in large-n studies.[64] Scholars conducting quantitative research on radicalization, for example, tend to label Indonesia as a "democratic" case where a moderate "civil Islam" holds sway over politics. This is not entirely correct, as the radicalization of various localities since 1998 and the ensuing democratic roll-back shows. Quantitative research may make similar misattributions in the case of "undemocratic," "radical" Muslim-majority countries.

A subnational focus on political radicalization also has several methodological advantages that may strengthen empirical findings. For instance, conducting research at the local level not only increases the number of observations, thereby providing a tool to detect variance in subnational radicalization, but it also facilitates controlled comparisons, which is especially important when trying to differentiate between the causes of the mobilization of Islamic groups and the influence of Islamist groups over policy agendas. Since within-country comparisons allow researchers to hold formal opportunity structures constant across cases, such comparisons can help them understand why, from a broad range of Islamic actors that mobilize in the context of democratization, only some manage to subsequently influence policymaking. Subnational, within-country comparisons also allow for a better matching of cases along historical and socioeconomic variables. Hence, the broader political and social context that is crucial in explaining local radicalization in Indonesia can be compared across cases with a higher level of confidence. In short, within-country comparisons based on subnational units of analysis have acquired an increasingly important role in comparative politics since they often provide a "more adequate description of complex processes of change."[65] This approach has yet to be applied to the study of political radicalization in democratizing Muslim-Majority countries.

Finally, studying the impact of Islamist groups on policymaking in democratizing Muslim-majority countries may not only create new insights about political Islamization, but also contribute to social movement theory in general. The comparative literature on policymaking, for instance, states that social movements are relatively inconsequential compared to political institutions, political parties, and public opinion.[66] The literature argues that social movements are even less likely to influence policymaking in low-quality democracies.[67] Yet, the Indonesian case shows that relatively unorganized groups operating outside the formal party system were more effective in influencing policymaking than institutions, parties, and public

opinion. In fact, Islamist groups were influential precisely because of the weakly institutionalized party system and Indonesia's low-quality democracy. The Indonesian case therefore shows the theoretical potential and importance of research on what influences policymaking in democratizing Muslim-majority countries where institutional capacity is often low, political parties are weakly institutionalized, and elites can afford to ignore public opinion to a degree unthinkable in consolidated democracies.

## NOTES

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