

Institutionalising Islamic Political Parties in Indonesia:
A Study of Internal Fragmentation and Cohesion in
the Post-Soeharto Era (1998-2008)

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Abstract

The thesis will address the question of why Islamic political parties, in the first decade of the reform era, suffer internal fragmentation and have failed to develop cohesion, while one Islamic party has been able to develop and consolidate. This thesis will explore and analyze factors and reasons behind the problem of the cohesion of the Islamic political parties by associating it with the existence of party institutionalization. For this purpose, this thesis would be a study of comparative institutionalization of Islamic political parties, particularly between the National Awakening Party (PKB) and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). PKB is a good exemplar for an Islamic party that experienced severely fragmented parties. In fact, this party has become the largest among Islamic political parties and including one of the worst fragmentations among all new political parties in Indonesia. Meanwhile, PKS has been able to maintain its internal discipline and unity, although factionalism and fragmentation have become commonplace during the first decade of the Reform Era. This thesis believes that the more a party have been institutionalized, which is indicated by the existence of procedural leadership in decision-making process, the effectiveness of internal conflict resolution mechanism, the continuation of systematic cadrerization and the commitment to the shared values, there is a bigger chance of the party to preserve its cohesion. On the other hand, the less a party have been institutionalized which is indicated by the ineffectiveness of procedural leadership, the failure of internal conflict resolution mechanism, the impediment of systematic cadrerization, and the failure to provide ideology as the guidance of policy and uniting values, there is more possibility for the party to be fragmented.

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