



Infrastructure Barriers to Islamic Political Parties: Dynamics of PKB in the 2004-2019 Presidential Election Contestation

M Nastain¹, Irwan Abdullah², Zuly Qodir³, Hasse Jubba^{4*}

¹*Politik Islam-Ilmu Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55183*

²*Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University,
Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

^{3,4}*Politik Islam-Ilmu Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55183*

Corresponding Author: hasse@umy.ac.id

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Abstract

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This research was intended to determine the infrastructural barriers of the PKB political party in encouraging its cadres to become contestants in the presidential and vice-presidential elections from 2004 to 2019. During the four presidential and vice-presidential elections, PKB, one of Indonesia's largest Islamic parties, was absent from sending its cadres as contestants. This failure is suspected to result from infrastructural obstacles that intersect with PBNU's political interests. This research used a qualitative approach by combining interviews with documentation data and direct observations in the field. Interview data findings were used as a guide for finding online or offline documentation data. Both findings confirmed each other and were combined with observational data as a data validation method. Data presentation was carried out in three main stages. Namely, data findings were reduced according to research needs and elaborated using Anthony Giddens' structuration thinking. The data findings in this

research reveal that there are infrastructural obstacles in the form of organizational patrons that disrupt the independence of PKB. There is also extra organizational power from the NU autonomous division, which is suspected to have sectoral interests. Apart from that, external intervention makes PKB's political steps less flexible.

Keywords: Infrastructural barrier, regeneration, PKB, PBNU, Presidential Election

1. Introduction

PKB's failure to encourage its cadres as presidential and vice-presidential candidates cannot be separated from the factor of infrastructural barriers. Apart from the existence of internal conflicts and financial stability as structural obstacles, as well as the instant cadre formation process for certain groups which is a cultural obstacle, the existence of PBNU as an inseparable part can become an infrastructural obstacle. In its political journey, NU could not escape from its long history of involvement in practical politics during the *Orde Lama* and had become a major party.¹ So, when the Reformation rolled out in 1998, the NU structural gave birth to the political party PKB.² This historical and ideological bond between NU and PKB is what underlies the existence of infrastructural obstacles in PKB's political policies, one of them is the issue of contestation of presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

The political dynamics of the PKB during the four presidential and vice-presidential election periods from 2004 to 2019 gave a different colour to the contestation of Indonesian democracy. There were political anomalies that occurred in the success and failure of the PKB during that period. PKB's success can be seen from its position which was in the ring of power (the winner of the presidential election as a supporting party) during the four eras of leadership.³

¹ Firman Noor, "Islamic Party and Pluralism: The View and Attitude of Masyumi towards Pluralism in Politics (1945-1960)," *Al-Jami'Ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*; Vol 54, No 2 (2016) DO - 10.14421/Ajis.2016.542.273-310, December 14, 2016, <https://aljamiah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/549>.

² Yeby Mayrudin and M. Chairil Akbar, "Identity Politics Within Indonesian Islamic Parties: Study of PKB and PKS" 367, no. ICDeSA (2019): 283-88, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icdesa-19.2019.58>.

³ Y M Mayrudin et al., "Discursive Political Environment in Indonesian Political Parties: A Study on Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)," in *E3S Web of Conferences*, ed. Harakan A. and Jermisittiparsert K.,

PKB even showed its hegemony when it succeeded in leading Gus Dur to become president of Indonesia, defeating Megawati in the MPR session.⁴ However, behind this success lies a political failure, namely the absence of PKB cadres as presidential or vice-presidential candidates from 2004 to 2019 direct elections. The last time PKB had cadres who advanced in the contest was in 2004 when it nominated Gus Dur and Marwah Daud although did not pass the health test.⁵ Practically after that, PKB failed to encourage its cadres and instead chose to become a supporting party for other parties' cadres.

The aim of this research is to determine the infrastructural obstacles that occur in the PKB policy making process in political contestation, especially in the direct election of the president and vice president. Infrastructural obstacles are focused on the dialectical relationship between PKB and PBNU which does not always coincide with political dynamics. The relationship between the two is interesting to be observed and analysed because apart from being close ideologically and emotionally, they also have significant differences. This research tries to elaborate on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory to look at the position of agents and the structure that is built between PKB and PBNU. In Giddens' perspective, the agent tried to place his interests in a structural position to smooth out the agent's interests⁶. In this case, the study perceives how in political interests the two institutions try to influence each other. However, the PKB's position as a political institution are more dominant in the relationship between the two.

This study is based on the existing reality that PKB's failure to place its cadres during the four presidential and vice-presidential election periods was a political failure. However, it is necessary to look at the traces of political policy whether it is true that the absence of PKB cadres is only due to cultural and structural problems or whether there are also infrastructural inhibiting factors. This research is important to reveal how the political relations and interests

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⁴ Dimas Pramodya Dwipayana, Edison Hatoguan Manurung, and Nanang Trihandoko, "Gus Dur's Typology of Political Leadership," *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review* 6, no. 1 (2023): 400–410.

⁵ Christopher J Dagg, "The 2004 Elections in Indonesia: Political Reform and Democratisation," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 48, no. 1 (2007): 47–59.

⁶ Keith Dowding, "Agency and Structure: Interpreting Power Relationships," *Journal of Power* 1, no. 1 (2008): 21–36.

between PKB and PBNU, which in political dynamics do not always go hand in hand, do not always support each other, but both are able to maintain their existence. The existence of PKB has historically proven to be able to survive in the national political arena at a time when many parties that were born after Reformation failed to compete electorally. This situation certainly cannot be separated from the support of NU in both structurally and culturally.

2. Literature Review

Infrastructural Barrier

Structural barriers refer to collective impediments or influences within the internal structure of an organization that may involve policies, practices, and norms that benefit some while marginalizing others ⁷. Structural barriers in politics and policies often intersect with state regulations and policies. The political system, whether internal or policy-based, according to the laws of a country, has the potential to disrupt a justice system that politically marginalizes certain groups.⁸ In terms of political power, structural barriers also affect the level of public engagement and participation in political events.⁹ The structural characteristics and organizational determinations are key factors in the emergence of creativity and innovation within an organization. Elites should conduct studies and evaluations related to the structural characteristics, whether they function epistemically as creative spaces or have the potential to stifle internal organizational competence.¹⁰

⁷ a Bruns et al., "Scholar (10)," *Mass Communication and Society*, 1974, https://doi.org/10.1163/_q3_SIM_00374; Chen H S Turnbull et al., "Scholar (11)," *Why We Need the Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1163/_q3_SIM_00374.

⁸ Siri Lange, "The Depoliticisation of Development and the Democratisation of Politics in Tanzania: Parallel Structures as Obstacles to Delivering Services to the Poor," *The Journal of Development Studies* 44, no. 8 (September 1, 2008): 1122–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220380802242396>; Selver B Sahin, "Combating Violence against Women in Turkey: Structural Obstacles," *Contemporary Politics* 28, no. 2 (March 15, 2022): 204–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2021.1992131>.

⁹ Michael L. Rosino, "Boundaries and Barriers: Racialized Dynamics of Political Power," *Sociology Compass* 10, no. 10 (2016): 939–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12412>; Dorajet Imeri and Abdula Azizi, "Structural and Non-Structural Obstacles in the Process of Recognition of Independence of Kosovo: 2008–2021," *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2023): 352–63, <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2391358i>.

¹⁰ Fernando de-Oliveira and Óscar Rodil-Marzábal, "Structural Characteristics and Organizational Determinants as Obstacles to Innovation in Small Developing Countries," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 140 (2019): 306–14, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.12.021>.

On the other hand, political infrastructure refers to groups of political forces in society that influence and actively contribute to the policies of a political party.¹¹ In the political tradition of PKB, infrastructural barriers refer to the influence of PBNU as an organization outside PKB that actively influences the political policies of PKB. The marginalization of political party cadres based on gender, lineage, or identity is still commonly found in the political practices of Islamic parties. Some individuals receive privileges based on identity and gender, which is an implementation of infrastructural barriers.¹² In the PKB and NU tradition, submission to *Kyai* and *pesantren* becomes a positive political patronage as it can act as a catalyst for internal party upheavals.¹³

Regeneration

The democratic system requires public involvement in political contests. The public is not only seated as contestants but also as constituents who determine the winners. The cadre ship system carried out by political parties is essentially meant to ensure that public support can be bound in the name of ideology, ideals, or even common interests.¹⁴ The position of Islamic political parties in Indonesia, after two decades of post-reform, does not show significant growth in voters. In fact, some parties have experienced stagnation or even a decline

¹¹ Yusa Djuyandi, *Pengantar Ilmu Politik* (PT. RajaGrafindo Persada-Rajawali Pers, 2023).

¹² Yeby Ma'asan Mayrudin, Bayu Nurrohman, and Dewi Sri Astuti, "Eksistensi Politik Kader Perempuan Pada Pengorganisasian Partai-Partai Politik," *Ijd-Demos* 4, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.37950/ijd.v4i3.323>; Y S Permana, "Subnational Sectarianisation: Clientelism, Religious Authority, and Intra-Religious Rivalry in Aceh," *Religion, State and Society* 49, no. 2 (2021): 142–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2021.1881392>.

¹³ R W Hefner, "Indonesia: Shari'a Politics and Democratic Transition," in *Shari'a Politics: Islamic Law and Society in the Modern World* (Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, Boston University, United States: Indiana University Press, 2011), 280–318, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-84898674936&partnerID=40&md5=4b88757eebe71ef4f8282a932aac842e>; R Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (The Asia Foundation, Indonesia: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

¹⁴ K W Fogg, "Indonesian Socialism of the 1950s: From Ideology to Rhetoric," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2020): 465–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1794805>; Y Kayane, "Historical Formation of Islamist Ideology in Indonesia: The Role of the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (DDII)," *Critical Asian Studies* 54, no. 1 (2022): 47–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2021.2008261>; M Mietzner, "Ideology, Money and Dynastic Leadership: The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, 1998–2012," *South East Asia Research* 20, no. 4 (2012): 511–31, <https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2012.0123>.

in votes, approaching the parliamentary threshold.¹⁵ In a study conducted by Celep, O (2018), it is argued that political parties must undergo modernization within their internal systems to face dynamic political challenges.¹⁶ The future challenge in Indonesia's political system is the shift of voters to Generation Z, who are more familiar with social media usage than ideological and ancestral cultural politics. The regeneration of cadres must be able to reach and accommodate voters with different propositions and preferences.¹⁷

According to Hendrawan and Aspinall (2021) in their research, they mentioned that political parties are still trapped in money politics when building coalitions. The decision to nominate a candidate is not based on ideological closeness or competence but often driven by financial considerations¹⁸. Shifting the mass base may provide an answer to the challenge of cadreship stagnation. Political parties' willingness to change their political culture and open up to new spaces in line with social dynamics is the way forward. Research conducted by Giugal, A and Costinescu, IM (2021) on small political parties in Romania, the National Liberty Party (PNL), showed that the courage to change the party's direction, focusing on rural lower-middle-class constituents through a community clientelism approach, was successful.¹⁹ Islamic parties in Indonesia could try a similar strategy in their cadre ship; PKB could start by shifting its support base not only from Islamic boarding schools and NU clerics but also by incorporating other mass bases.

¹⁵ M Haris et al., "The Dynamics and Existence of Islamic Party in 2019 General Election: Case Study of Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10, no. 2 (2020): 409–32, <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJIMS.V10I2.409-428>; A Chalik, "The Half-Hearted Compromise within Indonesian Politics: The Dynamics of Political Coalition among Islamic Political Parties (1999–2019)," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, no. 2 (2021): 487–514, <https://doi.org/10.15642/IJIS.2021.15.2.487-514>.

¹⁶ Ö Celep, "The Moderation of Turkey's Kurdish Left: The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)," *Turkish Studies* 19, no. 5 (2018): 723–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2018.1483195>.

¹⁷ R H Saputro et al., "Gaining Millennial and Generation Z Vote: Social Media Optimization by Islamic Political Parties," *Res Militaris* 13, no. 1 (2023): 323–36, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85142019751&partnerID=40&md5=a59ad7389a33357c32a29b07aa7086f1>; Sekolah Tinggi et al., "Eksistensi Partai Politik Dalam Persepsi Publik The Existence of The Political Parties in Public Perception" 10, no. 1 (2019): 17–38.

¹⁸ A Hendrawan, W Berenschot, and E Aspinall, "Parties as Pay-off Seekers: Pre-Electoral Coalitions in a Patronage Democracy," *Electoral Studies* 69 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102238>.

¹⁹ A Giugal and I M Costinescu, "Small-Time Clientelism: The Rising Fortunes of the Romanian National Liberal Party, 1990–2016," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 53, no. 2 (2020): 25–46, <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2020.53.2.25>.

Direct Presidential Elections

Direct presidential elections in Indonesia have been in place since 2004, leading to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono becoming the President of Indonesia. The polemic surrounding direct elections revolves not only around the candidates as the main actors but also around issues that serve as intermediaries for victory. Issues of Islamic populism and intolerance have at times become central concerns, with normalization influencing voters, reflecting partisan affiliations and rhetoric that implicates identity politics.²⁰ Electoral drama involving the exploitation of religious values has led to polarization from the elite to grassroots levels. The commodification of religion, ethnicity, and ideology continues to take centre stage and become central issues in Indonesian political contests.²¹ Direct presidential elections should have been a moment of victory for the people, as it grants them the freedom to choose their president. However, it has been tainted by partial political practices that prioritize victory even if it means undermining the integrity of democracy. Strategies like money politics, identity politics, and the fomentation of religious and racial sentiments are used to secure votes.²² The people are treated merely as electoral machines, approached, pampered, and transactionally considered.

²⁰ R J Toha, D D Gueorguiev, and A Sinpeng, "The Normalization of Intolerance: The 2019 Presidential Election in Indonesia," *Electoral Studies* 74 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102391>; M Y Sawitri and I N Wiratmaja, "On the Brink of Post-Democracy: Indonesia's Identity Politics in the Post-Truth Era," *Politicka Misao* 58, no. 2 (2021): 141–59, <https://doi.org/10.20901/PM.58.2.06>; M Mietzner, "Authoritarian Innovations in Indonesia: Electoral Narrowing, Identity Politics and Executive Illiberalism," *Democratization* 27, no. 6 (2020): 1021–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2019.1704266>.

²¹ A G Herdiansah, Y Djujandi, and W S Sumadinata, "Extending Aliran Politics in Electoral Contest: An Insight of Indonesia's Democracy in the Post-2014," *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 13, no. 4 (2019): 518–45, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85086091035&partnerID=40&md5=4369b6e10b8e66c220cc83e2597e4af4>; D Gueorguiev, K Ostwald, and P Schuler, "Rematch: Islamic Politics, Mobilisation, and the Indonesian Presidential Election," *Political Science* 70, no. 3 (2018): 240–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00323187.2019.1584733>.

²² Misran et al., "How Does Social Media Affect Money Politics Campaign Rejection in the 2020 Regional Head General Election Social Media? A Case Study of Indonesia," ed. Antipova T., *International Conference on Advances in Digital Science, ICADS 2021* (Department of Government Affairs and Administration, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Springer Science and Business Media Deutschland GmbH, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-71782-7_45; M Mietzner, "Dysfunction by Design: Political Finance and Corruption in Indonesia," *Critical Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2015): 587–610, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2015.1079991>; K P Mwale and J Lintonbon, "Heritage, Identity and the Politics of Representation in Tribal Spaces: An Examination of Architectural Approaches in Mochudi, Botswana and Moruleng, South Africa," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 3 (2020): 281–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2019.1621923>.

3. Methods

This research is field study and uses a qualitative descriptive approach by combining data using triangulation techniques. Initial data was obtained by conducting interviews with parties involved in the political contestation of the PKB and NU during the research period. It is ensured that the respondents do not currently hold a structural position that have the potential for conflict of interest and is not free to provide information. The first respondents is MCH who came from the PMII division, which is an organization that has strong affiliations with PKB and NU and provides important supplies in the cadre formation process. The second respondents is MTA who was the PBNU administrator for the 2016-2021 solemn period as the administrator of RMI (Rabithah Ma'ahid Islamiyah) as the division in charge of NU Islamic boarding schools. The third respondent is BDW, who is an expert staff member of several PKB elites and became Ministers from PKB during the 2014-2019 period.

Findings from the interview results were elaborated with documentation data obtained based on offline and online documentation review. Apart from that, direct observations were made in the field at the research object so that valid data were obtained. Data were divided into two versions, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data referred to two main data findings, namely interview data which was elaborated with documentation data. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from data from observations in the field. The data analysis process was carried out in three stages, namely collecting primary data with interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted with three different sources at different times and places so that it was possible to obtain comprehensive and authentic data. In the second stage, the interview data findings were reduced if corroborating data from document searches were not attained, whether in the form of online or offline documents and guided by the results of observations in the field. Third, presenting analytical data was in an interpretive descriptive manner accompanied by using Anthony Giddens' structuration theory approach which identifies the role of agents and structures. Data presentation was carried out using a systematic and structured process enriched with interpretation based on valid data.

4. Results and Discussion

Infrastructural Barrier

The relationship between PKB and NU is like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. PKB is bound both historically and structurally, especially when the NU structure was finalized on July 23, 1998, at the end of Gus Dur's leadership in PBNU. Throughout the historical dynamics of Indonesian politics from 2004 to 2019, the NU's relationship with PKB has not always been in a romantic and supportive phase. In some presidential and vice-presidential election contests, there were moments when NU and PKB did not align in providing support. However, with the political maturity, their differing stances are no longer a serious issue. NU members, who are notably impacted by differences in choices, have become wiser in handling such situations.

As an infrastructural obstacle in NU's internal politics, which significantly influences the political conditions of PKB, its role, although not significant, is notable. Their relationship is more cultural and emotionally bonded, so in practical politics, they tend not to have to align closely. Nevertheless, the public has been presented with a harmonious relational pattern for almost the last decade, especially during the tenure of Chairman K.H. Said Aqil Siradj. This has made differences in political views between PKB and NU seem unusual. However, as a political party, PKB understands political dynamics better and has a sharper political instinct in designing and implementing political strategies. PBNU's involvement in PKB's practical politics is more dominant as a place for expression and as legitimization for political stances. This is because, in its political tradition, differences in views among senior Kyais often occur.

1. Organizational Patron

a. Hasyim Muzadi Era (1999-2010)

Two periods of Hasyim Muzadi's leadership as the chairman of PBNU were marked by highly dynamic internal politics. During these two periods, Hasyim Muzadi guided PBNU and PKB through two direct elections where the people could directly choose members of regional legislative councils, the national parliament, and the President and Vice President. Internal dynamics within PBNU and PKB occurred during the 2004 elections, where three prominent NU figures competed in the presidential and vice-presidential election. Gus Dur, paired with Marwah Daud and supported by PKB, Sholahudin Wahid allied with

Wiranto, and Hasyim Muzadi was nominated as the vice-presidential candidate by Megawati Soekarno Putri, the incumbent presidential candidate.

Gus Dur's health test failure did not immediately shift PKB's support to Hasyim Muzadi, who was then serving as the chairman of PBNU. From interviews with MTA and BDW²³, it was found that there were personal issues between Gus Dur and Hasyim regarding Hasyim's acceptance as Megawati's vice-presidential candidate. Gus Dur seemed unable to forget how he was removed from the presidential palace and replaced by Megawati. In fact, Gus Dur firmly stated that if PKB supported Mega-Hasyim, he would still abstain from voting.²⁴ In the first round, PKB's support was clearly given to the Wiranto-Sholahudin Wahid pair. Apart from their personal closeness as siblings, PKB during Gus Dur's era seemed more comfortable in consolidation and political lobbying.²⁵

The failure of the Wiranto-Sholahudin Wahid pair to enter the second round did not shift support to Hasyim Muzadi. Instead, PKB supported the SBY-JK pair and became the key to their victory in the second round.²⁶ The harmony between PBNU and PKB, which were supposed to mutually support each other in bringing their cadres to the pinnacle of Indonesian governance, had to be compromised due to personal issues among their leaders. Referring to the Javanese philosophy that "fellow kings cannot rule each other," Gus Dur and Hasyim Muzadi are two prominent figures, each with power that cannot co-rule.

b. Said Aqil Siradj Era (2011-2021)

Unlike the era of Hasyim Muzadi, which was filled with intrigues and political dynamics, the relationship between Said Aqil Siradj as the chairman of PBNU appeared to be very harmonious with PKB under the leadership of Muhaimin. Said Aqil did not hesitate to become a campaigner for PKB and often conveyed the interests of PKB in various forums, especially when meeting with NU members at the grassroots level. In one highly tendentious statement, it

²³ MTA was a PBNU administrator in the RMI sector during Said Aqil Siradj's leadership. And BDW is a PMII activist who became an expert staff member for several PKB structural administrators between 2014-2019.

²⁴ <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-174376/gus-dur-tolak-berdamai-dengan-hasyim-muzadi> dan <https://nu.or.id/daerah/hasyim-muzadi-netralitas-pkb-karena-beban-psikologis-gZcg5>

²⁵ <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/78948/pkb-memutuskan-mendukung-pasangan-wiranto-gus-solah>

²⁶ <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-172773/sby-disumbang-nu-32-golkar-31-pkb-28-pks-24>

was mentioned that “PKB is NU, NU is PKB”.²⁷ Throughout the two leadership periods from 2011 to 2021, the warmth between NU and PKB managed to create a conducive atmosphere within the party after the polarization between Gus Dur and Muhaimin.

Siradj proved to be able to play his role as a catalyst that could restore internal party dynamics and prepare it for competition. Practically, the polarization of support that caused PKB’s decline in votes in the 2009 elections did not have a domino effect in the 2014 elections. Instead, PKB’s votes returned to the level of 11.29 million votes, similar to the 2004 election results. This vote result indicates that the internal conditions of PKB have recovered, the party’s engine is ready for battle again, and the internal consolidation carried out by Muhaimin in collaboration with Said Aqil Siradj has been successful. Even during Said Aqil Siradj’s leadership period, there were almost no significant frictions among internal PKB cadres, thanks to the intervention of senior kyai who helped reconcile conflicting factions.²⁸

However, during this period, PKB was not yet able to encourage its cadres to participate directly in the contest for the presidential and vice-presidential elections. Based on interviews with MCH, it is suspected that PKB must ensure a conducive internal condition and observe the results of the 2019 vote as a parameter for endorsing its cadres in the presidential election. If only based on the vote results in 2014, it is not sufficient as a guideline for the future. Consistency in votes and even an increase in votes in the subsequent period are required to ensure a strategy for endorsing its cadres in the direct presidential election.²⁹

2. Extra Organizational Power Independence of NU Autonomous Bodies

The independence of NU autonomous bodies has significantly influenced the internal dynamics of PKB. One prominent figure who has directly crossed paths with Muhaimin is Khofifah Indar Parawansa. After being endorsed by PKB in 2013 to challenge Soekarwo for the East Java gubernatorial seat, the

²⁷ <https://news.detik.com/pemilu/d-6541987/cerita-said-aqil-pernah-jadi-jurkam-pkb-ke-mana-mana-nggak-ada-amplop>

²⁸ Results of interviews with BDA on November 27 2023, 16.30-22.00 at Fore Rawamangun Jakarta.

²⁹ Interview results with MCH on October 13 2023, 20.00-02.00 at MCH’s house

election ended in defeat.³⁰ In the 2018 regional elections, Khofifah paired with Emil Dardak, supported by three major parties, namely Nasdem, PPP, and PKPI, competing against Saifullah Yusuf-Azwar Anas, supported by two major parties, PKB and PDIP.³¹ Khofifah, backed by the strong NU autonomous bodies, Muslimat and Fatayat, proved to be a formidable force, especially among female voters. Coupled with Khofifah's leadership, representing the epitome of NU women with a religious, intelligent, and independent image.

Recent friction with NU autonomous bodies has become more noticeable with Yaqut Cholil as the chairman of Ansor NU and concurrently the Minister of Religious Affairs. Yaqut's presence has long been seen as a strong potential rival to Muhaimin in the future. Apart from his profile and competence, Yaqut shares a similar lineage with Muhaimin. The solid and organizational growth of Ansor and Banser makes Yaqut a bargaining position. According to an interview with MTA, Yaqut's appointment as Minister of Religious Affairs represents the interests of the State Palace (Jokowi's interests) more than representing PKB. BDW also expressed a similar sentiment, stating that Yaqut cannot be fully controlled by Muhaimin.³²

As an autonomous body, NU has the authority to govern itself to implement NU programs in line with its membership base. Ideally, the autonomous body should not take a stance contrary to the interests of both PBNU and PKB. However, in political reality, when the autonomous body is capable of building its organization and solidifying its members, this does not prevent the emergence of partial interests from the elite of the autonomous bodies. The position that should be a supporting organ for comprehensive interests instead becomes a competing force bringing partial interests of its elite organ.

3. External Intervention

The political dynamics of PKB cannot be separated from external intervention which is the party's main supporting organ. PBNU as the organization with the largest Muslim community in Indonesia has strong ties to PKB. Both positions

³⁰ <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2013/08/22/1605209/Muhaimin.Hanya.Khofifah.yang.Siap.Melawan.Soekarwo>

³¹ <https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/138813/6-partai-resmi-dukung-khofifah>

³² <https://www.suara.com/kotaksuara/2023/10/03/155041/hubungan-cak-imin-vs-menag-yaqut-memanas-jadi-tanda-perang-dua-kubu-di-internal-pkb> dan <https://www.detik.com/sumut/berita/d-6978119/cak-imin-sebut-gus-yaqut-petakilan>

cannot mutually deny each other. This external intervention is influenced by several key factors as below:

a. Historical factors of PKB and PBNU

In its history, the process of creating PKB was initiated by PBNU structure which was anxious about the direction of Reformation. The formation of PKB was one of the political paths of the NU elites which was initiated by Gus Dur as general chairman. If we look at the course of history, PKB's ties with PBNU are not just emotional and ideological ties, but it can also be said that PKB is PBNU's biological child in the political field. Departing from this historical process indirectly made the party's position and strength the "trustee" of the political struggle of NU citizens. However, these historical ties have an impact on PKB's political stability and independence in determining its political policies. Indirectly, various political decisions taken by PKB were not only because of internal considerations but also because of NU's interests in general. In the political contestation for the presidential and vice-presidential elections, PBNU's involvement can be seen in the form of support for one of the candidate pairs. As happened in the 2004 elections where the positions of the PKB and PBNU were at odds because of personal problems between Gus Dur and Hasyim Muzadi. In contrast to the 2009-2014 presidential election, especially during the Said Aqil Siradj era, the positions of the PKB and PBNU can be said to be in line with their political interests.

b. NU residents as primary supporters

PKB's political position, which always receives intervention from external parties, cannot be separated from its dependence on NU members as primary supporters. Even though in recent periods, PKB has tried to build a modern political party pattern by opening itself to other ideologies and religions, it has not been able to free itself from its dependence. The inclusiveness of PKB, if intended as an electoral machine, certainly cannot be said to be successful because so far it is still supported by NU members as the primary mass. This condition certainly means that PBNU has a very strong playing position to be able to influence political policy. As PBNU general chairman, Yahya Chalil Staquf delivered a message in his speech when winning the election for general chairman, that NU's neutrality is a must and should not be used only for the

interests of a particular party. The attitudes and policies taken by Yahya then gave rise to very broad and massive reactions and polemics at the grassroots.

Political intervention carried out by external parties to some extent had an influence on PKB's courage in encouraging its cadres to contest the presidential and vice-presidential elections directly. The position of PKB which has historical and ideological ties with PBNU must also be able to build good communication so that the level of support is more optimal. The 2019 presidential and vice-presidential election was a very appropriate example when Jokowi, who was the incumbent, chose Ma'ruf Amin, who was more of a representative of NU than PKB. However, the political step that supports and encourages Ma'ruf Amin as a candidate was PKB, which was the main supporting party of Jokowi's coalition. From this point, we can see that the wedge between PKB and PBNU is not only in ideological matters but also in the level of practical political interests.

5. Conclusion

PKB's infrastructure barriers in encouraging its cadres in the struggle for power in the presidential and vice-presidential elections from 2004-2019 were dominated by its relationship with PBNU. The relationship between the two does not always run smoothly and in line with policies and political interests. But, behind the political intrigue between the two, they still cannot be separated. This situation cannot be separated from the history of the birth of the PKB which was initiated by NU structural members and became an extension of NU's interests. In this situation, the leadership, and tendencies of the PBNU management have an influencing factor and change the political map of PKB. During the two decades under Hasyim Muzadi's leadership, the relationship between the two went up and down and they did not support each other during the 2004 elections. But the relationship between the two improved and they were able to support each other when the PKB was involved in internal conflict and together they restored the glory of the PKB. In the two decades that followed, Said Aqil Siradj's leadership could be said to be the most romantic and conducive conditions.

In Anthony Giddens' structuration approach, it can be used as an approach to see the relationship between PKB and NU. Both are involved in determining their respective interests so that it becomes biased to determine which agent is more dominant between the two. Muhaimin as general chairman of the PKB has very strong financial capacity and ability as well as influence but cannot

completely control NU's interests because they also have strength and solidity that is no less strong. This position of mutual influence prevents structure and agency from appearing in a strong identity. Even the position of NU and the Kyai within it are able to act as catalysts when there is internal conflict within the PKB. Therefore, to this day, PKB is a party that has high solidity when other Islamic political parties experience turbulence. The role of PBNU and Kyai who act as mediators and have the power to settle conflicting parties is the most unique differentiator.

The position of PKB and PBNU, which both have the power to influence each other indirectly, makes the policy-making process related to determining which cadres to run as presidential or vice-presidential candidates difficult. Even after almost 4 election periods, the support of the PBNU and the Kyai remained divided when Muhaimin became the presidential candidate. It indicates that PBNU and its staff cannot be separated from practical political interests which cannot be fully controlled by PKB or Muhaimin. even though, if we refer to cultural identity, Muhaimin is the noble in the descendants of the founder of NU, namely the great-grandson of K.H. Bisyr Samsuri and is also a descendant of the founder of the Denanyar Jombang Islamic boarding school. With those identity background, it cannot guarantee massive and solid support from PBNU.

Co-authors Contribution:

M. Nastain served as first author and was involved in data collection. Irwan Abdullah was involved in directing the data findings and helping reduce the necessary data. Zuli Qodir and Hasse Jubba contributed to obtaining secondary data and sharpening the analysis.

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