

## THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS IN MOBILIZING VOTERS FOR THE 2024 ELECTION IN MEDAN CITY

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the role of Islamic organizations in voter mobilization in the 2024 Election in Medan City. Using a case study approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation, this study found that Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) play a strategic role in shaping political awareness and voter preferences. This role is carried out through religious forums and the use of social media, but it is colored by ambiguity between the neutral position of the organization and the practical political affiliation of its cadres. The results show that religion-based voter mobilization can increase political participation, but also harbor the potential for polarization and religious instrumentality. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of Islamic organizations as agents of political education that uphold the values of moderation and inclusivity in democracy.

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### INTRODUCTIONS

The history of Islamic politics in Indonesia shows that Islamic organizations have undergone a transformation from a mere religious group to an entity that has great influence in national politics. The Dynamics of Islamic Politics in Indonesia highlights how Islamic organizations such as NU not only function as a da'wah institution, but also as political actors who are able to shape public opinion and direct public political support. In the context of the 2024 election, Islamic organizations not only play a role in directing voters, but also in ensuring that Islamic values remain

the basis for choosing leaders with integrity and having a vision for the welfare of the ummah. (Dewi & Junaidi, 2024) (Salma & Muslim, 2025)

However, in political contestation, Islamic organizations also face various challenges, especially related to identity politics. In the book *Identity Politics and the Struggle for Hegemony*, it is explained that the use of religion-based identity politics can lead to social fragmentation in society, which ultimately has the potential to create sharp political polarization. This is a serious concern in the 2024 election, where there is the potential for Islamic organizations to be used as political tools by certain groups for electoral purposes. Therefore, it is important for Islamic organizations to maintain neutrality and play a mediator role in creating a democratic and inclusive electoral process. (Ba'dawi et al., 2024) (Ritonga et al., 2023; Susilawati, 2023)

In the context of the 2024 election, Islamic organizations have a strategic role in mobilizing voters, shaping people's political preferences, and increasing voter participation. This research is important because there have not been many studies that specifically discuss how the strategy of Islamic organizations in influencing the political behavior of the people of Medan City. (Muzaki & Luttadinata, 2024; Suardi, 2025)

In the city of Medan, which has a significant Muslim population, the role of Islamic organizations in shaping political preferences is enormous. These organizations are not only involved in religious activities, but are also active in the social and political spheres. With its broad mass base and strong influence, Islamic organizations have the potential to mobilize voters, both directly through election socialization, and indirectly through political education and the cultivation of religious values related to politics. This phenomenon is very relevant to research, considering that the 2024 election is predicted to be a fierce political competition. (K. A. Putra et al., 2025; T. R. Putra et al., 2024)

In the dynamics of Indonesian politics, Islamic organizations have a very significant role in determining the direction of democracy. As explained in *Indonesian Political Dynamics*, the existence of Islamic organizations is not only limited to the religious realm, but also participates in shaping political structures in various regions. This involvement can be seen from their active participation in providing political education to the public as well as involvement in political campaigns directly and indirectly. The existence of Islamic organizations is often a bridge between the ummah and the government in various policies related to the life of the nation and state. (Damanik & Junaidi, 2024; Kamuli et al., 2023)

The 2019 election has shown that the vote of Muslims is one of the determining factors in the election results in Indonesia. In Medan, as one of the major cities in North Sumatra, Islamic organizations played an important role in the process. Through various channels, both in the form of taklim assemblies, recitations, and other social organizations, political messages are often conveyed to the public. This creates a great influence on the political preferences of citizens, both individually and collectively. Therefore, research on the role of Islamic organizations in voter mobilization is very relevant to understand how they affect voter behavior in Medan City, especially in the face of the 2024 General Election. (Akla, 2025; Hastarini et al., 2025)

According to research by , another challenge faced by Islamic organizations is the emergence of sharp political polarization among Muslims themselves. For example, in the 2019 elections, although many Islamic organizations were educating the public to participate, there were still significant differences in political choices between different Islamic groups. This can reduce the effectiveness of voter mobilization carried out by Islamic organizations. Sasmita et al. (2025) (Ahmidi et al., 2024; Singarimbun & Junaidi, 2023)

From a policy perspective, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Outlook 2024 highlights how religious institutions have a strategic role in building public political awareness. The Ministry of Religious Affairs itself emphasized the importance of religious moderation as part of efforts to maintain political stability and prevent radicalization in elections. Islamic organizations are expected to contribute to providing political education that not only increases voter

participation, but also ensures that the electoral process runs peacefully and is not caught up in political narratives that can divide the ummah. Thus, the role of Islamic organizations in the 2024 election is not only to mobilize voters, but also as a guardian of healthy and inclusive democratic values.

Therefore, the urgency of this research is based on the fact that in every electoral momentum, Islamic organizations are often the actors that candidates and political parties take into account. However, there is still a lack of scientific studies that specifically and in-depth describe how these organizations play a role in mobilizing voters at the local level, especially in the context of the 2024 election in Medan City. This research is important to understand communication patterns, mobilization strategies, and forms of influence carried out by Islamic organizations on their constituent base. In addition, this research is relevant in the context of strengthening participatory democracy and community political education based on moderate and inclusive Islamic values.

### Literature Review

The study of the role of Islamic organizations in the Indonesian political sphere has become an important part of academic discourse, especially in looking at the relationship between religion and democracy. The study of the role of Islamic organizations in the Indonesian political sphere has become an important part of academic discourse, especially in looking at the relationship between religion and democracy. The study is one of the main references that highlights the contribution of the largest Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in maintaining political stability after the 2019 elections. In the study, Islamic organizations are not only seen as religious actors, but also as balancers of socio-political conflicts through a moderate Islamic narrative and reconciliation. This approach confirms that Islamic organizations have great potential as a guide to peaceful political discourse, not just passive religious entities. Zahratana & Ridho (2023)

On the other hand, he focused his attention on the dynamics of political communication in campaigns, especially on social media. In the context of political digitalization, Islamic organizations are beginning to play an important role in spreading political messages based on religious values. The narrative strategy used often emphasizes the issue of morality, partiality with the ummah, and the image of ideal leaders according to Islam. This research underscores the importance of adapting Islamic organizations to modern political communication technologies in mobilizing voters, especially the younger generation. Saragih (2021)

Meanwhile, the study provides a more local perspective by highlighting the vulnerability of conflict due to the politicization of religion in the city of Medan. The findings of this study show that religious organizations are often trapped in the tug-of-war for local political interests, so they play a dual role as mediators as well as tools of political mobilization. In the context of a plural Medan, the existence of Islamic organizations has the potential to be a factor in social cohesion or even a trigger for tension if not managed wisely. Rizqya & Afdholy (2024)

The three studies above make an important contribution to the understanding of the position and role of Islamic organizations in politics. However, there has not been much research that specifically and in-depth describes the dynamics of Islamic organization mobilization strategies at the local level, such as in the city of Medan, especially ahead of the 2024 elections. Therefore, this research is here to fill this void by focusing on how Islamic organizations operate in shaping the political consciousness of the ummah, the mobilization strategies used, and the challenges they face in maintaining a balance between political interests and religious values.

### METHOD RESEARCH

The type of research used is a case study, which aims to analyze in depth and holistically the role of Islamic organizations in political mobilization in a particular environment. The case study allows researchers to explore

various aspects, both in terms of strategies, challenges, and the impact of mobilization carried out by Islamic organizations on community involvement in the 2024 elections. Through this approach, the research will focus on specific phenomena in a real context, so that the results can provide a more comprehensive picture of political communication patterns, the influence of Islamic organizations on voter preferences, and the effectiveness of the mobilization strategies applied. (Rasyid, 2022)

The data in this study relies on primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is data obtained directly from the main source, namely the Islamic Organization (NU) through data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and group discussions. While secondary data is data obtained from existing sources, such as documents, reports, or literature relevant to the research. This data is not collected directly by the researcher but is used to support the research analysis. (Sari et al., 2022)

The data analysis in this study uses thematic analysis techniques. The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents will be categorized based on themes relevant to this study. The analysis process is carried out through three main stages, namely data reduction, presentation of data in narrative form, and drawing conclusions. In addition, data triangulation is used to improve the validity of research by comparing results from various data sources collected. Thus, this study can provide a more accurate picture of public perception of public relations practices in the government sector in Medan City. (Creswell, 2015) (Huff, 2017)

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study show that Islamic organizations in Medan City, especially Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, have an active role in increasing voter participation in the 2024 election. This activity is carried out through various approaches such as thematic recitation, taklim assemblies inserted with moderate political messages, Islamic discussions with leadership themes, and non-formal campaigns on social media. This role is not partisan, but rather towards political education based on Islamic values, which emphasizes the importance of choosing leaders who are trustworthy, fair, and have a vision of the ummah.

Field findings also indicate that these Islamic organizations play a function as a bridge between the ummah and state policies. Through internal and external networks, they educate the public on the importance of exercising their right to vote and avoiding the practice of money politics and SARA-based hate speech. This effort is carried out both through Friday sermons, cadre training programs, and dialogue between religious organizations facilitated by the local government.

However, not all Islamic organizations show a neutral attitude. Some small groups show a tendency to support certain candidates explicitly, though not institutionally. This shows that there is a tension between the position of CSOs as religious entities and the practical political reality on the ground.

### Analysis and Findings

From the results of in-depth interviews with the management of NU and Muhammadiyah branches in the city of Medan, data was obtained that around 70% of religious activities carried out before the election indirectly contained political education content. This indicates that Islamic organizations have internalized their political role within a religious framework, not merely as a tool of electoral mobilization.

Furthermore, it was found that social media plays an important role in mobilization strategies. Islamic organizations have used platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp as a means of simultaneously spreading moral and political messages. This is in line with the findings, that the younger generation is more easily touched by digital narratives than conventional campaigns. (Bondar & Siregar, 2025)



On the other hand, Islamic organizations also face challenges in the form of fragmentation of internal support. Differences of opinion among members on who is the most suitable candidate to support often spark tensions at the grassroots level. Although organizations at the central level call for neutrality, differences in cadres' political affiliations often create hidden spaces for conflict. (Synarsari & Adnan, 2025)

In general, this study emphasizes that the role of Islamic organizations in the 2024 General Election in Medan City is not only limited to technical mobilization, but also includes the formation of value-based political awareness, strengthening democratic participation, and moral supervision of the ongoing political process.

In addition, voter mobilization by Islamic organizations is no longer traditional and exclusive through da'wah forums alone, but has migrated to digital spaces. Analysis of political communication patterns shows that social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok are the main channels for the dissemination of political messages packaged in religious narratives. This strategy has proven effective in reaching the younger generation of Muslims in Medan, who are demographically the dominant voters in the 2024 election. (Setiawan, 2022)

However, this digitalization strategy is not without risks. The use of religious narratives in digital campaigns also opens up opportunities for disinformation, identity-based propaganda, and psychological manipulation of voters. The fact that some of the content disseminated is not scientifically verified shows the weakness of the political literacy of the ummah which should be the main concern of religious organizations. (Ardiansyah & Muhaimin, 2024; Khamdan, 2022)

Furthermore, thematic analysis of the interview data shows that political mobilization by Islamic organizations is not only related to the invitation to vote, but also forms what is called moral *voting behavior* political preferences based on religious perceptions of the candidate's figures, not solely by work programs or political track records. This has the potential to put politics on a narrow moral altar and get rid of the principle of rationality in elections. (Courtesy & Setyahadi, 2019; Nazla, 2024)

In addition, there is a gap in political participation between active members of the organization and non-organizational Muslim communities. The study found that those who were directly affiliated with organizational structures showed higher levels of political participation than the general public.

Another significant finding is the emergence of a tendency for internal polarization among Islamic organizations. Although it does not lead to open conflict, differences in political affiliation within the organization show that there is a fragmentation of political orientation that threatens the social cohesion of the people. This fragmentation shows that Islamic organizations have not fully succeeded in playing the role of social glue in the electoral democratic contest.

Thus, this study critically assesses that Islamic organizations have the potential to be a catalyst for value-based democracy, but at the same time also contain the risk of reproduction of polarization and religious instrumentality in practical politics if not closely monitored.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that Islamic organizations, especially in the city of Medan, have a strategic and significant role in voter mobilization in the 2024 election. This role is not only limited to da'wah activities and political education, but also extends to the realm of opinion mobilization and the formation of people's political preferences through the approach of Islamic values. However, this involvement is ambivalent. On the one hand, Islamic organizations contribute positively to increasing political participation and instilling an awareness of democracy based on ethics. On the other hand, the emergence of the practice of politicizing religion, the use of identity narratives, and the

involvement of cadres in partisan campaigns show that Islamic organizations are not yet completely free from the tug-of-war of practical political interests.

Digital mobilization through social media is one of the important findings, where Islamic organizations are beginning to adapt modern campaign strategies, despite the risk of giving rise to disinformation. Internal organizational fragmentation and inequality of political participation between groups are also important notes. Therefore, Islamic organizations need to strengthen their educational and moderation functions so that they not only become a tool for electoral mobilization, but also the guardians of inclusive and civilized democratic values.

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