

# Muslim Politics: Political Model of Islamic Law in Adat Societies

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**Abstract:** This research aims to analyze the political model of Islamic law within the indigenous community of Kerinci. The idea behind this research is the triumph of the Islamic party in the local, governor, and presidential elections in Kerinci, Jambi Province, between 2009 and 2019. Gradually, Islam acquired substantial political influence inside the customary domain of Kerinci. The study employs a combination of socio-historical and qualitative research. The data is examined utilizing Miriam Budiardjo's political law approach, encompassing classical, behavioral, post-behavioral, dependence, neo-Marxist, rational choice, and new institutionalism approaches. Our research indicates that the implementation of Political Islamic Law in Kerinci is an integral component of the Islamic Populism movement, which has gained momentum and become deeply rooted in the political conduct of the local Muslim community. These cultural habits originate from the fundamental principles of society, which have emerged as a result of the assimilation of Islamic teachings into daily life. These individuals are involved in the decision-making processes of Adat Institution and Majelis Pengkajian Ulama' (MPU). These individuals inherently endorse Islamic parties such as PAN (National Mandate Party) and PKS (Prosperous Justice Party). Adat institutions play a significant role in local elections by offering guidance through sectoral delegates in every adat region.

**Keywords:** *Muslim politic; Islamic law politic; adat; indigenous people*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis model politik Hukum Islam dalam masyarakat adat Kerinci. Ide dari penelitian ini berasal dari kemenangan partai Islam dalam pemilihan kepala daerah, gubernur, dan presiden di Kerinci, Provinsi Jambi antara tahun 2009 dan 2019. Secara bertahap, Islam memperoleh pengaruh politik yang substansial di dalam wilayah adat Kerinci. Penelitian ini menggunakan kombinasi penelitian sosio-historis dan kualitatif. Data yang ada dikaji dengan menggunakan pendekatan hukum politik Miriam Budiardjo, yang meliputi pendekatan klasik, perilaku, post-behavioral, ketergantungan, neo-Marxis, pilihan rasional, dan institusionalisme baru. Penelitian kami menunjukkan bahwa penerapan Syari'at Islam Politik di Kerinci merupakan komponen integral dari gerakan

Populisme Islam, yang telah mendapatkan momentum dan mengakar kuat dalam perilaku politik masyarakat Muslim setempat. Kebiasaan budaya ini berasal dari prinsip-prinsip dasar masyarakat, yang muncul sebagai hasil dari asimilasi ajaran Islam ke dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Individu-individu ini terlibat dalam proses pengambilan keputusan di Lembaga Adat dan Majelis Pengkajian Ulama (MPU). Individu-individu ini secara inheren mendukung partai-partai Islam seperti PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional) dan PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera). Lembaga adat memainkan peran penting dalam pemilihan kepala daerah dengan memberikan arahan melalui delegasi sektoral di setiap wilayah adat.

**Kata kunci:** *Politik Muslim; politik hukum Islam; adat; masyarakat adat*

## Introduction

The coalition of the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) was successful in the 2019-2024 Regional election in Kerinci Regency, marking their third consecutive victory since 2009. Islamic political parties maintain their dominant position in post-reform Kerinci. In 2019, during the presidential election, many people cast their votes for Islamic political parties. According to the Jambi KPU data, in 2019, the Prabowo-Sandi pair, supported by the Gerindra Party, PKS, PAN, Demokrat Party, and Berkarya, received a total of 6,543 votes in Kerinci Regency. In contrast, the Jokowi-Makruf duo received 2,439 votes.<sup>1</sup> The Islamic Party's popularity in Kerinci is attributed to the effective implementation of Islamic political laws by Islamic parties in rural regions. The socio-historical influence of Islam in the indigenous areas is inseparable from it. Unlike the situation in Sungai Penuh City, an urban area located in the center of the Kerinci Regency, secular nationalist parties tend to dominate there.

Conversely, Kerinci Regency, situated in close proximity to West Sumatra province, is somewhat impacted by the Islamic political paradigm prevalent in the region. Between 2010 and 2020, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) held a prominent position in the

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<sup>1</sup> Kumparan.com, "KPU Jambi: Prabowo Dominant in Kerinci, Jokowi Wins Tanjung Jabung," 2019, <https://kumparan.com/jambikita/kpu-jambi-prabowo-dominan-di-kerinci-jokowi-menangi-tanjung-jabung-1qwS72g0f2T>.

political landscape of West Sumatra.<sup>2</sup> Previous research has also examined the robust correlation between Islamic groups and political parties in securing victories in the Governor elections in Jambi Province, namely for candidates Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani.<sup>3</sup> Both West Sumatra and Jambi Province share comparable political frameworks characterized by the dominance of Islamic parties. Both areas share a common Islamic culture characterized by the adagium: *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. The enduring presence of traditional practices in West Sumatra, particularly within the Minangkabau tribe and in Jambi, with the Melayu tribe, has garnered significant interest from anthropological scholars worldwide.

The Kerinci area was selected due to its adherence to the customary institutional structure, making it one of the few customary territories in Indonesia that currently preserves this tradition. The customary institutions in Kerinci are believed to significantly contribute to the Islamic party's success in implementing its political agenda. The solid foundation of Islam in Kerinci is demonstrated by the resilience of adat institutions that embody Islam as an integral component of the cultural and societal principles of the indigenous people of Kerinci. Customary institutions have a role in validating the application of Islamic law within their specific customary regions. Aside from conventional establishments, *Majelis Pengkajian Ulama'* (MPU) also conducts regular lectures on Islamic law. According to researchers, the MPU has a significant influence in establishing the credibility of non-formal candidates. Nonetheless, the idea holds significance as it underscores the importance of selecting Islamic-affiliated groups and political figures who are seen as devout.

The study of indigenous or Islamic law, known as *'urf* in Sumatra, had been conducted long before by John R. Bowen. Bowen took the example of *Adat* in Gayo to explain the Anthropology of Religion. Bowen focuses more on discussing the Judges of Islamic Law (individuals) defining Islamic law when dealing with customary law,

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<sup>2</sup> Aqil Teguh Fathani et al., "Analysis of the Victory of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in West Sumatra (2009-2020)," *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 17, no. 1 (2021): 69–83, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tps.v17i1.8542>.

<sup>3</sup> Zakly Hanafi Ahmad, "Political Relations of Islamic Groups Towards the Victory of Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani in the 2020 Jambi Governor Election" (Diponegoro University, 2022).

state law, and other Laws.<sup>4</sup> The State has recognized *Adat* as a political body since 1983.<sup>5</sup> *Adat* has transformed into a political movement.<sup>6</sup> Political struggles in customary institutions can be seen in several writings, including John Haba, who explained the internal conflict in indigenous people between indigenous leaders and communities regarding power politics.<sup>7</sup> *Adat* politics has always been associated with customary decision-making, which is still carried out traditionally. In particular, two well-known researchers took Kerinci as a research location: C.W Watson, an anthropologist, and Uli Kozok, a philologist. Watson's research focuses on the study of family lineage and anthropological research on the life systems of the Kerinci people.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Kozok, as a philologist, examined and analyzed the language of the Tanjung Tanah Kerinci Law, which is assumed to have been made in the 14th century AD.<sup>9</sup>

As for the previous research that discussed Kerinci, there was research that concentrated on examining the authority of the indigenous institution Kerinci in legalizing Muslim marriage.<sup>10</sup> Also, the *Adat* Institution produced several Islamic legal *Adat*.<sup>11</sup> Other research

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<sup>4</sup> John R. Bowen, *Religions In Practice An Approach To The Anthropology Of Religion*, 3rd Ed. (New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> John R. Bowen, *Islam, Law, and Equality in Indonesia* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615122>.

<sup>6</sup> Fritz Edward Siregar, "The Political Context of Judicial Review in Indonesia," *Indonesia Law Review* 5, no. 2 (August 31, 2015): 208–37, <https://doi.org/10.15742/ilrev.v5n2.140>.

<sup>7</sup> John Haba, "The Reality of Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia: A Reflection," *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 22, no. 2 (2010): 255–76, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v12i2.112>.

<sup>8</sup> C. W. Watson, "Local Lineages in Kerinci, Sumatra," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48, no. 142 (September 1, 2020): 379–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2020.1801030>.

<sup>9</sup> Uli Kozok, "A 14 Th Century Malay Manuscript from Kerinci," *Archipel* 67, no. 1 (2004): 37–55, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2004.3807>.

<sup>10</sup> Armi Agustar, "Otoritas Ninik Mamak Sebagai Syarat Perkawinan Di Desa Pangkalan Baru," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ahwal Syakhsbiyyah (JAS)* 4, no. 1 (July 1, 2022): 25–42, <https://doi.org/10.33474/jas.v4i1.16138>.

<sup>11</sup> Asa'ari Asa'ari, Rifqi Nurdiansyah, and Hainadri Hainadri, "The Practice of Establishing Islamic Law By Indigenous People: A Study of Five Villages in Kedepatian Semerap, Kerinci Regency," *Khatulistiwa* 12, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 146–62, <https://doi.org/10.24260/khatulistiwa.v12i2.2379>.

showed the strong influence of Kerinci culture on the endogamous Muslim marriage model.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the formalization of Islam tends to be unsuccessful in Kerinci due to the strong influence of traditionalist Islam affiliated with Adat.<sup>13</sup> This gave rise to contestation within the Kerinci custom and Islamic organizations, As well as the process of selecting village heads in adat areas in Kerinci and the local political Muslim model.<sup>14</sup>

Based on previous research confirms that Kerinci's indigenous people have a solid customary law system and local political tension that shapes the political model of Islamic law. The model has an impact on the practices of Islamic law and the unique face of Kerinci Islam. This research argues that there is a distinctive political model of Islamic law in Kerinci society. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question of how Muslim communities engage in the political model of Islamic law in indigenous communities. Furthermore, what are the determinants that lead to the increased probability of Islamic parties winning in elections as opposed to national parties inside indigenous communities?

The research method in this study is a combination of socio-historical and qualitative research. Data to answer research questions comes from documentation and previous research. The data that has been obtained is read and studied in depth. Data is presented in a narrative-descriptive way. Data were analyzed using a legal political approach. According to Miriam Budiardjo, political approaches consist of traditional, behavioral, post-behavioral, dependency, neo-Marxist, rational choice, and new institutionalism approaches.<sup>15</sup> Apart from that,

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<sup>12</sup> Nuzul Iskandar, Indah Herningrum, and Susi Susanti, "Islamic and Cultural Negotiations in Endogamous Marriage in Kerinci," *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2022): 49–72, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jhi.v20i1.6515>.

<sup>13</sup> Marjan Fadil, Martunus Rahim, and Indra Ikhsan, "The Islamic Formalism Movement in Malay Land: Experiences of the Muslim Community in Kerinci, Jambi," *Jurnal Fuaduna : Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 5, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.30983/fuaduna.v5i1.4596>.

<sup>14</sup> Yasni Efyanti, "The Role of Indigenous People in The Implementation of Village Head Elections in Five Villages In Kedepatian Semerap Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province," *Al-Qisthu: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Hukum* 15, no. 2 (2017): 19–33, <https://doi.org/10.32694/010310>.

<sup>15</sup> Miriam Budiardj, *Fundamentals of Political Science*, 1st Ed. (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007).

it is strengthened by data obtained from previous research, which discusses Islamic politics and its influence on traditional areas in Kerinci. Apart from that, the data was also analyzed using the qualitative data analysis technique of Miles et al., namely data condensation, data presentation, and concluding.<sup>16</sup>

### **Socio-Political Conditions of Islamic Law in Kerinci**

The Kerinci people are indigenous people who inhabit the valley and Mount Kerinci in Jambi Province. The Kerinci community has two leaders, namely administrative leaders such as the Regent and Mayor. On the other hand, traditional leadership is maintained in the midst of modernization. The relationship between Islamic law and customary law in the local culture of the Kerinci community is generally strong. Reflected in the adage: *Adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi kitabullah*". This adage is repeated in every opening of the traditional speech of the Kerinci people.<sup>17</sup> Customary territories cover several administrative areas such as villages and kelurahan. Generally, every customary institution in Kerinci has the same pattern of management division. It consists of four components, including *Depati* (Traditional Leaders), *Ninik Mamak* (Traditional Elders), educated Middle-Class Society, and Young People. They formed customary institutions that became institutions that regulated community life. All aspects, including social, law, political, and religious, are controlled by customary leadership centered on an indigenous institution. This customary leadership model can be seen in the Kerinci community in Jambi Province. Unlike traditional leadership, which is usually passed down from generation to generation through descent, customary institutions in Kerinci have a system of electing traditional administrators, which is held every five years along with conventional ceremonies (*Kenduri Sko*) democratically. *Kenduri Sko* is a ritual event that contains the change of traditional officials, the purification of heirlooms, and *kenduri* (community feast) with a large banquet followed

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014); Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis (a Source Book of New Methods)* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984).

<sup>17</sup> Asa'ari, Nurdiansyah, and Hainadri, "The Practice of Establishing Islamic Law By Indigenous People: A Study of Five Villages in Kedepatian Semerap, Kerinci Regency."

by the whole community.<sup>18</sup> Customary leadership elections are held between three and seven years. In general, *Kenduri Sko* is carried out by the *federation* (customary territory that houses several villages) in Kerinci Regency. In Kerinci Regency itself, there are several *kedepatian*.

The different characters of the Kerinci Community can be seen geographically, namely Kerinci *Hulu (Mudik)*, Kerinci *Tengah*, and *Hilir*. According to the Kompas report, the division of this region affects who is eligible to run for Regent in Kerinci. So that political contestation in the Kerinci region is sectoral delegation.<sup>19</sup> Then, delegates are recommended by indigenous leaders to contest. For example, in one area in Kerinci, the determination of the Village Head is very dependent on the recommendations of customary institutions.<sup>20</sup> Sociopolitical relations are strong bonds established with each other.

Talking about indigenous people's relations within Islamic law politics, in other words, also talking about political Muslims. According to Mandeville, Muslim politics means focusing on actors as political subjects who influence and shape accurate political models in Muslim societies. Mandaville further explains:

To study Muslim politics, then, is to look at the diverse ways in which people who identify themselves as Muslims in a variety of social locations—be they religious scholars, bureaucrats, intellectuals, merchants, or scientists—understand, make use of, and mobilize the symbols and language of Islam around issues of social order, power, and authority.<sup>21</sup>

The actors referred to in customary territories are power holders and authority holders. They play an essential role in providing political direction, including ruling over the determination of who leaders should be chosen from the Micro (Village), Local (District),

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<sup>18</sup> Tela Wahyuni and Valezza Juliani Arafik, "Traditions And Religious Relations: Perceptions Of Religious Group In Kerinci, Jambi," *Contemporary Society And Politics Journal* 1, no. 1 (2022): 37–46.

<sup>19</sup> Eren Marsyukrilla, "Kerinci-Style Primordialism," 2018, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2018/05/16/primordialisme-ala-kerinci>.

<sup>20</sup> Efyanti, "The Role of Indigenous People in The Implementation of Village Head Elections in Five Villages In Kedepatian Semerap Kecamatan Keliling Danau, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province."

<sup>21</sup> Peter Mandaville, *Islam and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315814773>.

Regional (Province), and nationally-President levels in the case of the number of elective votes. So, the strong bond between Islamic law and customary law has become its version of *al-'urf*. The Kerinci community is an indigenous community that has existed for a long time. The people of Kerinci live by tightly held customary law norms. Traditional ceremonies are often held in parts of the customary area (*kedepatian*). The highlight of the most significant traditional event in the Kerinci area is the *ske* feast.<sup>22</sup> C. W. Watson identifies the Kerinci tribe as “Minangkabau-like” because of the family system's similarities. The kinship model in Kerinci is also an essential factor in determining the classification of which family's traditional leaders are chosen.<sup>23</sup>

Indigenous traditional leaders can be assumed to be part of the micropolitical model. In general, micropolitics is one type of politics that focuses on politics when forming perceptions, attitudes, and preferences that contribute to desires, beliefs, tendencies, and judgments.<sup>24</sup> Ja'far Ahmad, an academic and political expert on Kerinci, explained that the primordialism element in Kerinci's society dramatically affects how and where people's political votes will be distributed.<sup>25</sup>

The Islamic law political Model in Kerinci society can be categorized as a behavioral approach. The consequence of this approach is that customary institutions are not the central point of Kerinci's political model. However, the community's behavior firmly holds a custom that shapes and determines the political model in Kerinci. The behavioral political science approach has a political flow process consisting of Input and output. For the Kerinci Community, it can be assumed that the input position is the community, while the production is a customary institution. Customary institutions function as givers of political legitimacy based on the influence of a group of individuals (Input).

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<sup>22</sup> Asa'ari, Nurdiansyah, and Hainadri, “The Practice of Establishing Islamic Law By Indigenous People: A Study of Five Villages in Kedepatian Semerap, Kerinci Regency.”

<sup>23</sup> Watson, “Local Lineages in Kerinci, Sumatra.”

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Scherer, “Micropolitics,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* 17 (2015).

<sup>25</sup> Jafar Ahmad, “Character Education and Voting Behavior of Sungai Penuh City Citizens,” *Tarbawi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 16, no. 2 (2016): 95–120.



The traditional stakeholders in Kerinci are generally referred to as *Depati*. *Depati* has a philosophical meaning *memakan habis, memenggal putus, and membunuh mati*. The meaning of this philosophical understanding is that a person has full power and authority in deciding cases in society. The high position of *Depati* makes him the full authority holder of both customary law and Islamic law.<sup>26</sup> If a *Depati* makes a wrong in determining the law, either customary or Islamic law, the *Depati* can be dishonorably dismissed by the Indigenous People. Therefore, indigenous peoples in the political approach are referred to as part of the Input who controls the course of power.

### **Islamization in Kerinci: a Legal Political Strategy**

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Jambi region experienced Islamization brought by Sufi traders.<sup>27</sup> Establishing the Jambi Sultanate proved the success of the Islamization process in Jambi. Jambi Sultanate was previously the Jambi Malay Kingdom, which was established in 1460 A.D. The Jambi region is an important area on the island of Sumatra because it has a large port that moved the wheels of the economy in the 15th to 19th centuries A.D. So, the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) at that time really wanted the Jambi region to submit to control the economy. The Dutch Colonial made various political efforts. However, the Jambi Sultanate refused to submit and resisted. The assassination of Sultan Taha Saifuddin in 1904 became the end of the Jambi Sultanate.<sup>28</sup>

Kerinci civilization, located far from the center of the Jambi Sultanate in the 18th century, became a sub-area with its local leadership model. Kerinci, at that time (until now), was culturally controlled by the *Depati-Depati* (traditional leaders). There are two theories about the process of Islamization in Kerinci. The first is brought by the Shaikhs (Siak), and one of the most famous Siaks is Siak

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<sup>26</sup> Arzam Arzam, "Customary Degrees in Kerinci Reviewed from Social Sciences," *Al-Qisthu: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Hukum* 12, no. 1 (2016): 66–76.

<sup>27</sup> Agusti Putra Benny, "Transformation of Jambi Malay Islamic Culture; From Traditional Societies to Urban Societies" (Uin Raden Fatah Palembang, 2019).

<sup>28</sup> Benny Agusti Putra, "Jambi Malay History From 7th Century To 20th Century," *Tsaqofah Dan Tarikh: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Sejarah Islam* 3, no. 1 (June 10, 2018): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.29300/tjksi.v3i1.1549>.

Lengih. The second theory is due to political intervention from the Jambi sultanate to the *Depati*.<sup>29</sup>

Adagium “Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah” originally “Adat Basandi Alur, Alur Basandi Patut”.<sup>30</sup> This adagium proves that the process of Islamization in Kerinci is successful because it is able to change the philosophy that was initially purely cultural nuances into intertwined religion and culture. This proverb is also used by some Kerinci traditional areas, such as Kedepatian Semerap, in enacting laws. Every community's legal decisions relating to family and social issues cannot be separated from the essence of this adage. So that, every *syara* employee (religious leader) in a traditional community always considers two aspects, namely customary law and Islamic law.<sup>31</sup> The formation of a new philosophy was not solely based on ideological elements but was also driven by political interests at that time. Based on manuscripts found by E. O. Van Reijn from Auckland University, Kerinci was influenced by two sultanates, namely Inderapura Sultanate (15-18 A.D.) and Jambi Sultanate (14-19 A.D.). The two sultanates divided the Kerinci region and gave heirloom goods in the form of cloth. The two sultanates fought over the Kerinci region, and the impact of the two royal dominations resulted in dialect differences in the Kerinci language.<sup>32</sup>

According to Eickelman and Piscatori, the political system means the negotiation of interests or clashes with each other, even in Muslim areas. The political system consists of “who gets what, how, and when gets it.”<sup>33</sup> If illustrated, the process of Islamic politics in

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<sup>29</sup> Deki Syaputra ZE, “Sultan and Islam: The Role of Jambi Sultanate in Islamization in Kerinci,” *Hadbarah* 14, no. 1 (2020): 15–30, <https://doi.org/10.15548/h.v14i1.1376>.

<sup>30</sup> Oga Satria, “The Fatwa Of Smoking In The Kerinci Manuscripts,” *Penamas* 33, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 277–92, <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v33i2.432>.

<sup>31</sup> Asa’ari, Nurdiansyah, and Hainadri, “The Practice of Establishing Islamic Law By Indigenous People: A Study of Five Villages in Kedepatian Semerap, Kerinci Regency.”

<sup>32</sup> E. O. V. Reijn, *Sjaro Panta: A Folktales from Kumun, Kerinci: Text, Translation, Vocabulary, and Sketch of Kumun Phonology*. Jakarta: Badan Penyelenggara Seri Nusa (Yogyakarta: Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Kerinci in the 17th and 18th centuries A.D. began with a contestation between the two sultanates of Inderapura and Jambi. In the context of the Jambi Sultanate to *Depati* in Kerinci, the Jambi Sultanate wants *Depati* to harmonize between Islamic Law and Customary Law in Kerinci. As proof of the submission of the Kerinci region under the Jambi sultanate, Islamization is a political tool used by the stakeholders in both areas.<sup>34</sup> If described with the concept of political Muslims by Eickelman and Piscatori, it means “Jambi Sultanate and Inderapura Sultanate gained power over the Kerinci region by sending warrants and heirlooms to the *Depati* in Kerinci in the 18th century A.D. Interestingly, the two sultanates actually did not really have complete control over the entire Kerinci region. The Kerinci region is still led and governed by *Depati*, who have their respective customary territories. However, in order to protect the territory, the tax was still delivered to the sultanates.

The Kerinci people, who previously adhered to animism and dynamism, since the 18th century have integrated elements of Islam into their beliefs. Acculturation between local beliefs and Islam resulted in syncretic Islam.<sup>35</sup> Today, it is inevitable that Islam is becoming the sole religion throughout Kerinci. The population of Muslims in Kerinci is 99.76%. However, the practice of animism and dynamism in rituals is maintained. Not surprisingly, Islam has become one of the essential elements in every social and cultural aspect, including as a political strategy. In general, religious practice, the Muslim community in Kerinci in madzhab adheres to the Shafi’i madzhab and has Asy’ari theology. While in Tassawuf follows Imam Ghazali.<sup>36</sup> This model of religious practice was influenced by the Perti (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyyah) organization from West Sumatra. Perti established Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah (MTI) in the Kerinci customary

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<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Sukardi, “The Process of Islamization in Tanah Kerinci,” *Krinok: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Sejarah* 1, no. 1 (May 6, 2022): 65–72, <https://doi.org/10.22437/krinok.v1i1.17882>.

<sup>35</sup> Mahli Zainudin Tago, *Sharia Islam and Syncretic Islam in Kerinci Hilir* (Yogyakarta: LP3M Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.15548/h.v14i1.1376>.

<sup>36</sup> Fadil, Rahim, and Ikhsan, “The Islamic Formalism Movement in Malay Land: Experiences of the Muslim Community in Kerinci, Jambi,” June 30, 2021.

territory.<sup>37</sup> The Islamic model of the Kerinci community in the current era is indeed much influenced by Islamic organizations and culture from West Sumatra.

### **Islamic Party Domination: Identity Contestation**

The 18th-19th century A.D. saw the end of the Ottoman Caliphate.<sup>38</sup> Many countries in the Middle East have begun to establish their own countries. One of them is Saudi Arabia. Puritanical domination received rave reviews from tribes in the Arabian peninsula. It was evidenced by the cooperation between King Saud and the Wahabi Islamists.<sup>39</sup> No wonder, then, that after the Hajj season, pilgrims from Indonesia bring puritanical beliefs to Indonesia. Including Padri War figures from the Minangkabau Tribe. The Padri War was a series of political conflicts and power contestations between Islamists and Indigenous people that lasted from 1803 to 1837 in West Sumatra.

The indigenous people in the Padri War received support from the Dutch Colonial. The Padri War lasted more than 30 years and ended in negotiations between indigenous people and Islamists. The two blocs united and turned against the Dutch colonial in West Sumatra.<sup>40</sup> One of the results of the talks was the medium “Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah and Syarak Mangato, Adat Mamakai.” According to the medium dictum, Islamic law has a higher position than customary law. This is because Customary Law only applies if it is in accordance with Islamic Law. That is, the Islamists at that time were at least successful in carrying out these negotiations.

The success of the Islamists had an impact on the religious culture of West Sumatran society. The medium also managed to become the identity of the Malay tribe in Sumatra. The Kerinci tribe is

<sup>37</sup> Nuzul Iskandar, Arzam Arzam, and Jafar Ahmad, “Jurisprudence Authority Negotiations: Cultural Perti Relations and Mainstream Religious Organization in Kerinci,” *Ijtihad* 37, no. 2 (2021): 1–14.

<sup>38</sup> Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (London: Harvard University Press, 2017); James P. Piscatori, *Islam in the Political Process* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>39</sup> Piscatori, *Islam in the Political Process*.

<sup>40</sup> Safwan Rozi, “Cultural Islamic Negotiations in the Paderi Rao Movement in Central Sumatra (1820-1833),” *Kalam* 6, no. 1 (February 24, 2017): 85–104, <https://doi.org/10.24042/klm.v6i1.396>.

no exception. The Kerinci tribe is referred to as a tribe similar to the Minangkabau tribe. Because of the similarity of kinship models, both use the matrilineal system. The establishment of Islamic parties in the post-1990s was also part of a series of Islamic revivals worldwide. Islamic parties were deliberately formed to accommodate Muslim communities in political contestation in Muslim countries.

The similarity of culture and customary structure between Minangkabau and Kerinci can also be seen from the similarity of the adagium philosophy of life: “Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah.” This philosophy forms *Adat* in Kerinci, adopting Islam as values and norms alongside customs. The people of Kerinci accept Islam not only as a social and cultural system but also as a political one. In 2019, when I interviewed the Kerinci community about who to vote for in the presidential election. They also answered, “Anyone from the spouse of a candidate from an Islamic party.”

Historically, Islam in Kerinci had mystical and syncretic nuances, but since the 1930-the 1990s, Islamic Sharia hegemony began to contest syncretic Islam in Kerinci.<sup>41</sup> The 1990s also marked a global rise in Islamism. Globalization of Islamic revival also affects the Islamic model in Kerinci. The impact of Islamism led to the exclusion of the Ahmadiyya organization through the District Attorney with letter number No. Kep. Ol/J.6.12.3/DKS.3/4/1989.<sup>42</sup> However, the fact is that their existence still exists in the Kerinci Mudik area, more precisely in the Kayu Aro area. The Kayu Aro area is a heterogeneous area that is the focus of transmigration from Java. Religious diversity in Kayu Aro is due to the area being a gathering place for Kerinci, Javanese, Minang, and Batak tribes, just like the Sungai Penuh City area, the urban one. In contrast to the Kerinci region in general, these two regions are dominated by Islamic parties. However, in the City area and the Transmigration area, the Nationalist-Secular Party tended to win.

Evidence of the dominance of Islamic parties in Kerinci is found in a series of victories of the Kerinci Regent, who has been

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<sup>41</sup> Tago, *Sharia Islam and Syncretic Islam in Kerinci Hilir*.

<sup>42</sup> Ismatu Ropi, “The Politics of Regulating Religion: State, Civil Society and the Quest for Religious Freedom in Modern Indonesia,” 2016, <https://australiaawardsindonesia.org/article/detail/140/13/the-politics-of-regulating-religion-state-civil-society-and-the-quest-for-religious-freedom-in-modern-indonesia>.

affiliated with Islamic parties since 2009. Moreover, the influence of the 212 Islamic movements in 2016-2017 also had a significant impact on the condition of political Islam in Indonesia.<sup>43</sup> The 212 movement was also able to recruit a considerable number of Malays. The effect of this movement has influenced the Islamic model in local areas. Diego Fossati's analysis shows that ideology-based identity politics was repeated after the 1950s when contestation between the Masyumi Party and the (Indonesian Communist Party) PKI party took place. In the 2019 presidential election, the issue of religious ideology became critical.<sup>44</sup> Throughout the history of the Indonesian notion, religion, and the state have been two inseparable entities in life and have had an impact on the political model in Indonesia. For Jeremy Menchik, Indonesia's religious-state model makes it different from the secular State in general. Indonesia has a "godly nationalism" system.<sup>45</sup>

In the 2018 Kerinci regional election, the candidate pairs Adirozal from PAN and Ami Taher from PKS won by a landslide with 37.5% of the votes, the candidate pair of Monadi and Edison obtained 28.8%, while Zainal Abidin and Arsal Apri obtained 33.7%—each pair of candidates as sectoral delegates of each region in Kerinci. Interestingly, Adirozal and Monadi are both from Kerinci Mudik. They seized the Siulak area as the center of government of Kerinci and Kayu Aro, a heterogeneous area in densely populated Kerinci.<sup>46</sup> There is a belief in the people of Kerinci that if they succeed in mastering the voice of Kayu Aro and Siulak, then they can indeed succeed in becoming regional heads in Kerinci. This is a factor in why the people of Kerinci Hilir want to expand the area; there is an element of political marginalization in every regional election.

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<sup>43</sup> Yusril Fahmi Adam, "Islam and Identity Politics: The Conflict of the 212 Movement in Indonesian Historical Perspective," *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 2 (2022): 88–103, <https://doi.org/10.23971/njppi.v6i2.4395>.

<sup>44</sup> Diego Fossati, "The Resurgence of Ideology in Indonesia: Political Islam, Aliran and Political Behaviour," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 38, no. 2 (August 21, 2019): 119–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103419868400>.

<sup>45</sup> Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316344446>.

<sup>46</sup> Hendri Dede, "Timses Adirozal-Ami Taher Uses This Strategy to Gain Votes in Siulak Mukai," 2018, <https://jambi.tribunnews.com/2018/04/14/timses-adirozal-ami-taher-pakai-strategi-ini-untuk-mendulang-suara-di-siulak-mukai>.

The sectoral delegation model in Kerinci was created to fulfill the vital role of customary governance in the community. In general, there are three forms of authority in the Kerinci community: state authority in the form of administrative government, religious authority in the person of religious figures (*ulama*), and customary government. Customary governance plays a vital role in Kerinci society.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, indigenous governments get contestation from religious leaders. Today, religious leaders are regaining their authority after Islamization was successful. Indigenous peoples are now positioning the *ulama* as a source of inquiry. In the current context, answers based on Islamic legal propositions are more credible. Although, it is still recognized that indigenous dominance is still strong politically.

### **Political Model of Islamic Law in Kerinci**

In the Kerinci region, there are no Sharia Regional Regulations (Perda), as there are in the various areas in Indonesia, one of which is the Aceh Province. However, more concretely, the critical position of Islamic law and forms of Islamic law, especially in today's life, are widely accepted in Kerinci society. This can be said to have started with the arrival of Islam to Kerinci, which brought significant changes to the teachings once adhered to by the Kerinci people. Teachings that were originally animist in nature changed to Islamic teachings based on the Al-Qur'an and hadith.<sup>48</sup>

If we trace the development of Islamic history in Kerinci, we can see that significant developments occurred during the time of H. Abdul Latif (early 17th century AD). He is said to have been a student of Sheikh `Abdur Rauf Singkil (d. 1105 H/1693 AD), who adhered to the Syattariyah Order and the Shafi'i school of thought. In his preaching, H. Abdul Latif not only teaches Islam through religious studies with Erekat and fiqh nuances but also develops it through arts

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<sup>47</sup> Oga Satria and Riski Puspita Estari, "Collaborative Governance in the Government System of Tanjung Pauh Mudik Village, Kerinci Regency," *Journal of Local Politics and Government Studies* 2, no. 2 (2022): 138–52, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tpj.v2i2.1266>.

<sup>48</sup> Darti Busni et al., "The Command of Ideology Transformation from Animism to Islamism: Transcription and Translation of Piagam Kerinci," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 20, no. 1 (2022): 147–72, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v20.i1.1039>.

and culture activities, such as Urbana remembrance (sike), Narayanan, qasida, and others.<sup>49</sup>

Even currently, the role of customs in Kerinci is increasingly marginalized due to many factors, such as feuds between residents, communal conflicts, etc.<sup>50</sup> However, it can be accepted that it is difficult for Islamic conservatism to enter the Kerinci region because customs originating from and relying on Islam are still strong.<sup>51</sup>

This research explicitly examines the indigenous community of Kerinci, who diligently preserved their customary ways for millennia. The population of Kerinci Regency is a sub-Malay ethnic group from Jambi.<sup>52</sup> The arrival of Islam in Kerinci prompted society to distinguish between customary law and Islamic law. This gave rise to a distinctive manifestation of Islamic jurisprudence. The accommodation of Islamic law is executed by customary organizations whose function is to enforce customary law. The evolution of Islam in Kerinci flourished and became an integral religious identity of the people. The establishment of *Majelis Pengkajian Ulama'* (MPU) serves as evidence of the consolidation of Islamic studies in the Kerinci region, which the local Ulama consistently upholds.<sup>7</sup> Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU), Muhammadiyah, and *Persatuan Tarbiyatul Islamiyah* (Perti) play a significant role in the practice of Islam among the general population. In addition, the proliferation of Sufi *Tariqat* groups, such as Naqshabandiyah and Syathariyah, also integrated into the fabric of Kerinci society.

Over time, Islamic law gained widespread acceptance and remained a crucial component of the community alongside customary law. As a result, Islam achieved victory on numerous fronts.

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<sup>49</sup> Busni et al.

<sup>50</sup> Mahli Zainuddin Tago, "Penguatan Adat Dan Revitalisasi Dakwah Penelitian Di Muara Lingkat, Kerinci-Jambi," *Afkaruna* 9, no. 2 (2013): 162–74, <https://doi.org/10.18196/aiijis.2013.0026.162-174>.

<sup>51</sup> Marjan Fadil, Martunus Rahim, and Indra Ikhsan, "The Islamic Formalism Movement in Malay Land: Experiences of the Muslim Community in Kerinci, Jambi," *Jurnal Fnuaduna : Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 5, no. 1 (2021): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.30983/fuaduna.v5i1.4596>.

<sup>52</sup> Mahli Zainuddin and Hilman Latief, "Preserving Ancestral Land and Ethnic Identification: Narratives of Kerinci Migrants in Malaysia," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 9, no. 2 (2021): 203–17, <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2020.15>.



Unsurprisingly, Islamic Law not only continues to be followed on a daily basis in the political sphere but also exerts significant influence in deciding the victors of local and national political contests. Unavoidably, this political model compels the people of Kerinci to develop a type of politics that is inherently intertwined with Islamic politics. The Kerinci society has consistently upheld the traditional power embodied by Adat institutions and indigenous religious leaders. Both institutions confer legitimacy, gradually cultivating a community's inclination to select future leaders from Islamic political parties.

The political Islamic legislation mentioned above falls under the category of the behavioral approach. The influence of Islamic Law on the political landscape of Kerinci has a direct impact on the voting patterns of the local people. The Kerinci people tend to support Islamic parties that advocate for Islamic principles and political candidates that are perceived as representing Islamic factions. During the stage of the Decision-Making Process, the participation of ADAT institutions and MPU is crucial in offering recommendations. The selection of Islamic parties holds significant importance as it entails the anticipation of policies that align with Islamic jurisprudence. The socio-politic conditions of Kerinci can be classified as Islamic populism based on the political behavioral pattern of Islamic law in the region. The Islamic populism movement in Kerinci is spearheaded by prominent leaders who consistently propagate concepts related to the Islamic political agenda.

## **Conclusions**

This research shows the contemporary manifestation of Islamic politics in Kerinci by emphasizing an approach to community behavior that has a strong relationship between Islamic law and customary law illustrated through the influence of traditional leaders and customary government structures. The people of Kerinci, who are deeply rooted in their cultural and religious practices, show a tendency to support Islamic parties, indicating a typical political model in which Islamic populism plays an important role. This research underscores the multifaceted nature of Islamic law in Kerinci, where the coexistence of custom, Islamic law, and political dynamics has created a unique political landscape. A behavioral political science approach helps in understanding the intricacies of the decision-making process by emphasizing the role of traditional institutions and ulama in guiding

society's political preferences. In short, the Islamic Sharia political model in Kerinci is a complex interaction between historical, cultural, and religious factors, where Islamic parties have become famous for their effective integration of Islamic principles into the local political order. This distinctive political model reflects the dynamics of Islamic populism, which is rooted in a behavioral approach and displays a robust coexistence between custom and Islamic law in shaping the political identity of the Kerinci community.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest with any party in writing this article.

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