

## Islamic organisation and electoral politics: Nahdlatul Ulama and Islamic mobilisation in an Indonesian Local Election / Luthfi Makhasin

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Deskripsi Lengkap: <https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail?id=20479772&lokasi=lokal>

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### Abstrak

#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper deals with the politics of patronage and piety in local elections by examining the role of and dilemma faced by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, in a local electoral competition. Focusing on the 2017 local election in Brebes, Central Java, this article confirms previous scholarly works findings of widespread patronage distribution and the impact of rising religious conservatism on electoral competition. However, this paper shows that piety and patronage politics neither necessarily maintain oligarchic rule nor provoke intolerance and violence. The case of the electoral competition in Brebes reveals that Islamic organizations in Indonesia are not immune from electoral politics, and due to institutional weaknesses of most political parties in Indonesia, will likely remain important political players by mobilizing support in elections at both the local and national level. In a broader context, Islamic mobilization in local elections in Indonesia helps understand the emergence of pious democracy in democratic Muslim-majority countries.