

The politics of Shari'a law: Islamist activists and the state in democratizing Indonesia

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Abstrak

The Islamization of politics in Indonesia after 1998 presents an underexplored puzzle: why has there been a rise in the number of shari'a laws despite the electoral decline of Islamist parties? Michael Buehler presents an analysis of the conditions under which Islamist activists situated outside formal party politics may capture and exert influence in Muslim-majority countries facing democratization. His analysis shows that introducing competitive elections creates new pressures for entrenched elites to mobilize and structure the electorate, thereby opening up new opportunities for Islamist activists to influence politics. Buehler's analysis of changing state-religion relations in formerly authoritarian Islamic countries illuminates broader theoretical debates on Islamization in the context of democratization. This timely text is essential reading for students, scholars, and government analysts.