



Muslim Voter's Trust in Islamic Parties in North Lombok, NTB (2019 and 2024)

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the behavior and trust level of Muslim voters towards Islamic parties in North Lombok Regency during the 2019-2024 period. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with religious and community leaders, election organizers, as well as from official documents and voter data to ensure validity and depth. The findings reveal that despite the Muslim majority in the region, most Muslim voters tend to support nationalist parties rather than Islamic parties in legislative elections. Key factors influencing this preference include pragmatic voter considerations focusing on party performance, candidate quality, and tangible socio-economic programs. The roles of faith-based mass organizations are significant but their loyalty often aligns with influential leaders rather than exclusively supporting Islamic parties. Additionally, the dominant influence of traditional leaders and widespread money politics contribute to the nationalist parties' electoral dominance. This voter behavior reflects a complex interaction of ideological shifts, socio-cultural dynamics, leadership structures, and economic realities. Utilizing Muhammad al-Shatibi's contemporary Maqasid al-Shariah framework, the study interprets this phenomenon as voters prioritizing welfare and justice aligned with the overarching goals of Shariah. Islamic parties are thus urged to reform strategies by enhancing community engagement, strengthening cadre capacity, and fostering inclusive partnerships to remain competitive and build sustainable voter trust in the evolving political landscape of North Lombok.

Key words: voter behaviour, Islamic parties, North Lombok

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan memahami perilaku dan tingkat kepercayaan pemilih Muslim terhadap partai Islam di Kabupaten Lombok Utara pada periode 2019-2024. Meskipun mayoritas penduduk beragama Islam, mayoritas pemilih lebih memilih partai nasionalis dibanding partai Islam dalam pemilu legislatif 2019 dan 2024. Faktor utama yang memengaruhi pilihan ini adalah orientasi pragmatis pemilih yang lebih menilai kinerja, figur calon, dan kemampuan menjawab kebutuhan nyata masyarakat. Peran organisasi massa keagamaan sebagai saluran komunikasi politik juga signifikan, namun loyalitas pengikutnya tidak selalu terkait eksklusif dengan partai Islam. Selain itu, pengaruh budaya adat dan pemimpin tradisional yang dominan memengaruhi pola pemilih, dimana mayoritas tokoh adat mendukung partai nasionalis. Fenomena politik uang yang marak turut memengaruhi keputusan pemilih, dengan partai nasionalis yang lebih kuat secara finansial memperoleh keuntungan. Dengan adanya berbagai tipe pemilih pengikut dan rasional perilaku pemilih Muslim menjadi dinamis dan kompleks. Analisis menggunakan teori Maqasid al-Shariah Muhammad al-Shatibi menunjukkan bahwa pemilih menempatkan kebutuhan kesejahteraan dan keadilan sosial sebagai prioritas utama, sehingga partai yang mampu memenuhi masalah kontekstual lebih dipercaya. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa partai Islam perlu melakukan reformasi strategi yang relevan dengan kebutuhan sosial-politik lokal serta memperkuat jaringan dan kualitas kader agar mampu bersaing efektif di kontestasi politik.

Kata kunci: perilaku pemilih, partai Islam, Lombok Utara

A. Introduction

In the general election in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province in 2019, simultaneous legislative elections were held in 10 districts / cities, namely Mataram City, Central Lombok Regency, East Lombok Regency, Sumbawa, West Sumbawa Regency, Bima Regency, Bima City, Dompu and including North Lombok Regency. (Agus 2023) North Lombok Regency. Of the 10 districts that held legislative elections, the author sees the legislative election in North Lombok Regency as the most interesting legislative election because North Lombok Regency is an area with a fairly high voter turnout rate in NTB province.

In the 2019 elections, the voter turnout rate exceeded the national target from a total number of voters of around 183.391 people. The legislative election is a hot topic of conversation in every circle, from beginner voters to the elderly. The interest of the people of North Lombok Regency in politics is very high, therefore the level of voter participation in North Lombok continues to increase. The interesting political reality in the 2019 legislative general election in North Lombok Regency was followed by 14 political parties consisting of nationalist political parties and political parties based on Islamic values. (Salim 2022) However, the facts that occur, researchers see that in the 2019 legislative elections in North Lombok district, the majority of Muslim voters tend to have more trust in choosing national parties so that Islamic parties tend not to be able to maximally represent at the legislative level.

On the basis of the above issues, the researcher wants to look further into how the behaviour of Muslim voters in North Lombok Regency, why Muslim voters in North Lombok Regency prefer the Nationalist Party to the Islamic Party, and the factors that influence voter behaviour towards Islamic parties in North Lombok Regency. Several previous studies have also examined this topic, such as: first, by Wais Alqarni in 2023 entitled *Efforts to Build Public Trust in Political Parties in the Islamic Sharia-Based Province of Aceh*. (Alqarni, Syamsudin, and Saleh 2023) The findings of this research are that political parties act as a forum for the best cadres for elections at various levels. The success of the party is greatly influenced by the management of its management. Public trust is important for the progress of the party, one of which can be obtained through inclusiveness on current local issues. In Aceh, public trust increases if the party is able to fight for and implement local content and wisdom.

Second, by Muhammad Syaoki in 2020 entitled *Fighting Symbols of Political Communication in the North Lombok Regency Election*. (Syaoki and Fikri n.d.) This study found that the use of symbols in the North Lombok Regency elections by the JODA and NADI pairs is one of the political communication strategies to attract public sympathy. Third, by Habib Alwi, et al. entitled *Practice of Identity Politics In Indonesian Democracy: Case Study Of Gubernatorial Election In West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia*. (Alwi 2025) The study finds that identity politics operates subtly, influencing voter affiliations and preferences through social habits (habitus) and the influence of involved actors. It highlights the importance of identity politics in promoting a more inclusive and representative regional democracy. Additionally, the research aims to refine theoretical understandings of identity politics by bridging radical democratic theory with standpoint theory, addressing gaps in existing literature.

Wais Alqarni's research (2023) focuses on building public trust in sharia-based parties in Aceh, different from the NTB context. Muhammad Syaoki (2020) examined political symbol strategies in the North Lombok elections, without discussing voter behaviour in depth. Habib Alwi et al. (2025) examined identity politics in the 2024 NTB regional elections macro and theoretically. This research is different because it specifically examines the behaviour and trust of Muslim voters towards Islamic parties in North Lombok (2019-2024), as well as the factors that influence voter preferences over nationalist parties.

B. Research Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the behaviour and level of trust of Muslim voters towards Islamic parties in North Lombok Regency in the 2019 to 2024 period. (Bryman 2016) The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to explore in depth the meanings, motives, and social dynamics that occur in the context of local politics. The research was conducted directly in the field in North Lombok Regency which has a significant population of Muslim voters, so that the local socio-cultural and political context could be observed intensively.

The main subjects of the research were Muslim voters as well as religious leaders, community leaders and election organisers in the area. The selection of informants was done by purposive and snowball sampling so that the data obtained is relevant and representative. (Norman K. Denzin 2017) Data collection was conducted by combining various techniques, namely participatory observation to capture social reality and voter behaviour directly, in-depth interviews with key figures and voters to obtain their personal narratives and views, focus group discussions to explore the collective views of the community, and documentation in the form of official archives, voter data, election results, and local media materials as secondary data to strengthen validity. (A. Muri Yusuf 2014) The researcher himself acted as the main instrument, using semi-structured interview guides and observation guidelines that were developed to ensure the data collected was valid and comprehensive.

The data obtained was analysed qualitatively through a process of data reduction to filter out relevant information, data presentation in the form of systematic descriptive narratives, and conclusion drawing based on interpretations of voter behaviour and their level of trust, linked to political theories and the local socio-cultural context. Triangulation of methods and data sources was used to increase the validity of the research results, as well as peer debriefing and member checking to ensure that the interpretation of the data was in accordance with the meaning intended by the informants. In conducting the research, ethical aspects were also a major concern by maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities, obtaining permission to participate, and respecting the values and culture of the local community.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Overview of Political Conditions and Muslim Voter Participation in North Lombok Regency

Lombok Utara Regency (abbreviated as KLU) is a region located in the province of West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. (Arzak and Balaraman 2024) The region has distinctive geographical, social, and cultural characteristics, which significantly influence the political behaviour patterns of its people, particularly Muslim voters who make up the majority of

the demographic in this area. North Lombok administratively consists of five sub-districts, namely Bayan, Gangga, Kayangan, Pemenang, and Tanjung, with a total of 43 villages spread across its territory. (Yusuf and Usman 2022) Geographically, the district has an area of approximately 809.53 km² and borders the Java Sea to the north, East Lombok Regency to the south, and West Lombok and Central Lombok Regencies to the west and east. The presence of the Lombok Strait to the east also has strategic implications for economic and tourism development in this area.

According to official data from the North Lombok Regency Statistics Agency (2024), the population in this district shows a relatively stable growth trend from year to year. (Budiman et al. 2024) In 2019, the total population was recorded at 220,412 people, which increased to 241,658 people in 2024. The gender composition is balanced with 108,675 males and 111,737 females. This growth is believed to have a significant impact on voter patterns and participation rates in every election and regional head election that takes place in the district.

When it comes to religious structure, the people of North Lombok are predominantly Muslim, accounting for more than 223,000 people in absolute terms, or around 92 per cent of the total population. The rest consists of Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism in much smaller numbers. For example, Kecamatan Kayangan has around 46,818 people spread between Muslims and other religious minorities, including more than 112 mosques in the kecamatan. Kecamatan Tanjung also has a diverse distribution of places of worship, with musholla, churches, temples, and monasteries, demonstrating the cultural and religious diversity that is susceptible to influencing the region's socio-political dynamics.

Although the majority of the population is Muslim, the tendency of political behaviour of the people of North Lombok does not automatically follow the paradigm of religion-based voters. An analysis of the results of the 2019 and 2024 legislative elections reveals an interesting pattern: the majority of Muslim voters prefer political parties labelled as nationalist rather than Islamic parties that have been associated with Muslim identity. The voting table released by the North Lombok Regency KPU shows that nationalist parties such as Gerindra, PDIP, Golkar, and Demokrat were able to dominate the votes and seats contested in the North Lombok Regency DPRD in the two periods. In the 2019 legislative elections, for example, Gerindra received the highest number of votes, reaching 19,976 votes with an allocation of 5 seats, while PKB as an Islamic party received 13,304 votes and 3 seats. Other Islamic parties such as PPP and PKS only received votes and seats that were much lower than the nationalist parties.

This phenomenon can also be seen in the 2024 election results. Despite a slight increase in PKB seats to 6 seats, its vote share compared to Gerindra's 5 seats with 2,598 votes still shows the dominance of nationalist parties. PPP and other Islamic parties remain below the votes for nationalist parties. This proves that saturation and changes in Muslim support patterns have occurred significantly in five years. The increase in population mentioned is closely related to the increase in the number of voters who have the potential to participate in every election. With the increase in population, the level of voter participation in the district automatically increases, but the type of participation needs to be distinguished between active participation in voting and participation influenced by external factors such as culture, religion, economy, and money politics.

Most of the people in North Lombok who are classified as economically unstable face daily challenges such as unemployment and limited access to social services. In this condition, economic promises in political campaigns become the main attraction that is much stronger than ideological fervour or religious identity. Muslim voters tend to be pragmatic, choosing parties that are considered capable of providing real solutions related to employment, social assistance, infrastructure development and welfare improvement.

Therefore, nationalist parties that intensively deliver concrete promises and economic programmes tend to gain much higher trust from the public than Islamic parties that are still often trapped in the use of religious symbols and religious values without a clear economic agenda that can be directly touched by the community.

North Lombok is not only a Muslim-majority region, but also one with a high level of cultural and religious plurality. In addition to Islam, there is the existence of Hinduism with a centre in Tanjung sub-district which has 55 temples and 40 monasteries as Hindu and Buddhist places of worship. This diversity makes political competition more complex because the voting base is not always formed from religious similarities. The influence of community organisations such as Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and other mass organisations is also cross-party with diverse member loyalties. (Samsul Anwar and Khatami 2024) These religious organisations act as social and political bridges that influence the behaviour of certain voters. The existence of widely recognised traditional leaders in the community is also a key differentiating factor in political elections. They function as centres of social decision-making, including in determining the direction of the political choices of village communities. This cultural and customary influence adds a layer of complexity in understanding the political behaviour of North Lombok constituents.

The North Lombok Regency General Election Commission (KPU) is the institution most responsible for organising and overseeing elections at the district level. (Putri, Anam, and Nizamudin 2025) This organisation works hard to manage the voter list, coordinate adhoc bodies such as the Sub-district Election Committee (PPK), the Voting Committee (PPS), and the Voting Organiser Group (KPPS). (Suci Ramadhani Putri, Ratna Mulhimmah, and Nizamudin 2022) KPU is also in charge of recapitulating the vote results and announcing the elected candidates for DPRD members. With a vision of "becoming an independent, professional, and integrity election organiser for the realisation of LUBER (Direct, General, Free, Secret) and JURDIL (Honest and Fair) elections," the North Lombok KPU continues to improve the quality of transparent and accountable election administration. The General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) of North Lombok Regency plays a strategic role in monitoring and preventing violations during the election stages. With a structure consisting of a chairman and commissioners along with secretariat staff, Bawaslu actively conducts supervision from the polling station to the sub-district level. Its existence is very important in handling election disputes, monitoring money politics policies, and ensuring the implementation of elections is fair and honest.

The intensive participation of Bawaslu and KPU in socialisation and political education activities is also a major support in strengthening the quality of voters. They try to alleviate apathy and educate the public to vote based on conscience and objective judgement. However, structural challenges such as money politics and the influence of traditional leaders are still obstacles that must be overcome.

2. Determinants of Political Behaviour of Muslim Voters in North Lombok

Muslim voter behaviour in North Lombok Regency is not a phenomenon that arises from a single dimension, but the result of the interaction of various factors that are complex, multiple, and mutually influencing. Based on quantitative data, in-depth interviews with community leaders, traditional leaders, party cadres, election organisers, and field observations, a number of main factors can be found that dominantly determine how Muslim communities in this district choose political parties, especially in choosing between Islamic parties and nationalist parties. These factors can be classified into several broad categories, including: ideological orientation, the role of religious community organisations (ormas), leadership and customary culture, the influence of money politics, and the characteristics of voter types. Each factor is described below with concrete examples and quotes from interview sources.

Theoretically, Muslim voters are naturally assumed to have a tendency to support parties labelled as Islamic, which are considered to represent their religious values and aspirations. (Fadhilah Putri and Manik 2024) However, the findings in North Lombok systematically challenge this assumption. The majority of Muslim voters no longer have a rigid orientation towards religion-based party ideology as the sole or main factor for voting.

An interview with a community leader in Kecamatan Pemenang named Asjad, stated: "The people in Kecamatan Pemenang in particular do not really care about party ideology, whether it is an Islamic or nationalist party. They look more at who the candidate is, whether they have a track record, network and can be trusted." This statement shows a shift in political orientation from pure religious identity to more pragmatic and result-orientated preferences. The factors of cadre, social closeness and the quality of the candidate's figure become the main considerations, not just the ideological label of the party. This condition is also coloured by the image of Islamic ideology that tends to stagnate, as well as the lack of effective political communication from Islamic parties to constituents. In contrast, nationalist parties are active in ideological blending with nationalism and development approaches, so that they are able to attract wider sympathy.

On the other hand, in Tanjung Sub-district, which has high religious and cultural diversity, nationalist parties such as PDIP have succeeded in strongly instilling Pancasila values through ideological cadreisation, while Islamic parties have not shown the same. In an interview with a youth leader in the area, Yardiarto said: "PDIP has succeeded in educating and instilling the values of Pancasila so that it can get a lot of support from the Hindu and Muslim communities here." From this data, it can be concluded that the success of strengthening the party's ideology and their continuous regeneration is an important asset in shaping the loyalty of community votes. Islamic parties in North Lombok still face major challenges in this regard.

Faith-based community organisations are important actors in shaping the political choices of Muslim communities in North Lombok. Organisations such as Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiah (NWDI), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah have massive mass networks and significant influence in mobilising votes at the grassroots level. Interviews with NWDI leaders in Pemenang sub-district show how organisations function as effective political 'communication channels': "Where I voted in the legislative and regional elections, the administrators and cadres certainly followed. Organisations in North Lombok have a

big role in determining the direction of votes." What's interesting is the fact that ormas members' loyalty to their leaders can go beyond party labels. For example, Hj Rohani, the wife of the North Lombok Regent, Najmul Akhyar - a central figure in NWDI and leader of the mass organisation - received huge support despite coming from the Perindo Party, which is a nationalist party and not labelled as Islamic. This phenomenon reveals that mass organisations, in addition to being religious communities, are also effective political mediators that mobilise large numbers of votes, sometimes not directly orientated towards Islamic parties.

In addition, the interviews also revealed that Islamic parties have a loyal voter base, but the number is not large enough and has not been able to compete with nationalist parties whose CSO networks are more established. This opens up opportunities for Islamic parties to formulate collaboration strategies or build a more solid network of mass organisations.

One of the factors that determine Muslim voting patterns in North Lombok is the strong culture of adat and centralised leadership. In this region, the influence of traditional leaders or mangku adat is very dominant in determining the political choices of villagers and even sub-districts. Traditional leaders are considered as figures who have widely recognised social and spiritual legitimacy. Their role in determining people's political choices is very significant and is rarely challenged by constituents.

An interview with the Mangku Adat of Gumantar Village, Raden Manding, illustrates this point: "In our village, what the mangku adat says is what the community will vote for. He is trusted not only in adat, but also in political leadership." Another example is Loloan village in Bayan sub-district. Its traditional leaders direct the community to vote for the Gerindra party, and the party has consistently won elections in this area. The consequence of this centralised leadership culture is that parties that are able to build relationships with and support traditional leaders will have a strong and loyal voting base. Conversely, Islamic parties that have not successfully adopted this approach risk losing their vote base and seats in these areas. The dominance of traditional leaders who tend to affiliate with nationalist parties is one of the reasons for the overall dominance of nationalist parties in North Lombok.

The phenomenon of money politics is a major problem that greatly affects voter behaviour in North Lombok.(Nurul et al. 2022) Money politics not only shakes the foundations of democracy, but also undermines the principles of honesty and integrity of elections. Interviews with youth leaders in Kayangan Village indicate that giving money or goods in exchange for votes has become a culture in the run-up to elections: "Many people have received money before election day. On the day of voting, if there is no money, they can switch their vote to the person who gave it." This money politics makes financial capital the deciding factor in the victory of legislative candidates, with better-funded parties and candidates tending to dominate.

A legislative candidate from PDIP was also aware of this challenge, admitting that he had maximised formal campaigning such as billboards, banners and meetings, but was defeated by the massive influence of money that eroded people's votes. Supervision by Bawaslu is very difficult because the practice of money politics takes place behind closed doors between the giver and receiver without witnesses. This reality shows the need for serious

steps from all elements of democracy to eradicate the practice of money politics and tighten regulations and law enforcement.

In addition to external factors, the individual character of voters also has an important influence. (Suniadewi and Abadi 2024) Two types of voters, especially those seen in North Lombok, are voters who tend to follow the crowd and rational voters. Follower voters are usually novice voters, young people, or the elderly who do not fully understand politics and prefer to follow social currents and neighbourhood opinions. They do not do much research on candidates and parties, but instead rely on recommendations from friends, family, or the surrounding social environment. A youth leader in Kayangan Sub-district said: "When I said I would vote for Gerindra, my friends immediately voted for that party too." In contrast, rational voters make decisions based on objective considerations such as candidates' track records, integrity, experience and capabilities. They consider parties as mere political vehicles and vote based on the quality of the candidate rather than party identity. Academic Saepul Watan stated: "I vote for candidates based on their track record, not because of their party. For me, the party is just a tool, the important thing is that the candidate is able to represent the community in a real way." Bawaslu even appreciated the growth of rational voters thanks to the continuous education and socialisation they conducted during the election stages.

From the description above, it can be seen that the behaviour of Muslim voters in North Lombok is a dynamic interaction between ideological factors, socio-culture, mass organisation networks, traditional leadership, as well as the reality of money politics and voter character. Many voters, although religiously inclined to Islamic parties, are in practice attracted to nationalist parties that are considered more representative and able to provide real economic solutions. Ormas have a dual role, not only as a partisan base but also as a social mobiliser and vote getter. The culture of centralised leadership with traditional leaders is a strong variable that shapes voting patterns at the community level. Money politics remains a major obstacle to a healthy democracy, requiring attention from both watchdogs and political parties themselves. Meanwhile, the increasing number of rational voters is a hope and challenge to improve the quality of democracy, by minimising identity politics and money.

3. Muslim Voters in North Lombok Prefer Nationalist Parties over Islamic Parties in 2019 and 2024

Muslim voters in North Lombok Regency present an interesting phenomenon in local political dynamics, namely the tendency of the Muslim community to prefer nationalist parties compared to parties labelled as Islamic in the 2019 and 2024 Legislative General Elections. This is quite a unique situation considering that the majority of the population in this area is Muslim, so logically Islamic parties should have a strong voter base. However, the reality shows the opposite, where nationalist parties such as Gerindra, PDIP, Golkar, and Demokrat won significant votes and seats, while Islamic parties such as PKB, PPP, and PKS received limited votes and seats.

This phenomenon can be analysed from various perspectives, including the social, cultural, economic dimensions, as well as the political structure and organisation of the local community. One of the main determining factors is the pattern of voters who are more pragmatic and rational, who in addition to paying attention to party labels also focus on

aspects of party performance, figures, and the ability to answer the real needs of the community.

From the aspect of party ideology, although ideology is clearly one of the considerations, Muslim communities in North Lombok tend not to be too fanatical about the Islamic ideology carried by the party. Many voters actually make their choices based on the level of trust in the party and its political figures, not solely based on religion or party labels. They see the extent to which the political party plays a real role in regional development, community service, and the fulfilment of political promises. This is reflected in the results of surveys and interviews that show that voters are getting bored with excessive promises that are not realised by Islamic parties, so they switch to choosing nationalist parties that are considered more serious in answering problems on the ground.

Another crucial dimension is the role of faith-based community organisations. Muslim voters in North Lombok are strongly influenced by the affiliation and direction of organisations such as Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiah (NWDI), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Interestingly, however, these organisations do not always direct their absolute support to Islamic parties. For example, NWDI, which has a central figure as its regent, supports the nationalist party Perindo, whose owner and centre are non-Muslims. This shows that the loyalty of organisation-based voters is not solely to ideology, but also to the leadership of the organisation's central figure.

In addition, there is a strong cultural and customary dimension to the North Lombok community. The systematisation of adat leadership and the role of adat figures (mangku adat) determine the political direction of the community at the village and sub-district levels. This centralised leadership means that people's votes are strongly influenced by the traditional leaders they trust. In conditions where the majority of traditional leaders are affiliated with nationalist parties, the community automatically and for generations follows this direction. The role of adat leaders is not just about politics, but also includes social and religious aspects that shape the solidarity and lifestyle of the community.

In addition to ideological and socio-cultural factors, financial and logistical strength also play a crucial role in mobilising the voter base. Money politics in North Lombok is a common phenomenon and seriously affects voter behaviour. Nationalist parties, which are generally more financially established, are able to approach the community directly, even at the lowest level by providing financial incentives in disguise ahead of the election. This money politics often overpowers the quality of programmes and visions of Islamic parties, which may seem less militant and less well-funded. As a result, voters are more easily tempted to switch to parties with greater financial resources.

This phenomenon is reinforced by the existence of followers, especially among first-time voters and older voters, who do not have a strong political understanding and tend to follow the choices of friends, neighbours or popular figures in their neighbourhood without much critical consideration. Nationalist parties with wider communication networks and more aggressive approaches at the community level have been more successful in attracting this type of voter.

Nevertheless, there is still a group of rational voters who make their choices based on the track record and quality of legislative candidates regardless of party background, whether

Islamic or nationalist. They consider aspects of competence, integrity, and the ability of candidates to fight for the aspirations of the people in concrete terms, not just party promises or labels. However, this group has not yet become a large majority that is sufficient to shift the dominance of nationalist parties.

This condition indicates that in the reality of general elections, especially in North Lombok, political approaches based only on religious or ideological labels are not effective enough. Islamic parties must develop new strategies that are more adaptive to the unique local context, namely strengthening direct community involvement, strengthening relationships with traditional leaders and religious organisations, and building strong and sustainable cadre networks. In addition, financial readiness as an effective campaign capital is also an absolute requirement to win the election, given the increasingly tight and dynamic competition.

Overall, the pattern of Muslim voters in North Lombok reflects the complexity of local socio-cultural and political wealth that combines identity factors, economic pragmatism, leadership figures, and cultural traditions. Nationalist parties that are able to embrace these various aspects optimally succeed in obtaining vote dominance, while Islamic parties need to reflect and reform strategies to be more relevant, competitive, and widely accepted by Muslim voters in this area.

4. Muslim Voter Behaviour in North Lombok Based on Muhammad al-Shatibi's Maqasid al-Shariah Theory

The phenomenon of Muslim voter behaviour in North Lombok that prefers nationalist parties over Islamic parties is a complex and interesting political dynamic to be analysed in depth using the perspective of contemporary Maqasid al-Shariah, especially the thought of Muhammad al-Risalah al-Shatibi which is very relevant in bridging sharia values with the needs of current socio-political practices. (Dwi Joko Rahmadi et al. 2025) Al-Shatibi emphasises that Islamic law should not be understood in a rigid and textual manner, but must be seen through the main objectives of sharia (maqasid) which aim to ensure the overall and sustainable benefit and welfare of the people. In his famous concept, maqasid consists of five main protections, namely religion (hifz ad-din), soul (hifz an-nafs), intellect (hifz al-'aql), offspring (hifz an-nasl), and property (hifz al-mal). (Sugitanata 2024)

In the context of North Lombok, the Muslim majority faces serious challenges in terms of economic and social welfare that determine their political choices. Economic limitations, the need for employment, and strengthening access to social services are top priorities that reflect the protection of the soul (hifz an-nafs) and property (hifz al-mal) in maqasid. Nationalist parties that are able to target these needs with programmes and promises that are felt more concretely by the community are pragmatically accepted as a platform that is able to fulfil maqasid goals. This reflects that Muslim voters rationally place the real benefits and needs of life above mere religious ideological affiliation. Therefore, the pragmatic and rational orientation of voters is not an aberration, but a real manifestation of the dynamic and adaptive contextual implementation of maqasid.

Furthermore, al-Shatibi highlights the importance of just, competent and responsible leadership in realising maqasid, known as the principle of al-imamah al-'adilah. (Jasser Auda n.d.) Voters in North Lombok choose legislative candidates not only based on party

identity, but more on track records and leadership qualities that are considered capable of ensuring social justice and sustainable development. This supports the understanding that the quality of leadership that combines Islamic values with practical capacity is the main key in realising the objectives of sharia while gaining socio-political legitimacy from the community. Islamic parties that rely solely on religious labels without any real capabilities fail to fulfil these maqasid expectations and therefore lose the battle for votes.

In socio-political dynamics, the loyalty of Islamic organisations such as Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) that do not always absolutely support Islamic parties, but often lead to nationalist parties that are able to provide *maslahat*, can be understood as a *fiqh siyasah* strategy based on *maqasid al-shariah*. These mass organisations prioritise general *maslahat* and the socio-political sustainability of the *ummah*, by choosing support that can guarantee benefit and stability, rather than adhering strictly to formal religious symbols. This practice enriches the understanding of Islamic politics, which is not static and contextualised according to the demands of the times.

From this perspective, Islamic parties in North Lombok are faced with deep strategic reform demands. They must strengthen the agenda of empowering the *ummah* that is concrete and in accordance with *maqasid*, build cadres who are empowered, have integrity, and are able to compete in the complex socio-political realm, and develop strategic cooperation with traditional leaders and mass organisations to strengthen networks and legitimacy. The *maqasid sharia* approach must be the foundation of every political policy and programme to be relevant to the needs of the people and able to win the trust of voters in a sustainable manner.

This contemporary understanding of *Maqasid al-Shariah ala Muhammad al-Shatibi* provides a strong theoretical and applicative basis to see the pragmatic and adaptive behaviour of Muslim voters in North Lombok, as well as a guide for Islamic parties to be able to articulate sharia in the context of modern socio-political development. Thus, *maqasid* is not just a normative concept, but a strategic guideline for Islamic politics that is inclusive, effective, and orientated towards the *ummah's maslahat* in the dynamics of contemporary society.

D. Conclusion

Muslim voter behaviour in North Lombok shows a tendency to choose nationalist parties over Islamic parties, which is influenced by complex factors such as economic pragmatism, the influence of traditional leaders, the role of religious organisations, and the reality of money politics. Using Muhammad al-Shatibi's contemporary *Maqasid al-Shariah* theory, this phenomenon can be understood as an effort to fulfil the objectives of sharia contextually, where voters seek parties or figures that are able to realise real *maslahat* in terms of welfare and social justice. Islamic parties that are less responsive to these needs must reform their strategies, strengthen socio-economic programmes, improve the quality of cadres, and build inclusive partnerships in order to compete and gain sustainable voter support. These voter patterns reflect complex socio-political dynamics and demand adaptations of Islamic politics that are relevant to the realities of modern society.

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