

The Existence of The Islamic Student Association As an Agent of Social and Economic Change In The Framework of The Indonesian Legal State

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ABSTRACT

The existence of the Islamic Student Association (HMI) as an agent of social and economic change within the framework of the Indonesian State of Law. This study is motivated by the strategic position of student organizations in the history of the nation's journey which often appears as a moral force and social control over the direction of state policies. Using normative juridical methods enriched by conceptual and historical approaches, this study examines the constitutional legitimacy of student organizations, the relevance of HMI's role in socio-economic dynamics, and its conformity with the principles of the rule of law and democracy. The results of the study show that the existence of HMI has a strong normative basis in the principle of freedom of association and assembly, as well as gaining legitimacy as long as its activities are in line with constitutional values. Substantively, HMI's role as an agent of social change is reflected in the ideological, structural, and social pragmatic dimensions, while in the economic field, there is a transformation of the movement from a pattern of criticism to empowerment through strengthening entrepreneurship and community economic assistance. Despite facing internal challenges in the form of cadre consistency and

external challenges in the form of social, political, and technological changes, HMI still shows adaptive capacity in maintaining its relevance. Thus, this study emphasizes that the existence of HMI is dynamic and contextual as part of civil society that plays a role in maintaining a balance between the state and society, as well as contributing to equitable social and economic development within the framework of the state of law.

ABSTRAK

Eksistensi Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI) sebagai agen perubahan sosial dan ekonomi dalam bingkai Negara Hukum Indonesia. Kajian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh posisi strategis organisasi kemahasiswaan dalam sejarah perjalanan bangsa yang kerap tampil sebagai kekuatan moral dan kontrol sosial terhadap arah kebijakan negara. Dengan menggunakan metode yuridis normatif yang diperkaya pendekatan konseptual dan historis, penelitian ini menelaah legitimasi konstitusional organisasi kemahasiswaan, relevansi peran HMI dalam dinamika sosial-ekonomi, serta kesesuaiannya dengan prinsip supremasi hukum dan demokrasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa eksistensi HMI memiliki dasar normatif yang kuat dalam prinsip kebebasan berserikat dan berkumpul, serta memperoleh legitimasi sepanjang aktivitasnya selaras dengan nilai konstitusi. Secara substantif, peran HMI sebagai agen perubahan sosial tercermin dalam dimensi ideologis, struktural, dan praksis sosial, sementara dalam bidang ekonomi terlihat adanya transformasi gerakan dari pola kritik menuju pemberdayaan melalui penguatan kewirausahaan dan pendampingan ekonomi masyarakat. Meskipun menghadapi tantangan internal berupa konsistensi kaderisasi dan eksternal berupa perubahan sosial, politik, dan teknologi, HMI tetap menunjukkan kapasitas adaptif dalam menjaga relevansinya. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa eksistensi HMI bersifat dinamis dan kontekstual sebagai bagian dari civil society yang berperan menjaga keseimbangan antara negara dan masyarakat, serta berkontribusi terhadap pembangunan sosial dan ekonomi yang berkeadilan dalam kerangka negara hukum.

INTRODUCTION

Student organizations throughout the history of Indonesia have always played an important role as the main actor in encouraging social and political change. From the period of the national movement to the reform period, students often appear as a moral force that voices the interests of the people while supervising the direction of state policies. The Islamic Student Association (HMI) is one of the oldest and most influential student organizations, which not only

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focuses on developing the intellectual capacity of its members, but also on the formation of leadership character and awareness of social responsibility. The existence of HMI cannot be separated from the social, economic, and political dynamics of the nation, especially within the framework of the Indonesian Rule of Law which places the rule of law as the main basis for the implementation of state life (Rudiyansah, 2024a).

As a cadre organization, HMI carries out a normative mission to produce academic people who are creative, dedicated, and devoted, based on Islamic values, and have the responsibility to create a just, prosperous, and pleasing society of Allah SWT. The mission orientation emphasizes that HMI is not only a gathering place for students, but also a strategic means of producing agents of change in the social and economic fields (Kartakusumah, 2023). The implementation of this role is reflected through the active involvement of HMI cadres in various public policy discourse spaces, social advocacy activities, people's economic empowerment programs, and real participation in the national development process. Thus, the existence of this organization is not only determined by the sustainability of its institutional structure, but also by the extent of its contribution in encouraging social transformation and strengthening the economic foundation of society (Harahap, 2025).

From the perspective of the state of law, as affirmed in the constitution that Indonesia is a state of law (*rechtstaat*), every activity of community and student organizations must run in line with legal norms and constitutional values (Muhlashin, 2021). The presence of organizations such as HMI is becoming increasingly relevant because it functions as a vehicle for political and legal education for students, so that it is able to give birth to a younger generation who have constitutional awareness and commitment to the enforcement of the rule of law. On the other hand, the complexity of democratic dynamics requires student organizations to always be adaptive to the times, especially in dealing with the problems of social inequality, economic pressure, and technological disruption that change the pattern of social relations in society (Prasetyo et al., 2025).

However, the sustainability of the existence of student organizations cannot be separated from various challenges, both internal and external ((Fadli et al., 2025);(Gafur, 2015). Internal challenges include the sustainability of the cadre regeneration process, the quality and integrity of leadership, and the organization's ability to maintain independence from the influence of practical political interests. Meanwhile, external challenges arise from changes in social and economic structures, globalization trends, and public policy dynamics that require organizations to constantly update their strategies and the relevance of their roles. Based on this exposure, this research is crucial to examine in depth the existence of HMI as a student organization within the framework of the Indonesian State of Law, especially related to its role as a motor of social and economic change. This study not only highlights the historical and normative aspects, but also reviews the actual contribution of organizations to the social and economic development of society. Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic position of student organizations in the Indonesian constitutional system, as well as affirm the urgency of the role of students in maintaining the values of justice, democracy, and the rule of law.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method in the study entitled "The Existence of the Islamic Student Association as an Agent of Social and Economic Change in the Framework of the Indonesian Legal State" was prepared using a normative juridical approach enriched with conceptual and historical approaches. This research departs from the understanding that the Islamic Student Association (HMI) is not only a student organization entity, but also part of the nation's socio-political dynamics that interact with the principles of the Indonesian Rule of Law as affirmed in the constitution (Asadi, 2024). Therefore, this study places legal norms, doctrines, and the development of thought on the role of student organizations as the central point of analysis.

The normative juridical approach is used to examine various relevant laws and regulations, especially those related to freedom of association and assembly, community

participation in development, and constitutional guarantees for citizens' participation in social and economic life (Rudiyansah, 2024b). Analysis was carried out on the norms in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, regulations on community organizations, and public policies that have implications for the space of student organizations. The conceptual approach is used to examine the meaning of "the existence of student organizations" and "agents of social and economic change" in the perspective of social change theory, civil society theory, and state law theory. Meanwhile, the historical approach is used to understand the dynamics of HMI's role in various phases of the nation's journey, so that the continuity and transformation of the orientation of the movement can be seen.

The legal materials used in this study consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials (Zainuddin & Karina, 2023). Primary legal materials include laws and regulations and official state documents. Secondary legal materials include academic literature, scientific journals, previous research results, and the thoughts of experts on student organizations, socio-economic development, and the rule of law. The tertiary legal materials are in the form of legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other relevant supporting sources to clarify terms and concepts. The collection of legal materials is carried out through systematic literature studies by tracing sources that have substantive relevance to the research theme.

The analysis technique used is qualitative analysis with a descriptive-analytical method (Hastuti & Abidin, 2022). This research does not solely describe norms and concepts, but also conducts legal reasoning to assess the suitability between the ideal role of student organizations and developing social practices and dynamics. In this framework, the existence of HMI is analyzed as part of the strength of civil society that contributes to the process of social transformation and economic empowerment, as well as its relevance is tested in the framework of the state of law that places the law as the commander in chief in the life of the nation and state.

Through this method, the research is directed to produce an argumentative construction of the position and contribution of HMI in strengthening a just social and economic order, as well as affirming that the existence of student organizations has constitutional and sociological legitimacy in the Indonesian State of Law system. Thus, the methodology used not only serves as a technical instrument of research, but also as a critical thinking framework in placing student organizations as strategic actors in national development based on laws and constitutional values.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted through a normative juridical approach with the support of historical and conceptual studies, the existence of the Islamic Student Association (HMI) shows the consistency of its role as a student organization that is not only engaged in the realm of intellectual regeneration, but also in social advocacy and community economic empowerment. Normatively, the existence of student organizations is guaranteed within the framework of freedom of association and assembly which is part of the principle of a democratic legal state. In the context of the Indonesian State of Law, the existence of HMI acquires constitutional legitimacy as long as its activities are within the legal corridor and uphold constitutional values (Saleh & Miswar, 2018).

The results of the study show that the existence of HMI as an agent of social change appears in three main dimensions. First, the ideological dimension, namely the organization's commitment to Islamic and Indonesian values which is formulated integrally in the vision of struggle. Second, the structural dimension, namely the involvement of HMI cadres in various public spaces, both at the local and national levels, which shows the transformation of the role from campus activism to public policy space. Third, the dimension of social praxis is in the form of active participation in social issues such as education, poverty, economic inequality, and strengthening democracy. In practice, HMI is often present as a critical partner of the government, providing input to public policy as well as being a force of social control (Miswar et al., 2023).

In the framework of the Indonesian State of Law, HMI's role as an agent of change cannot be separated from the conception of the state of law that places the law as the commander in chief

in the administration of the state. The principles of the rule of law, equality before the law, and the protection of human rights are the normative foundations for student organization activities. Thus, every social movement carried out by HMI must be oriented towards upholding the value of justice, not just mass mobilization. This is where the relevance of the existence of student organizations as part of civil society that functions to maintain a balance between state power and community interests (Nur & Makmur, 2020).

In the economic aspect, the results of the study show that HMI's role as an agent of change has developed significantly. No longer limited to criticism of economic policies, this organization began to encourage cadres- and community-based economic empowerment (Asngari et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship training programs, MSME assistance, and sharia economic discourse are part of a real contribution to building economic independence. This reflects the paradigm transformation of the student movement from a protest movement to a solution movement. Thus, the existence of HMI is not only symbolic in the discourse space, but also actual in the practice of empowerment. Further discussion shows that the existence of HMI as an agent of social and economic change has dynamics that are inseparable from internal and external challenges. Internally, the consistency of cadre regeneration and ideological solidity are the determining factors for the sustainability of the organization's role. Externally, changes in the political landscape, economic globalization, and the development of information technology affect the pattern of student movements. These challenges require HMI to adapt without losing its identity as a struggle organization (Sasbianto et al., 2025).

In the perspective of social change theory, the existence of HMI can be understood as part of the transformational forces born from a group of young intellectuals. Students, as an educated group, have the capacity to be reflective and critical of social realities. Therefore, student organizations such as HMI have strategic potential in shaping public opinion and encouraging policy reform. However, the effectiveness of these roles is highly dependent on the moral integrity and intellectual capacity of its cadres (Siddiqy et al., 2025).

On the other hand, the national economy is still facing the problem of inequality and structural poverty, the role of student organizations as agents of economic change must be directed at strengthening the people's economy. HMI has the opportunity to contribute through the development of cadre entrepreneurship networks, collaboration with the private sector, and advocacy for economic policies oriented towards social justice (Reza, 2022). Thus, the organization's contribution does not stop at the level of rhetoric, but transforms into a systematic empowerment movement.

Based on the overall findings, it can be understood that the existence of HMI as an agent of social and economic change within the framework of the Indonesian Rule of Law is dynamic and contextual. This organization acts as a bridge between student idealism and the reality of public policy. Within the framework of the state of law, the existence gains legitimacy as long as it remains oriented towards the rule of law, democracy, and social justice (Karyudi & Firdausiah, 2024). Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, consolidating the value of struggle, and adapting to the times are important prerequisites for HMI to remain relevant as an agent of change that is constructive and with integrity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that the existence of the Islamic Student Association (HMI) as a student organization has a strategic position and constitutional legitimacy within the framework of the Indonesian State of Law. Through a normative juridical approach enriched by historical and conceptual perspectives, this study confirms that the existence of HMI is not only guaranteed by the principle of freedom of association and assembly, but also obtains normative reinforcement as long as its activities are in harmony with the rule of law, democracy, and social justice values. Thus, the existence of HMI is not sporadic or incidental, but inherent in the construction of a constitutional system that places civil society as a balancing element of state power.

Substantively, HMI has been proven to play a role as an agent of social change through ideological, structural, and social pragmatic dimensions. Commitment to Islamic and Indonesian values is the ethical foundation that guides the direction of the organization's movement. At the same time, the involvement of cadres in various public spaces shows a transformation of the role from campus activism to participation in the policy process. This role is increasingly evident through its contribution to the issues of education, poverty, economic inequality, and strengthening democracy. This shows that the HMI movement does not stop at normative criticism, but develops towards constructive participation and social control based on moral and intellectual responsibility.

In the economic field, the existence of HMI has undergone a paradigm shift from a protest movement to a solutive and empowerment movement. Entrepreneurship initiatives, micro business assistance, and strengthening economic discourse based on justice values show that there is an awareness that social change must be supported by economic independence. This orientation shows that student organizations are able to adapt to the challenges of the times without losing the identity of their struggle. This transformation is an indicator that HMI is not only present in the discourse space, but seeks to present concrete solutions to the problems of inequality and structural poverty (Sani, 2011).

However, the sustainability of this role is highly determined by the consistency of regeneration, ideological solidity, and the ability to adapt to political dynamics, economic globalization, and information technology developments. Internal and external challenges demand a renewal of the movement's strategy that remains rooted in the basic values of the struggle. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, moral integrity of cadres, and developing intellectual competence are the main prerequisites for HMI to remain relevant as an agent of constructive change.

In the end, this study confirms that the existence of HMI as an agent of social and economic change within the framework of the Indonesian State of Law is dynamic and contextual. This organization serves as a bridge between student idealism and the reality of public policy, as well as a representation of the power of civil society that plays a role in maintaining a balance between the state and citizens. As long as it remains oriented towards the rule of law, democracy, and social justice (Setiadi, 2021), HMI has the moral and constitutional legitimacy to continue to contribute to the development of the nation in a sustainable manner.

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