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Indonesia: Text and Context-Based Understanding of Islam*

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Verses)*

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Islamism and Contemporary Indonesian Islamic Politics



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ISLAMISM AND CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN ISLAMIC POLITICS

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Abstract

After the 2019 election, Indonesia is facing changes in political and religious life. In political life, the use of ethnic identity appears as a voter. Meanwhile, in terms of religion, the forces of Islamic conservatism and populism have emerged that have disrupted electoral democracy. The issue of identity politics, Islamic conservatism and populism will continue to grow if the moderate Islamic forces of Muhammadiyah and NU do not appear in political and religious life. The hope of a civilized and non-discriminatory democratic life in the strength of moderate Islam. If the power of moderate Islam is weak, then the power of Islamic conservatism with the power of identity politics and Islamic populism will become a real form of challenge to Indonesian democracy. This article aims to explain the three main challenges of Indonesian democracy after the 2019 Presidential Election, namely the rise of Identity politics; the rise of political Islamism which is compounded in Indonesian political practices. How both of them come into contact with political practices in Indonesia, so that it has an impact on Islamic politics today.

Keywords: Islamism; Politik Identitas; Politik Kontemporer

ملخص

توجه الإندونيسيا تفرق الحياة السياسية و الدينية بعد الانتخاب العامي سنة ٢٠١٩، حيث ظهرت هوية العرقية في الحياة السياسية كعامله منجمة الصوت بينما في الحياة الدينية ظهرت قوة المحافظة و الشعبية الإسلامية تتدخل في الديمقراطية الانتخابية. صارت سياسات الهوية و المحافظة والشعبوية الإسلامية دائما تتطور إذا كانت قوة الوسطية الإسلامية المحمدية و نهضة العلماء غير مرئية أمام الحياة السياسية والدينية. كان الأمل بالحياة الديمقراطية حضارية و غير مميزة في قوة الإسلام المعتدل. إذا ضعفت قوة الإسلامية الوسطية ستصبح قوة التيار الإسلامي المحافظ بقوة سياسات الهوية والشعبوية الإسلامية شكلاً حقيقياً من أشكال التحدي للديمقراطية الإندونيسية. هذا المقال سيبين ثلاث التحديات الأولى في الديمقراطية الإندونيسية بعد الانتخاب العامي لرئيس

الجمهور سنة ٢٠١٩ وهو ايقاظ سياسات الهوية و الإسلام السياسي الذي يتحد
في ممارسة السياسة الإندونيسية و كيف يتعامل كلاهما في السياسة الإندونيسية
بحيث يكون لها تأثير في السياسة الإسلامية اليوم
الكلمات : الإسلامية; سياسات الهوية; سياسات المعاصرة

Abstrak

Pasca Pemilu 2019, Indonesia menghadapi perubahan kehidupan politik dan keagamaan. Dalam kehidupan politik muncul penggunaan identitas etnis sebagai pendulang suara. Sementara dalam hal keagamaan, muncul kekuatan konservatisme dan populisme Islam yang mengganggu demokrasi electoral. Persoalan politik identitas, konservatisme dan populisme Islam akan terus berkembang jika kekuatan Islam Moderat Muhammadiyah dan NU tidak tampil dalam kehidupan politik dan keagamaan. Harapan kehidupan demokrasi yang beradab dan non diskriminatif pada kekuatan Islam moderat. Jika kekuatan Islam moderat lemah maka kekuatan konservatisme Islam dengan kekuatan politik identitas dan populisme Islam akan menjadi bentuk nyata tantangan demokrasi Indonesia. Artikel ini hendak menjelaskan tiga tantangan utama demokrasi Indonesia pasca Pemilu Presiden 2019 yakni kebangkitan politik Identitas; kebangkitan Islamism politics yang bersenyawa dalam praktek-praktek politik Indonesia. Bagaimana keduanya bersentuhan dengan praktek-praktek politik di Indonesia, sehingga berdampak pada politik Islam saat ini.

Kata Kunci: Islamism; Politik Identitas; Politik Kontemporer

A. Introduction

After the 1998 political reform, Indonesia has held regularly democratic presidential elections since 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. There is a changing portrait of Indonesian politics. Every post-New Order presidential election was marked by violent political upheaval¹. There was a political shift from authoritarianism and communism to system Fighting between ethnic and religious groups intensified in Indonesia in the era of liberal democracy. Spreading gossip happened among each candidate who wanted to run for the Presidential Election. The issue of communism, anti-Islam, pro-liberalism, pro-capitalism is a political issue every presidential election to be held in Indonesia².

The 2019 election was the presidential election where the development of issues of communism, liberalism, capitalism, and anti-Islam was very strong, creating political fear, intolerance and political hatred³. There has also been a revival of Indonesian Islamic

¹ Ken Miichi, 'The Role of Religion and Ethnicity in Jakarta's 2012 Gubernatorial Election', *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 33.1 (2014), 55–83.

² Saiful Mujani, 'Explaining Religio-Political Tolerance Among Muslims: Evidence from Indonesia', *Studia Islamika*, 26.2 (2019).

³ Jeremy Menchik, 'Moderate Muslims and Democratic Breakdown in Indonesia', *Asian Studies Review*, 43.3 (2019), 415–33 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2019.1627286>>.

conservatism and populism as a post-reform political development⁴. The growth of Islamism is predicted since the entry of conservatism on campuses through youth⁵. Islamic practices are contradictory between conservative and moderate progressive groups represented by Muhammadiyah-NU⁶.

Post-reform Indonesian politics since the 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019 elections marked by the presence of Islamist forces that influence people's political behavior. This is a sign of an ongoing political ideological battle⁷⁸. The use of various Islamic attributes is common in the public sphere. The emergence of Islamic-based parties increasingly provides evidence of the rise of the Islamist movement in Indonesia⁹. The condition of Indonesia's democracy, in the post-reform elections, led to symptoms of disruption to substantial democracy, the pluralism of citizens' aspirations was hampered, because many democratic principles were violated, such as violence against religious minorities and political ideologies¹⁰. Therefore, this condition is a sign of a political setback between the aspirations of the masses (undercurrents) and the political elite who control the realm of power¹¹. In subsequent developments, there has been resistance to democratic political forces that support a more just and non-discriminatory life as a tangible form of the presence of conservative political ideological forces¹².

Indonesia had experienced decades of dictatorial rule, during which democratic elections were not held. Although legislative elections were held, these were primarily intended to provide political legitimacy; the People's Representative Council and People Consultative Assembly were used solely to assert the dominance of the ruling Golkar Party over the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP) and the Democratic Party of Indonesia (Partai Demokrat Indonesia, PDI)¹³.

⁴ Alexander R Arifianto, *Islam and Indonesia's Presidency Race: A Defining Role?* (RSIS Commentary, 2019).

⁵ Leonard C Sebastian and Alexander R Arifianto, 'From Civil Islam towards NKRI Bersyariah? Understanding Rising Islamism in Post-Reformasi Indonesia', 129.October 2016 (2018), 301–16 <<https://doi.org/10.2991/icpsps-17.2018.65>>.

⁶ Alexander R. Arifianto, *Islam with Progress: Muhammadiyah and Moderation in Islam* (RSIS Commentaries, 2017).

⁷ Mukrimin, 'Islamic Parties and the Politics of Constitutionalism in Indonesia', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 6.2 (2012), 367–90 <<https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.2.367-390>>.

⁸ David M. Bouchier, 'Two Decades of Ideological Contestation in Indonesia: From Democratic Cosmopolitanism to Religious Nationalism', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 49.5 (2019), 713–33 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2019.1590620>>.

⁹ Muhammad Ansor, 'Post-Islamism and the Remaking of Islamic Public Sphere in Post-Reform Indonesia', *Studia Islamika*, 23.3 (2016).

¹⁰ Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner, 'Southeast Asia's Troubling Elections: Nondemocratic Pluralism in Indonesia', *Journal of Democracy*, 30.4 (2019), 104–18 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0055>>.

¹¹ Edward Aspinall and others, 'Elites, Masses, and Democratic Decline in Indonesia', *Democratization*, 27.4 (2020), 505–26 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2019.1680971>>.

¹² Marcus Mietzner, 'Sources of Resistance to Democratic Decline: Indonesian Civil Society and Its Trials', *Democratization*, 28.1 (2021), 161–78 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2020.1796649>>.

¹³ Daniel Dhakidae, *Cendekiawan Dan Kekuasaan Dalam Negara Orde Baru* (Gamedia, 2003).

Under the Soeharto regime, all aspects of Indonesians' political lives were strictly controlled. Civil society organizations, including religious and non-governmental ones, were not given sufficient space for participation¹⁴. Civil society activities were controlled by government apparatuses through a dangerous anti-subversion law. The state was under military control, and government apparatuses dominated civilian activities and interactions. Indonesia was a state with absolute power, one that could control its citizens' activities—often with fatal consequences¹⁵¹⁶. It dominated citizens' political activities and limited their political articulations in public spaces. Critical thinking was hampered by the centralistic policies of the state¹⁷.

This article will explain the challenges faced by Indonesian people after the 2019 election with the victory of the Jokowi-Makruf pair over the Prabowo-Sandi pair as a contemporary political condition, when democracy grows and becomes the hope of many parties. This article explains that the Jokowi-Maruf victory supported by PDIP, Golkar Party, PPP, PKPI, Hanura, Nasdem is considered not to represent the interests of Islam. Meanwhile, the Prabowo-Sandi pair, who is supported by the Gerindra Party, PKS, and PAN, is considered to represent Islamic interests. Tensions in society continue to this day with various political jargons such as Jokowi being anti-Islam, pro-communism and liberalism-capitalism. Meanwhile, even though Prabowo-Sandi lost, they were considered to support the interests of Islam, pro-people and anti-communist. The power of religious identity mingles with political power, giving rise to identity politics based on religion and the interests of religious elites after the 2019 presidential election.

B. Religious Identity in Indonesian Politics

After political reform began in 1998, elections have been held regularly to promote a democratic transition of power¹⁸. Civil society organizations, meanwhile, began to exert power in public arenas. Such organizations were also primary drivers of Soeharto's resignation on May 20, 1998; such power had never been wielded before¹⁹. Civil society organizations were able to exert control over the state, as political actors sought to avoid their attention and potentially charges of human rights violations²⁰. Civil society organizations and the power they wielded were widely debated, as Indonesians sought to position them within a new democratic context²¹.

As Indonesia continued to experience political developments over the subsequent decades, academics expressed concern that Indonesians stated political desires differed significantly from their actual practices. Although the government attempted to create

¹⁴ Mansour Fakhri, *Masyarakat Sipil Untuk Transformasi Sosial* (Pustaka Pelajar, 1996).

¹⁵ Mukrimin.

¹⁶ (Heryanto 2004)

¹⁷ Heru Nugroho, *Menumbuhkan Ide-Ide Kritis* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2001).

¹⁸ Denison Wicaksono, 'Rising of Nationalist and Political Islamist Polarization Conflict in Contemporary Indonesia: Case of Direct Governor Election in Jakarta 2017', *International Journal of Malay-Nusantara Studies*, 1.1 (2018); Dhakidae.

¹⁹ Simon Philpot, *Rethinking Indonesia*, ed. by Uzair Fauzan and Zuly Qodir (LKiS, 2004).

²⁰ Nurcholish Majdid, *Cita-Cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi* (Paramadina, 1999).

²¹ St Sularto, *Masyarakat Sipil Dan Demokrasi* (Jakarta: Kompas, 1999).

liberal economic and political policies—reflecting a tendency in much of Southeast Asia following the financial crisis of 1996–1998²²—many of the policymakers were the same people, having been carried over from the decades of authoritarian rule²³.

A scholar sharply mentioned that the political condition of Indonesia in the New Order era, under Suharto there was no regular change of leadership. Because what actually happened was only repeated ratification of Suharto's power through a general election with a clear and definite winner, namely Golkar as the party considered to represent the government with strong support from the Army, especially the Army Forces, Civil Servants from all levels of society. This is authoritarian politics wrapped in General Elections as its political legitimacy²⁴.

The rise of Indonesian politics using religious identity is a sign of the strengthening of the power of sects such as in Indonesian politics in 1955 (Geertz 1976; A G Herdiansah, Djuyandi, and Sumadinata 2019; A Ufen 2008). Contemporary Indonesian politics represents the power of religion, which is close to the power of Islam, abangan-nationalist and secular groups²⁵. The political struggle for sects is something that cannot be eliminated in Indonesia (Hefner 2000a). Religious identity cannot be erased from the political memory of Indonesia, as a country with the strongest religious attachment and adherence to religion in the world. Therefore, the rise of identity politics using religion is actually a repetition of past politics²⁶. Such conditions continued to develop when Indonesia experienced drastic political changes and economic crises after the 1998 reformation until now.

Following the political and economic crisis in the late 1990s, as well as the regime change, Indonesia began to experience polarization along religious and ethnic lines. Islamism became an important and unavoidable political force²⁷. Consequently, studies of Islamism and Islamic populism in Indonesia became common, expanding on existing studies in the Middle East²⁸. Populism was seen as a force capable of challenging authoritarianism and the political oligarchy²⁹.

Islamic populism became increasingly influential in the lead-up to the 2019 presidential election, during which polarization along religious and political lines was prominent. Political parties were popularly categorized as "Islamic" or "Nationalist", and these parties backed their own candidates in head-to-head competitions³⁰. Such a tendency first became prominent during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, which

²² Kwik Kian Gie, *Ekonomi Politik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002).

²³ Dhakidae.

²⁴ Dhakidae.

²⁵ Diego Fossati, 'The Resurgence of Ideology in Indonesia: Political Islam, Aliran and Political Behaviour', *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 38.2 (2019), 119–1148 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103419868400>>.

²⁶ and Vedi R Hadiz Robison, Richard, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in An Age of Markets* (Routledge Curzon, 2004).

²⁷ Wicaksono.

²⁸ (Hadiz 2016; Teik, Hadiz, and Nakanishi 2014)

²⁹ (Robison and Hadiz 2004)

³⁰ Wicaksono.

was contested by Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (popularly known as Ahok, backed by "nationalist" parties) and Anies Baswedan (backed by "Islamic" parties)³¹. During this election, Ahok was accused of blasphemy, citing a comment he had made regarding Surah al-Maidah, Verse 51. The resulting controversy and religious tension provided the political capital needed to guarantee Anies Baswedan's electoral victory³².

Islamic groups' use of places of worship (such as, mosques and prayer groups) for practical politics represent a significant step backwards for Indonesian democracy. It signifies an increased practice of identity politics, religious sentiments, and of ideological contestations³³. According to Grzywacz, previously the "notion regarding the role of Islam in shaping national identity of Indonesia shows that the post-colonial nation of Indonesia is made of three elements that shape its national Identity: language; ideology (*Pancasila*); and shifting away the Islamic ideology and political projects from the state politics"³⁴. However, Islamic organizations in present-day Indonesia have influenced local and presidential elections, contrasting them significantly with similar political processes under the New Order government³⁵.

In post-New Order Indonesia, identity politics have been used to promote the further development of religion and religious understandings as part of the contestations between Islamic and nationalist ideologies. These groups have sought to advance their own interests, influence voters' political behaviors, and pressure government policymakers. Islamist groups have sought to increase Islam's influence on practical politics, while nationalists have sought to ensure that only Islam's essence influences national politics and policies, arguing that Indonesia's national ideology Pancasila is compatible with both democracy and Islamic values³⁶. They argue that, as Pancasila had been formulated by Indonesia's founders, Islamic organizations must maintain these values to guarantee continued independence³⁷.

Under Soeharto's authoritarian and dictatorial regime (1967–1998), the political regime had sought to minimize religious polarization in Indonesian society by requiring all organizations to embrace Pancasila as their sole ideology³⁸. As a result of this coercion, civil society organizations and Islamic activists were severely restricted. These groups thus had to work underground, not daring to make use of public spaces. However, after political reform began in 1998, Muslim political activists established their own political parties that reflected their own particular religious ideologies, thereby articulating

³¹ Phillips J Vermonte, 'What Went Not Right in the Jakarta Election', *The Jakarta Post* (Jakarta, April 2017).

³² Vermonte; Wicaksono.

³³ Noval Dhwinuari Anthony, 'Dikritisi Karena Kampanye Di Area Masjid. Anies: Itu Kantor', *Detik.Com*, 2017.

³⁴ Anna Grzywacz, 'Constructing National Identity in Indonesia – Experience for Europe', *Mozaik: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora*, 14.2 (2013), 152–66.

³⁵ Wicaksono; Anthony.

³⁶ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Dan Pancasila Sebagai Dasar Negara* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2017).

³⁷ Haedar Nashir, *Negara Pancasila Sebagai Darul Ahdi Wa Al Syahadah* (Jakarta, 2015).

³⁸ Dan Slater, 'UNBUILDING BLOCS: Indonesia's Accountability Deficit in Historical Perspective', *Critical Asian Studies*, 46.2 (2014), 287–315 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2014.898456>>.

themselves after 32 years of subjugation. Polarization along religious lines became increasingly problematic as Islamist and nationalist forces continued to contest political spaces³⁹. As Zakarsyi (2008) argues, "The underground movement of political Islamism found its momentum in the fall of Soeharto's regime in 1998". Political Islam, as well as Islamist groups, experienced a surge as Muslims sought to contest state policies that they considered repressive.

Such a condition, however, has had a detrimental effect on the development of substantial democracy in Indonesia, where ideological contestations have continued. In his campaign, Joko Widodo emphasized the ideology of Pancasila, and his victory over Prabowo Subianto—who had relied primarily on religious symbols—was seen as signifying an ideological victory⁴⁰. In recent years, organizations seen as incompatible with the values of Pancasila—or as desiring to replace Pancasila with another ideology—have been prohibited in Indonesia. For example, in 2017 the Joko Widodo government formally dissolved HTI, arguing that the organization sought to replace Indonesia's ideological foundation and transform it into an Islamic state. Joko Widodo's dissolution of HTI was controversial and undemocratic⁴¹.

Islamist organizations and ideologies have significantly influenced Indonesia's politics, and as a result civil Islam has been seriously challenged⁴². The 2019 presidential election was thus an extension of these contestations, involving Islamist groups—coordinated by FPI and supported by Islamist parties such as PKS and PAN—and nationalist groups—including PDIP, Golkar, and Nasdem. Similar contestations occurred in national legislature, and had effects on local and provincial elections throughout Indonesia. The struggle between *abangan* (nationalist) and Islamist forces, even though this categorization has been protested by several academics, is still valid in Indonesia, with various modifications and new faces.

During the election, Islamist parties found broad support in West Java, West Nusa Tenggara, South Kalimantan, Banten, West Sumatra, and Aceh, where Prabowo Subianto emerged victorious. Meanwhile, nationalist parties had significant support in Bali, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, Manado, Ambon, Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, East Kalimantan, and North Kalimantan, where Joko Widodo won by significant margins; the candidate also emerged victorious in Central Java and East Java, both of which are home to massive religious organizations. In the 2019 election, it was very apparent that there was a political struggle using religious and ethnic identity politics which represented the basis of support for the Jokowi-Ma'ruf vs Prabowo-Sandi candidate⁴³.

Conservative and progressive forces continue to contest. In fact, in some cases the impact of the struggle for the power of identity politics was incidents of hatred and

³⁹ (Zakarsyi 2008, 337)

⁴⁰ Miichi.

⁴¹ Hasbi Aswar, 'DESTRUCTING THE ISLAMIST IN INDONESIA: JOKO WIDODO POLICY AND ITS CONTROVERSY', *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MALAY-NUSANTARA STUDIES (IJOMNS)*, 1.1 (2018).

⁴² Robert W Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁴³ Mujani.

religious intolerance in the 2019 General Election⁴⁴. There is also a clear picture of the struggle between conservative vs. progressive groups in Indonesian Islam since the 2017 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election until the 2019 presidential election^{45,46}. Conservative forces seem to dominate the Indonesian political scene with the main actors Habib Rizieq Shihab (Islamic Defenders Front), Bahtiar Nashir (National Movement for Defending Fatwa (GNPF), Munamarman (FPI), Yusuf Martak (FPI), Al Khatat (ex HTI), and Tengku Zulkarnain (MUI).

The ideological contestations between conservative Islam and progressive nationalism were during the 2019 Indonesian election also affected civil society organizations. Prabowo Subianto, for example, received the support of the Ijtima' Ulama, FPI, and the 212 Alumni, these groups mobilized their supporters both through religious activities and through online media such as WhatsApp⁴⁷. Joko Widodo and his coalition take it seriously, fore fronting the incumbent's efforts to eradicate corruption and promote social welfare⁴⁸. At the same time, the candidate highlighted his own piety in order to combat rumors that he and his supporters were anti-religious or even communist⁴⁹.

C. *Political Identity Since Election 2019 Until Present*

Political identity is an expression of the group's reflection on world views and the movement of conflict.. Political identity making contestation religious and ethnic group deepest hopes and fear. How it understands opponents actions and motives and the goals. The understanding contestation can be opportunities for the movement toward constructive political conflict and facilitated development inclusive in the multy-ethnic and religious.⁵⁰ The political contestation can occur the conflict but making political tension like Pancasila and the Islamic Ideology in Indonesia during New Order under Soeharto's.⁵¹

The political identity expression is not a new phenomenon in Indonesian political practice. However, we can see the phenomena in many others countries like, Egypt, Tunis, Morocco, Africa, India, Catalonia Spain, and Norway.⁵² It is identified by the

⁴⁴ Mujani.

⁴⁵ Mietzner.

⁴⁶ Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Vote Buying in Indonesia The Mechanics of Electoral Bribery* (London: Pilgrave MacMillan, 2019).

⁴⁷ IPAC, *'ANTI-AHOK TO ANTI-JOKOWI: ISLAMIST INFLUENCE ON INDONESIA'S 2019 ELECTION CAMPAIGN*, 2019.

⁴⁸ IPAC, *'ANTI-AHOK TO ANTI-JOKOWI: ISLAMIST INFLUENCE ON INDONESIA'S 2019 ELECTION CAMPAIGN*.

⁴⁹ IPAC, *'ANTI-AHOK TO ANTI-JOKOWI: ISLAMIST INFLUENCE ON INDONESIA'S 2019 ELECTION CAMPAIGN*.

⁵⁰ Marc Howard Ross, *Cultural Contestation in Ethnic Conflict, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) <<https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/CBO9780511491115>>.

⁵¹ Bourchier.

⁵² Antonia Witt, 'Where Regional Norms Matter: Contestation and the Domestic Impact of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance', *Africa Spectrum*, 54.2 (2019), 106–26; Ross.

General Elections Commission in Indonesia, as a violation of proper democratic processes. Political identity from religious and ethnic takes many forms. Religious and ethnic voters, for example, may be enticed with religious objects (for example, hijabs, jilbabs, sarongs, and *mukena* for Muslim voters) or religious infrastructure (prayer rooms, mosques, churches, and even temples). Moreover, voters may also be given in return for their black campaign activities and joining discussions or promised certain positions or offices in return for their support ⁵³.

Increasing political identity has actually become a challenge to democracy and has further eroded the quality of Indonesia's electoral democracy. If this were to continue, Indonesians may ultimately desire a return to the authoritarianism practiced by the New Order government. At the same time, Indonesia's elections have received the attention of foreign observers, who are concerned that such practices will reduce voter participation and create a situation wherein intolerance, intimidation, and coercion are rampant. Indonesia's practice of democracy has thus been widely criticized by proponents of liberal democracy and human rights ⁵⁴.

There is concern that the immense cost of Indonesia's electoral democracy. It is mainly because of widespread practice of cultural contestation, like religious and ethnic in which will create a resurgence in authoritarianism. The concern amplified by the rise of dynasty and oligarchic politics, which have resulted in Indonesia being ruled by only a few elites and their families—often the founders of political parties ⁵⁵. This can be seen in Jakarta Election 2017, Ahok and Anies Governor Candidate are contestation there are rising political identity vote getter with religious activities and ethnic sentiment ⁵⁶.

The increased prevalence of political identity rising since Indonesia began its political reform in 1998 has indirectly benefited the elites and other politicians with the capital to become politically active. This situation has been a particular boon to those with close ties to existing rulers, including party founders' descendants, subordinates, and colleagues. People without such ties, meanwhile, are politically disadvantaged and have inferior political power. Consciously or not, almost all of Indonesia's post-reform parties have become oligarchies ⁵⁷.

Identity politics is an integral part of the actions carried out in Indonesia. Action defending Islam and Action after Defending Islam are proof of religious identity, which are very popular issues for mass mobilization. Moderate groups face serious challenges in the political and religious fields of Indonesia (Burhani 2018a). The security forces also seemed helpless against demonstrators carrying religious flags (Miichi 2014). Actions using religion are part of the evidence that identity politics in Indonesia are used in general elections and regional head elections⁵⁸. The growth of identity politics is considered as a response to the presence of undemocratic politics. Jokowi-Makruf is considered not to give space for the opposition to voice their political aspirations. Jokowi-Amin tends to be

⁵³ Muhtadi.

⁵⁴ (Mujani, Liddle, and Ambardi 2018, 1–3)

⁵⁵ (Aspinall and Rohman 2017)

⁵⁶ IPAC, *After Ahok: The Islamist Agenda in Indonesia*, 2018.

⁵⁷ (Aspinall and Rohman 2017)

⁵⁸ Mujani.

present as a regime that creates new authoritarianism after the New Order. If the condition of the political regime continues to develop into a supporting force without an opposition force, it will jeopardize Indonesian democracy. Democracy will experience setbacks⁵⁹. Voters in the democratic era have two meanings: pragmatic and critical⁶⁰.

Identity politics can thus be said to be one of the three challenges of contemporary Indonesian politics after the 2019 general election. If they don't get the support from the democracy, religious, moderates, and nationalist, the politics identity will continue to grow and hinder the growth of the civilized democracy⁶¹. In addition, it will hinder the growth of the power of Civil Islam, which is represented by Muhammadiyah and NU as a civil society force that has a large mass base⁶². Even in its development, the power of Civil Islam has become a breeding ground for the power of religious conservatism⁶³. Muhammadiyah and NU have become a haven for conservative groups who use social media as their political platform. In addition, the power of conservatism uses millennial youth to become its attraction⁶⁴.

D. Islamic Politics as Islamism Since Election 2019 Until Present

In Islamic politics, religion (i.e. Islam) is used to mobilize voters to advance the shared interests of the faithful. Muslims who are ignorant of practical politics are emotionally manipulated to support a specific presidential candidate, one who is identified as representing their shared interests. By mobilizing the faithful, political elites seek to ensure that their political interests are realized⁶⁵. As such, Islamists utilize democracy as a political vehicle for their specific interests, even as actors advance strict exegeses that brand democracy as non-Islamic owing to its positioning of all people as having equal legal and political rights and standing. Islamists instead believe that a specific level of religious knowledge is prerequisite for political office and participation⁶⁶.

In Indonesia, Islamism may also be identified as a resurgence in *aliran* politics, with religious groups going vis-à-vis with secular ones. It may also be argued that this Islamism has created a dichotomy between Indonesia's Chinese minority and its non-Chinese majority. For example, when Joko Widodo and his running mate Basuki Tjahaja Purnama won Jakarta's 2012 gubernatorial election over Fauzi Bowo and his running mate Nachrowi Ramli, this signified a Javanese–Chinese victory⁶⁷. Similar ethnic contestations were seen in the Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election, when Basuki Tjahaja Purnama ran against Anies Baswedan. Ethnic tensions remained a prominent

⁵⁹ Hadiz.

⁶⁰ Mujani.

⁶¹ Hefner.

⁶² Hefner.

⁶³ Hefner.

⁶⁴ Alexander R Arifianto, *Indonesian Presidential Election 2019 Islam and Indonesia's Presidency Race: A Defining Role?* (Singapore: RSIS Publications, 2018).

⁶⁵ Mujani.

⁶⁶ Fossati.

⁶⁷ Miichi.

undercurrent throughout the 2019 general elections. This clearly evidences the rise of *aliran* politics; even though the candidates favored by Islamists lost the election, their religious identities were nonetheless central to their electoral strategies⁶⁸.

The religious contestations that ultimately resulted in Anies Baswedan winning Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election over incumbent Basuki Tjahaja were also evident in Indonesia's 2019 presidential election, when Joko Widodo and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin ran against Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno. Prabowo–Sandiaga were supported by Islamist groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), led by Rizieq Shihab; the National Movement for Defending the Fatwa (Gerakan Nasional Pembela Fatwa, GNPF), led by Bahtiar Nasir; Hizbut Tahrir, led by Ismail Yusanto and Al Khathat. These Islamic organizations were amongst the candidates' strongest supporters, signifying that political Islam has become a significant force since Indonesia began its political reform in 1998⁶⁹.

This Islamism was also evidence in the politics of religion during Indonesia's 2019 general election. Its rise has been a contending to moderate Muslims and democrats in Indonesia⁷⁰. It has grown in part due to *fatwa* requiring Muslim leadership, which has been supported by *ulama* (religious leaders) who have held sporadic demonstrations at the National Monument in Jakarta since 2016. During these mass gatherings—which were held even in the lead-up to the 2019 presidential election—thousands of Muslims gather and pressure the government to advance their interests⁷¹. These demonstrations have been identified as extensions of the protest movements that were initiated after Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was accused of blaspheming and defaming Islam during a speech at the Thousand Islands in 2017. After almost a year of demonstrations and protests, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was ultimately sentenced to two years in prison. The momentum of these protests continued to be exploited by the GNPF during Indonesia's 2019 presidential election.

As racial, ethnic, and religious issues have become political commodities in Indonesia in recent decades, the rise of political Islam has been inevitable⁷². Islamist movements, also identified as fundamentalist Islamic movements, have penetrated university campuses through their *tarbiyah* (Islamic education) groups, and—in conjunction with the Prosperous Justice Party—Islam-themed discussions and seminars. Such movements helped the Prosperous Justice Party contest Indonesia's first free

⁶⁸ Fossati.

⁶⁹ IPAC, 'ANTI-AHOK TO ANTI-JOKOWI: ISLAMIST INFLUENCE ON INDONESIA'S 2019 ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

⁷⁰ (Mudhoffir and A'yun 2017)

⁷¹ Alexander R Arifianto, *Indonesian Presidential Election 2019 Islam and Indonesia's Presidency Race: A Defining Role?*

⁷² Alexander R Arifianto, 'Rising Islamism and the Struggle for Islamic Authority in Post-Reformasi Indonesia', *TRaNS: Trans -Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 2019, 1–14 <<https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/trn.2019.10>>.

elections, providing the party with young Muslim agents on university campuses throughout the archipelago⁷³.

These popular Islamist movements have challenged more mainstream religious organizations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama and challenged the political legitimacy of the moderate Islam they represent. Citing a *fatwa* from the Ulama Council of Indonesia (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), these non-mainstream movements have claimed the authority to promote and implement specific *fatwas* in practical politics, and used this authority to sponsor a series of protest movements⁷⁴. The writers argue that, if such Islamist movements continue to thrive in Indonesia, this will detrimentally affect Indonesian democracy and erode the religious authority of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. As such, even though the government cannot stop these Islamist movements altogether, it must recognize the substantial threat they pose to electoral democracy. As they gain increased power in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, political, religious, and ethnic tolerance in Indonesia suffer; Islamist movements cannot readily navigate the reality of contemporary politics⁷⁵.

Reflecting on these conditions, Indonesia's political development since its 2019 election has been stymied by the rampant practice of Islamic identity politics. During the 2019 election, both candidates were backed by parties with non-religious ideologies. Nonetheless, one of the candidates was perceived as representing Islamic interests, and thereby received the political support of Muslims. This is a clear indicator of the power of Islamism in post-reform Indonesia⁷⁶. Islamism has become a conservative ideology in Indonesian politics, one that has contrasted with the secular ideology—particularly the promotion of electoral democracy—that is employed by some of the country's largest parties⁷⁷.

The rise of religious Islamism in Indonesia can thus hinder democratic political practices. This is because conservative groups are more likely to question democracy in Indonesia by proposing a sharia concept of Indonesia. A political concept that is considered more in line with Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. The idea of Islamic politics in Indonesia is one of the choices for conservative groups in building public opinion so that Indonesia is more prosperous, prosperous, just and dignified. But conservative groups do not see further the impact of their state, if they impose Shariah Indonesia. Such conditions are of course contrary to the formation of Indonesia as a country that is not only for certain religious groups, specifically for Islam, because those who contributed to the formation of an independent Republic of Indonesia were not only Muslims but all elements of the nation such as Christianity, Catholicism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and The School of Faith. In fact, if it will be forced

⁷³ Alexander R Arifianto, 'Islamic Campus Preaching Organizations in Indonesia: Promoters of Moderation or Radicalism?', *Asian Security*, 2018, 1–20 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2018.1461086>>.

⁷⁴ Alexander R Arifianto, 'Rising Islamism and the Struggle for Islamic Authority in Post-Reformasi Indonesia'.

⁷⁵ Mujani.

⁷⁶ Alexander R Arifianto, 'Rising Islamism and the Struggle for Islamic Authority in Post-Reformasi Indonesia'.

⁷⁷ (Mujani and Liddle 2009)

by carrying out Islamic law, it can be said to be contrary to Pancasila, including the First Precepts of Belief in One Supreme God.

In such a contemporary political context, Muhammadiyah firmly supports Pancasila as the state's foundation that cannot be changed by anyone. Pancasila is the basis of the state and must be strengthened, supported, filled and maintained for the sake of the integrity of the nation as a whole in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah as a civil society force, as a socio-religious organization, does not engage in party politics, supports one political force, but supports national politics that leads to equality, justice, law enforcement, and equitable economic distribution. This is where Muhammadiyah can be said to be a civil force that plays a role and is influential in Indonesian politics.

If Muhammadiyah and NU cooperate in building a civil society that is economically and politically independent, then the conservative forces that always carry the jargons of Islamic law must be formalized in Indonesia will disappear and recede by themselves. However, if Muhammadiyah and NU fail to have a positive impact on Indonesia's economic and political development, then conservative forces will continue to be the choice of a minority of Muslims. This is where the social services carried out by Muhammadiyah are very important. In addition to the strength of Muhammadiyah and NU, they must encourage the moderation of Indonesian Islam. Muhammadiyah and NU thus have a very strategic role with a fairly large number of congregations. Muhammadiyah and NU can also play a role in being at the forefront of building a bulwark for the rise of conservatism. NU and Muhammadiyah become forces from within Islam to prevent Islamic intolerance and conservatism⁷⁸. Muhammadiyah encourages national and non-sectarian politics for the advancement of the nation by promoting Islamic moderation.

E. Conclusion

Identity politics and contestations along religious and ethnic lines has created a new political climate in Indonesia. As a result, religious and ethnic factors significantly affected the campaign activities of Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto in Indonesia's 2019 presidential elections. However, despite clear religious and ethnic contestation, in Indonesia after election did not experience violent conflict. Nonetheless, there are concerns that continued identity politics contestation with conflict will detrimentally affect political freedoms and tolerance, potentially resulting in the decline of Indonesian democracy.

The practice of identity politics, as well as the resulting social polarization election, reflected a broader contestation between the political ideologies of religious conservatism and secular nationalism. In Indonesia's 2019 presidential election, religious conservatism was promoted by non-mainstream Islamic groups such as FPI and the 212 Alumni, under the coordination of the GNPF-MUI. These groups held their own congresses, during which religious leaders—predominantly "new Islamic authorities" such as Abdullah Gymnastiar, Yusuf Mansyur, Felix Siauw, and Abdul Somad—officially stated their support for Prabowo Subianto's presidential campaign.

⁷⁸ Alexander R Arifianto, *Indonesian Presidential Election 2019 Islam and Indonesia's Presidency Race: A Defining Role?*

Conversely, members of mainstream Islamic organizations (i.e. Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama) tended to back Joko Widodo.

It may be assumed that religious and ethnic issues will continue to be exploited in future Indonesian elections, and that such identity politics will inform public policymaking and constrain non-normative religious and political practices. As a result, the country's democracy will likely remain illiberal; similarly, political and religious freedoms may be stifled. The greatest challenges to Indonesia's democracy, including its presidential and legislative elections, are political identity, Islamic populism, and the conservative turn. These phenomena, found throughout Indonesia, have resulted from great disruptions at the global level and Muslims' failure to respond appropriately, creating not only active violence but also threats to the future quality of Indonesia's democracy. Although it has successfully implemented liberal electoral democracy, Indonesia has yet to create a tradition of respect and tolerance for people with different political choices, religious beliefs, and ethnic backgrounds. In the era of Islamism, this poses a substantial threat to the future of Indonesia's democracy; the emergence of "sharia police" and other acts of intolerance threaten harmony in Indonesia and amongst Muslims.

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Example in footnotes:

¹Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), h. 18.

²Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: One World Publications, 1991), h. 190.

³Syeikh Ja’far Subhānī, *Mafāhim Al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-’Arabī, 2010), Juz 5, h. 231.

⁴Syeikh Ja'far Subhānī, *Maḥāhim Al-Qur'ān*, h. 8-9.

Example in bibliography:

Subhānī, Syeikh Ja'far. *Maḥāhim Al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Mu'assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-'Arabī, 2010.

Eliade, Mircea (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West*. Oxford: One World Publications, 1991.

Shihab, Muhammad Quraish. *Sunnah-Syiah Bergandengan Tangan: Mungkinkah? Kajian Atas Konsep Ajaran Dan Pemikiran*. Cet. III. Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007.

Detail informations of the footnotes:

1. Holy book

Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqarah/2: 185.

Perjanjian Baru, Mrk. 2: 18.

2. Qur'anic translation

¹Departemen Agama RI, *al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Darus Sunnah, 2005), h. 55.

3. Book

¹Muḥammad 'Ajjaj al-Khaṭīb, *Uṣl al-Ḥadīth: 'Ulumuh wa Muṣṭalahuh* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1989), h. 57.

4. Translation Books

¹Toshihiko Izutsu, *Relasi Tuhan dan Manusia: Pendekatan Semantik terhadap al-Qur'an*, terj. Agus Fahri Husein dkk (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2003), h. 14.

5. Voluminous book

¹Muḥammad al-Ṭāhīr b. 'Ashur, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, Vol. 25 (Tunisia: Dār al-Suḥūn, 2009), h. 76.

¹Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukharī, *al-Jam' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1999), h. 77.

6. Article in book

¹Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Metode Intratekstualitas Muhammad Shahrur dalam Penafsiran al-Qur'an" dalam Abdul Mustaqim dan Sahiron Syamsuddin (eds.), *Studi al-Qur'an Kontemporer: Wacana Baru Berbagai Metodologi Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2002), h. 139.

7. Article in encyclopaedia

¹M. Th. Houtsma, "Kufr" dalam A. J. Wensinck, at al. (ed.), *First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. 6 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), h. 244.

8. Article in journal

¹Muhammad Adlin Sila, "The Festivity of *Maulid Nabi* in Cikoang, South Sulawesi: Between Remembering and Exaggerating the Spirit of Prophet", *Studia Islamika* 8, no. 3 (2001): h. 9.

9. Article in mass media

¹Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Hubungan Agama dan Negara", *Kompas*, 7 Agustus 2002.

10. Article in Internet

¹Muhammad Shaḥrūr, “Reading the Religious Teks: a New Approach” dalam <http://www.shahrou.org/25> Februari 2010/diakses 5 Juni 2010.

11. Thesis or dissertation

¹Syahrudin Usman, “*Kinerja* Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam pada SMAN dan SMKN Kota Makassar”, *Disertasi* (Makassar: PPs UIN Alauddin, 2010), h. 200.

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