Politics of Tolerance: Ethics of the Republic, Populism, and Totalitarianism in the 2024 Contest

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Abstract

This article reviews Political Tolerance; The Ethics of the Republic, Populism, and Totalitarianism in the Context of the 2024 Contestation. The study aims to illustrate the factors influencing changes in an individual's political tolerance during the 2024 presidential election contest. This research employs a qualitative method utilizing instruments such as literature studies, observation, analysis of conference outcomes, and data collection from informants through interviews, with the researcher acting as the key instrument. The data sources for this study are interviews conducted with lecturers from various programs in the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy at UIN Alauddin Makassar. The findings of this research highlight the extent of academic discussions and informants' perspectives on political tolerance, the ethics of the republic, and populism, as viewed by scholars from various scientific backgrounds such as politics, sociology, religious studies, Qur'anic studies, and hadith interpretation. These perspectives are analyzed based on both factual and imaginative understandings of the ethics of the republic and the human condition. The researcher seeks to explore how deeply intellectualism and academic expertise within the university context perceive issues related to the human condition and the ethics of the republic.

Keywords: Political Tolerance, Republican Ethics, Populism and Totalitarianism

Introduction

Political tolerance within Indonesia's political system today serves as an essential foundation for national ideology and identity. It provides a tangible example of how the republic functions amidst ideological diversity. Measuring party tolerance can involve examining the ideological conflicts among elites or the masses, determining whether these divisions lead to unity or disintegration, or whether conflicts are maintained and leveraged for political purposes. Indonesia's political landscape features opposition groups critical of the ruling government and coalition groups that support and benefit from holding power through electoral victories. This duality simplifies political dynamics into coalitions and oppositions, but the broader reality reveals evolving voter preferences shaped by easy access to information and social media's influence.

The rapid dissemination of information through technology significantly impacts political parties, civil organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the unaffiliated masses who operate outside formal political institutions. Expressions, ideas, and interests among elites and the masses often diverge from the preferences of other civil groups. In contemporary political studies, these differences are analyzed to explore tolerance levels. How willing are political groups to accept former adversaries as allies when mutual interests align? For instance, Indonesia has witnessed a stark ideological divide between nationalist and religious factions, particularly evident during the 2014 and 2019 elections. However, these historically opposing groups appear to have reconciled their political preferences ahead of the 2024 election, reflecting an intriguing development in political tolerance.

Historical and contextual factors influence tolerance levels and impact democratic stability. Stable democracies require environments that foster tolerance, while identity-based conflicts threaten to reduce tolerance among individuals, groups, or masses. This phenomenon demands attention, especially as Indonesia's nationalist and religious groups—once adversaries—now display unity in the political landscape leading up to 2024. This shift exemplifies the political tolerance necessary to maintain national cohesion and democratic stability.

National disintegration is a constant threat, even when it manifests in different forms. For example, Europe has faced challenges such as xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments driven by waves of refugees escaping prolonged conflicts and wars. These dynamics have parallels in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, where xenophobia often manifests as Islamophobia, Christianophobia, and nationalism-phobia, intensifying during local and national elections. The rise of social media has amplified these tensions, with heated debates and identity clashes often leading to legal disputes under the Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE) Law. Political trolling, propaganda, and provocation on social media—often conducted anonymously—have become prominent tools for shaping public opinion and polarizing society.

Such activities exemplify the concept of "banal religion" and "banal nationalism," where individuals aggressively defend their religious or nationalist identities, often resorting to irrational and unethical behavior. This includes hate speech targeting ethnicities, religions, cultures, or groups, as well as efforts to manipulate history to legitimize violence or undermine opponents. These actions distort the sacred principles of religion and nationalism, reflecting a form of brutality that violates cultural and religious norms.

Populism has also emerged as a significant force within Indonesia's political system. Populism is often characterized as a form of social mobilization based on asymmetric, multi-class coalitions. These coalitions advocate for political and economic agendas shaped by religious doctrines or cultural norms, rather than striving for material power or resources. Such agendas often align with the broader goals of populism, where narratives and collective identities are manipulated for political and economic interests. Religion and nationalism are central to these agendas, creating intersections between populism, politics, and power.

Xenophobia in Indonesia reflects broader global trends, such as anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe and the United States. These sentiments are often fueled by anxieties over globalization's social and economic effects, as well as declining welfare states. While xenophobia in Europe targets immigrants and refugees, its Indonesian counterpart takes the form of nationalism-phobia and Islamophobia. Indonesian politicians frequently exploit these sentiments, using them to attack traditions, religions, and identities. The infamous case involving Ahok, for instance, revealed how religious and ethnic identities could be politicized to serve practical political objectives. The echoes of past ethnic conflicts, such as those involving Chinese Indonesians during the late 1990s, continue to shape contemporary political narratives, fueling tensions and legitimizing hate speech.

Islam, as a religion, is inherently compatible with democracy. However, Islamism—a political ideology—distorts Islam's principles for totalitarian purposes. Criticizing Islamism is not an attack on Islam but a defense of the religion's integrity against ideological misuse. Unfortunately, many scholars fail to differentiate between Islam and Islamism, presenting the latter as a form of "liberal Islam." This conflation undermines genuine efforts to promote civil and liberal interpretations of Islam. The same phenomenon occurs in Western contexts, where critiques of Islamism are often misinterpreted as Islamophobia.

Islamism has become a transnational movement, influencing educational institutions such as madrasas and religious schools worldwide, including in Europe and Indonesia. Organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin) have established networks of integrated Islamic schools, tahfiz houses, and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), effectively recruiting and indoctrinating young generations with their ideology. This process aligns with what Hannah Arendt described as totalitarian movements: blending medieval theology with modern political strategies.

The rise of political Islam in Indonesia represents a significant challenge to democratic values. Islamism promotes ideological rigidity, often resulting in sectarian conflicts rooted in differing interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). This rigidity can extend to ethnic and religious minorities, perpetuating divisions within society. The spread of Islamism in Indonesia has been facilitated by educational institutions and grassroots organizations, which propagate a totalitarian vision of Islam that diverges from the religion's inclusive and democratic traditions.

The Muslim Brotherhood's vision of a "Pax Islamica" reflects a totalitarian agenda aimed at reshaping the world order under divine authority. This ideology mirrors the internationalism of Marxism, using political Islam as a tool to consolidate power and suppress opposition. Totalitarian regimes, whether religious or secular, thrive on strict control over political, economic, and social systems, leaving little room for democratic governance.

Indonesia's experience with Islamism highlights the complex interplay between ideology, politics, and power. The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh serve as stark examples of how totalitarian tendencies can undermine democratic principles and exacerbate socio-economic disparities. In Aceh, for instance, the rigid application of Islamic law has coincided with high poverty rates and persistent threats of disintegration, reflecting the challenges of balancing religious governance with democratic ideals.

Arendt's theories on totalitarianism—particularly the interplay between movements and ideologies—provide valuable insights into understanding Islamism as a fusion of medieval theology and modern politics. While Islamism claims authenticity by referencing Islamic traditions, it often distorts these traditions to justify its political agenda. The totalitarian vision of an Islamic state is marked by authoritarian governance, suppression of opposition, and the marginalization of civil liberties, posing a significant challenge to democratic societies.

In conclusion, political tolerance in Indonesia's current system must navigate a complex landscape of ideological diversity, historical grievances, and contemporary challenges. The interplay between religion, nationalism, and populism shapes the nation's political dynamics, influencing voter behavior and party strategies. As Indonesia approaches critical electoral milestones, fostering tolerance and addressing the underlying factors driving division will be crucial for sustaining democratic stability and national unity.

Theoretical Review

Populism is a concept that has been widely discussed and defined by various scholars. One prominent scholar, Paul Taggart, describes populism as being like a chameleon—able to change its form and rhetoric to adapt to different environments. This analogy underscores the idea that populism is a flexible political tool that shifts according to the context in which it arises. Taggart argues that understanding populism requires a focus on its geographical location and historical period. The form populism takes in Europe, for instance, may differ significantly from its manifestation in Southeast Asia, where it is often linked to religion and anti-colonial sentiment. The definition of populism, therefore, must be contextualized to reflect its specific manifestations in different political landscapes and historical moments.

From a sociological perspective, populism is understood as a political rhetoric that emphasizes the virtues of "the people" while viewing elites as corrupt and self-serving. This definition, which originates from the Dictionary of Sociology (Abercrombie et al., 1998), suggests that populism's appeal lies in its criticism of political elites and its emphasis on direct relationships between the government and the people. This populist view often bypasses traditional political institutions, such as legislative bodies, in favor of a direct and unmediated connection between the people and their leaders. Populism in this sense can be seen as a response to the perceived corruption and ineffectiveness of existing political structures. For example, in regions where parliamentary systems have failed to gain trust, populism often gravitates towards strengthening executive powers, positioning the leader as the direct voice of the people.

In Indonesia, populism has historical roots that can be traced back to the anti-colonial struggles of the early 20th century. Dawam Rahardjo (1994) highlights the role of figures like Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, who, in the early 1900s, criticized the suffering of the people under Dutch colonial rule. Tjipto's advocacy for the common people and his rejection of honors from the colonial government reflect the broader nationalist sentiment of the time, which sought to challenge colonial authority. This early form of populism was not only about political resistance but also about aligning the cause of independence with the welfare of ordinary people. Tjipto's leadership in founding Boedi Oetomo and his role in Indische

Partij epitomize how populism can be a force for social change and national liberation. The rejection of colonial power and the demand for self-rule were central to this populist movement. Taggart's notion of populism as a flexible, context-dependent force is evident here, as Indonesian populism in the early 20th century had a very different form and purpose compared to populist movements in Europe or Latin America.

Margaret Canovan (1981) offers a nuanced view of populism by categorizing it into three different models. The first is "wong cilik" populism, which refers to the rhetoric and political movement that targets marginalized groups like small farmers, workers, and other disenfranchised sectors of society. This form of populism views large businesses and the government as conspiratorial forces that oppress the "common people." It is skeptical of modernization and progress, often associating industrialization, urbanization, and capitalism with moral decay. In political terms, "wong cilik" populism is typically anti-establishment, rejecting intellectuals and traditional politicians in favor of a leader who embodies the will of the people. In Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, this populism is often seen in the way political elites use the rhetoric of the "common people" during elections, even though these same marginalized groups may be politically manipulated to support specific parties or agendas.

The second model is authoritarian populism, which seeks charismatic leaders who can transcend conventional political processes and offer a strong, unified vision. This form of populism is often associated with political movements that are not necessarily democratic but are instead focused on creating a leader-centered cult of personality. Juan Perón of Argentina is a classic example, where his rise to power was less about democratic processes and more about his personal charisma and the loyalty of his followers. In Indonesia, authoritarian populism has occasionally emerged through political movements that appeal to strongman figures and the promise of decisive leadership. These movements often lead to more coercive and violent actions, as seen in Indonesia's past, where extremist groups, such as those aligned with certain political factions, engage in violent tactics to suppress opposition.

The third model of populism is revolutionary populism, which aims to overthrow the existing political system and replace it with one that represents the interests of the masses rather than elites. This type of populism is ideologically driven, rejecting existing political institutions as tools of elite domination and advocating for a complete redistribution of power. Revolutionary populism is often led by charismatic leaders who position themselves as the representatives of the people, promising to dismantle the existing power structures. In Indonesia, this form of populism can be seen in the actions of religious or political elites who mobilize the masses to protest government policies or challenge political elites. However, this type of populism is not without contradictions, as many of the leaders who rise in revolutionary movements eventually adopt the same elitist strategies they once opposed, leading to new forms of political domination.

In contrast to populism, totalitarianism presents a more extreme form of governance, where power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or a single party, and the state controls virtually every aspect of society. Karl Graf Ballestrem (unpublished work) identifies three key features of totalitarian regimes. The first is that totalitarianism represents a new form of governance that differs significantly from earlier autocratic

systems. Unlike traditional autocracies, totalitarian regimes aim to completely control society, extending their power over political, social, and personal life. This involves not only eliminating political opposition but also shaping the beliefs and behaviors of citizens through propaganda and state-controlled institutions.

The second feature of totalitarianism is the shared goals of regimes like National Socialism and Bolshevism. Despite their ideological differences, both regimes sought world domination, rejected legal norms, and violated basic human rights. They implemented large-scale terror, including mass incarceration, and committed atrocities that led to the deaths of millions of people. These regimes viewed their violent actions as necessary steps toward achieving their utopian visions of a perfect society. The totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, therefore, were characterized by an extreme concentration of power and an utter disregard for human life.

The third feature of totalitarianism is its focus on indoctrination and control over all aspects of life. Totalitarian regimes not only suppress political participation but also control personal beliefs and social practices. As Hannah Arendt notes, these regimes create new political institutions that replace traditional legal and social structures. These new institutions, often led by a single party or a charismatic leader, become the primary vehicles for enforcing the regime's ideology. In this context, the state becomes all-encompassing, dictating every aspect of public and private life.

Arendt also emphasizes the role of propaganda and terror in totalitarian regimes. Propaganda is used not only to promote the regime's ideology but also to create a false sense of reality that the public is encouraged to accept as truth. Terror, on the other hand, is used as a tool for maintaining control, eliminating opposition, and ensuring that people conform to the regime's vision. In modern-day Indonesia, remnants of these tactics can still be observed in the way certain political groups use propaganda and fear to control public opinion and suppress dissent. Social media, in particular, has become a battleground for ideological conflicts, with various factions using it to spread misinformation and manipulate public perceptions.

The study of totalitarianism thus offers valuable insights into the dynamics of political power, showing how regimes can manipulate history, suppress dissent, and create an artificial reality in which their ideology is unquestioned. Totalitarian regimes rely heavily on propaganda, terror, and mass mobilization to maintain their grip on power, often distorting the truth to ensure public compliance. In contemporary political landscapes, the rise of authoritarian movements and the use of populist rhetoric often draw on similar tactics, highlighting the ongoing relevance of Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism in understanding modern political dynamics.

Method

This study uses a descriptive and qualitative approach, drawing primarily on literature reviews and thematic interviews. The literature review focuses on academic publications, conference proceedings, and reports that deal with the topics of populism and totalitarianism. Interviews with key informants provide further insights into the practical and historical manifestations of these political phenomena. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how populism and totalitarianism shape political life,

with a particular focus on their historical, geographical, and cultural contexts. By analyzing various sources, the study seeks to deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics that underpin political movements in both historical and contemporary settings.

Results and Discussion

The Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy at UIN Alauddin Makassar is a core faculty that contributed to the establishment of the institution, originally an IAIN branch, as stipulated by Presidential Regulation No. 11 of 1960. It is a significant center for religious education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, offering programs in Political Science, International Relations, Religious Studies, Sociology of Religion, Quranic Studies, Philosophy, and Hadith Science. These programs have greatly contributed to the academic and scientific development of religious and social sciences.

The researcher chose this faculty as the study's focus due to its strong academic emphasis on religion and social sciences, which provides a rich environment to explore how political developments and practical politics are viewed by scholars. The study aims to examine how political tolerance is discussed among academics and how it shapes perspectives on the ideal relationship between the state and the republic. In this context, the researcher engages with academic discourse to uncover how the ethics of the republic are articulated, aiming to form a consensus on political issues in the nation.

The diversity of the academic backgrounds of the sources interviewed from various programs within the faculty allows for a multifaceted exploration of contemporary political issues, particularly political tolerance, populism, and political choices in the 2024 local elections. The study explores how these scholars, with both global and national educational perspectives, provide insights into the current political and social movements, focusing on religion, culture, and social politics from a perspective of political tolerance.

The study further analyzes how political tolerance and national conflicts are viewed from the perspectives of Islamic law and philosophy, highlighting the role of intellectuals in minimizing global and national conflicts. It emphasizes the importance of intellectuals engaging with society and maintaining communication with the public to restore balance and foster mutual understanding between the people and the state. In this context, the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy is seen as a key institution in shaping political and social discourse, especially in the run-up to the 2024 elections, aiming to bridge academic perspectives with the people's will and contribute to strengthening political unity.

Republican Ethics, Civil Liberties, and Populism

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election provides a snapshot of the country's democratic journey, shaped by various issues such as oligarchy, political dynasties, and the excessive dominance of political actors. In the presidential race, three pairs of candidates—Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD, and Prabowo-Gibran Rakabuming Raka—competed, with the Prabowo-Gibran pair ultimately winning the presidency and vice presidency. However, despite the election results being settled, the democratic process in this contest reveals numerous irregularities, reflecting imbalances within the political system, republican ethics, and civil liberties.

Republican ethics, the fundamental principle governing the state's operations based on the common good, justice, and transparency, has increasingly eroded. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his philosophy, emphasized the importance of a civil state founded on justice, replacing mere instinct. Civil liberty, according to Rousseau, should not only be individual freedom but also include limitations to safeguard the general will. However, in practice, civil liberties in Indonesia are often compromised by the political elite's dominance, which centralizes power and diminishes the public's participation in decision-making processes.

As noted by Febriyanto, S.IP., M.IP., in an interview on July 14, 2024, the dominance of certain political actors in decision-making is at risk of creating uniform policies that ignore regional uniqueness and hinder local initiatives. This concentration of power also threatens the checks and balances that are essential to democracy, as oversight of power weakens and space for diverse political views shrinks.

Violations of republican ethics became more apparent with the Constitutional Court's decision to lower the minimum age requirement for presidential candidates to 35. This decision sparked controversy, especially due to allegations of nepotism, as it made it easier for certain political families to access power. Furthermore, the formation of large coalitions in the 2024 election further reflected the weakness of democracy, with political power concentrated in the hands of a few elites who could control electoral outcomes, thus reducing healthy competition.

In this context, republican ethics, which should prioritize justice and equality for all citizens, is increasingly displaced by elite interests, exacerbating political inequalities. As explained by Dr. Takbir Malliongi, M.Phil., in an interview on August 18, 2024, elite groups often control all political resources, monopolizing political parties to win elections. This undermines the democratic principle that should provide space for all citizens to participate equitably.

The emergence of single candidates in several regions, as seen in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada), is a clear example of growing political hegemony. In these elections, single candidates were commonly found, particularly in regions led by incumbents who controlled large coalitions. This shows that a political system, which should allow for open competition, is instead becoming increasingly focused on the dominant political powers. It also raises concerns about the unfair mobilization of resources, such as the use of civil servants (ASN) to influence political contests, which contradicts the principles of professionalism, meritocracy, and good governance.

The dominance of elite groups in politics also creates a crisis of representation, where the people's voices are sidelined and only channeled through elite-controlled pathways. As discussed by Dr. Santri Sahar, M.Si., a sociology professor in an interview on September 13, 2024, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, ultimately reinforcing the hegemony of dominant groups. The public begins to accept the reality that politics has become an arena of deceit, where political promises are merely tools for mobilizing resources and labor to serve the interests of a few.

Furthermore, Dr. Takbir Malliongi critiques that the formation of large coalitions has made the political competition increasingly narrow. Individuals with the qualities and capacities to lead are often sidelined by the influence of powerful groups dominating the political arena. These coalitions, while seemingly intended to increase electoral support,

ultimately reduce ideological diversity and hinder the emergence of leaders who truly represent the people.

This phenomenon serves as a reminder of the republic's original ideals, which aimed to steer Indonesia away from forms of governance like monarchy and feudalism. As Tan Malaka explained, Indonesia should be a republic that upholds popular sovereignty, not a state controlled by a small elite or specific groups. However, the increasing popularity of the term "Raja Jawa" in contemporary politics suggests that Indonesia is moving in a different direction—towards a government controlled by dominant forces that are nearly unmatched.

The phenomenon of the political representation crisis in Indonesia has become more evident, with political elites successfully creating a false consensus that is imposed upon society. This has had a detrimental impact on the democratic process, which should be open and inclusive. Rather than involving the entire population in healthy political discussions and debates, society is instead forced to follow the path set by elites who hold significant power. As a result, political practices in Indonesia have regressed toward totalitarianism, emerging through the hegemony of the elites who dominate, while opposition forces are weakened and silenced.

This representation crisis is clearly visible in the political party monopolization by a handful of elites, resulting in single candidates, as seen in some regions during the 2024 regional elections. By using subtle coercive power, such as control over the media, resources, and the suppression of opposition, these elites consolidate their power to manipulate the democratic process. Additionally, there is a strong tendency toward political dynasties, where political power is passed down through families and relatives, replacing the ideal system of political cadre development that should foster more competent and trustworthy leaders.

One of the main consequences of this political system is the increasing marginalization of the people's interests and aspirations. The monopolization of political parties and the formation of large coalitions at both the national and local levels do not reflect true political representation, as political decisions are largely made by the dominant elites, not by the will of the people. In this situation, society is seemingly forced to accept decisions that have been made by a select few, with no space for broader debate or participation.

As a response to this situation, Dr. Santri Sahar, a Sociology lecturer, emphasizes the crucial role of educational institutions, particularly universities, in counterbalancing the dominance of political elites. According to him, universities, as centers of thought and research, can serve as guardians of culture and science, while also reminding the state of the democratic rights that must be upheld. To bring about substantive change, political education based on an understanding of republican ideology is essential so that future generations can confront the damaging political hegemony.

Furthermore, it is important to analyze this phenomenon through the lens of sociological and political theories, such as those proposed by Antonio Gramsci. In his thesis on hegemony, Gramsci argued that when the ruling class loses its consensus and relies solely on coercive power, society will begin to lose faith in the existing system. In the context

of Indonesia, this illustrates how dominant political rulers use their power to maintain their positions, without regard for the interests of the people.

Over time, Indonesian democracy has experienced significant regression. From the 2024 elections, it is clear that the public is increasingly trapped between two choices: voting for a single candidate already determined by the large coalition or abstaining from voting, which could lead to increased political apathy. This underscores the importance of political awareness among the people, to recognize that a healthy democracy requires active participation from all segments of society, not just from a few elites controlling the electoral process.

It is also important to note that Indonesia's history has recorded many critical moments in the journey of the republic, especially regarding citizenship and the struggle for independence. Since the founding of the Republic of Indonesia, the struggle to form a national identity and preserve the sovereignty of the nation has been heavily influenced by the concept of active citizenship and awareness of the importance of national unity. Soekarno, as one of the founders of the republic, emphasized the importance of national character and solidarity in building an independent, sovereign, and just Indonesia.

However, over time, this idealism has been eroded by political practices that prioritize power and the interests of the elite. Therefore, joint efforts are needed to continue the struggle for the ideals of the republic, based on the principles of justice, egalitarianism, and true democracy. This can only be achieved if society remains vigilant against political practices that lean toward authoritarianism and collectively fights for their democratic rights.

Political Tolerance, Polarization, and Unification of Political Choices

This research seeks to understand the factors influencing citizens' political tolerance in a democracy, such as the meaning of tolerance and individuals' acceptance of political rights like freedom of speech and the right to organize, even for groups with differing or opposing views, which are fundamental pillars of democracy.

The history of political tolerance is also intertwined with the concept of pluralism, which explores the extent to which primordialism—stemming from conflicts between religion and ideology—has influenced social cohesion. Tolerance in the context of pluralism demonstrates how diverse ideologies and religions within a globalized nation can be unified through interaction and participation, so that all differences are respected without disturbing one another, ultimately fostering harmony.

In addition to religion and ideology, in pluralistic societies, we encounter concepts like consensus and conflict, as explained by David Lockwood, who argues that consensus and conflict are two phenomena inherently present in every society, helping us understand how social systems work. The structure of Indonesian society is marked by two unique features. Horizontally, it is characterized by the existence of social units based on ethnic, religious, customary, and regional differences. Vertically, Indonesian society is marked by significant gaps between the upper and lower strata. These differences, analyzed through consensus and conflict frameworks, offer insights into how political tolerance functions in a diverse society.

The societal structure in Indonesia raises questions about how national integration occurs at the horizontal level, as the nation's multidimensional plurality often creates challenges for horizontal integration, while social stratification, as reflected in Indonesian society, shapes vertical national integration. To explain this, van den Berghe identified several points: 1) segmentation into groups often with distinct cultures or subcultures; 2) social structures divided into non-complementary institutions; 3) a lack of consensus among members regarding fundamental social values; 4) frequent conflict between groups; 5) social integration growing primarily through coercion and mutual economic dependence; and 6) political domination by one group over another.

At this level, Indonesian society exhibits segmentation, where differentiation and specialization at the societal level are reflected in plural institutional structures. Therefore, in terms of political moderation and tolerance, diverse collective awareness and solidarity can emerge, fostering social systems that minimize conflicts and strengthen unity. This aligns with Emile Durkheim's notion of mechanical and organic solidarity, which refers to mutual dependence and complementarity between individuals and groups.

In modern times, it is common among Muslims to refer to the era of al-Khulafa al-Rasyidun (the Rightly Guided Caliphs) as a model for political ideals. According to Robert N. Bellah, early Islamic society was remarkably modern, but it was short-lived (lasting only during the first four caliphs, for around thirty years) and "failed" (the system was replaced by the more tribal regime of the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus). This failure, Bellah argues, was due to the absence of the necessary social infrastructure to sustain the system. In contemporary debates, some Islamic groups and movements seeking the establishment of a caliphate often compare today's political regimes to that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, leading to movements that challenge national unity and consolidation. This tension resulted in the dissolution of movements such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) in 2020 and Hizbut Tahrir in 2017.

There are several reasons Bellah views early Islamic society as modern, including high political participation and openness to leadership based on universal criteria, not heredity or lineage. This contrasts with systems of political leadership in societies like Persia, where social status was often determined by tribal lineage or royal family membership. Similarly, the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, which altered the age requirement for presidential candidates, seems to reinforce political dynasties by enabling power to pass down to family members, such as President Jokowi's son, Gibran, who was able to run for office despite being only 37 years old. This shift reflects a return to despotism, manipulating political rules to benefit elite families. The Constitutional Court's ruling, with five out of nine judges siding with this change, was criticized for lacking dissenting opinions that could have challenged this decision.

In Nurcholis Madjid's book *Islam, Doctrine, and Civilization*, he touches upon the difference between the pre-Islamic Jahiliyah era and the Islamic era in terms of political participation. He contrasts the societal values of the Jahiliyah era, which were based on lineage and prestige, with the Islamic era's emphasis on merit and accomplishments. Madjid highlights how Islamic society is universalistic and open, as it values achievements over ancestry, unlike the more closed and ascriptive societies of pre-Islamic Persia, where social status was based on royal or tribal lineage.

The political behavior of Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, is often cited as a model of political participation that included all members of society. However, this participation, as Thaha Husayn emphasized, is fundamentally a reflection of the principles of *shura* (consultation), which were exemplified in the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad. Political tolerance, as exemplified by the Prophet, included consultation and dialogue in decision-making, encouraging participation even in matters not directly addressed by divine revelation. This is evident when the Prophet consulted his companions about military strategies, such as in the Battle of Badr, where the decision to position the troops was not divine command but the result of *shura*.

Dr. Irham, a Hadith scholar, explains that the conflicts and political tolerance experienced by the Prophet Muhammad during his time in Mecca and Medina serve as crucial lessons in political resilience. For example, during the early days of Islam, the Prophet avoided physical confrontation, focusing on strategies to minimize political and physical conflict, including practicing Islam discreetly until the community was stronger. When the Prophet migrated to Medina, the city's inhabitants offered political protection and pledged allegiance to him. These events underscore how political tolerance and consultation were crucial in navigating conflict, and how political unity was built through mutual respect and dialogue.

Thus, the political tolerance and consultation (shura) exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad offer valuable lessons on navigating political conflict and fostering unity through dialogue, mutual respect, and active participation in the political process. These principles can serve as a guide for modern democratic societies, emphasizing the importance of tolerance, inclusivity, and cooperation in overcoming polarization and building a more just and unified political system.

Conclusion

The ethics of the republic, which has long been agreed upon by the nation's founders and accepted by the public, both consciously and formally, is considered common knowledge among citizens. In this context, the national expression in political terms refers to the alignment between collective expectations on how the republic should be governed for the common good. It is a shared understanding of how the state should function, aiming to serve the interests of all citizens rather than just a select few. The ethical framework behind the republic is built on these principles, guiding the political system to maintain fairness, justice, and the rule of law for everyone.

Political tolerance during the time of Prophet Muhammad was characterized by an emphasis on *musyawarah* (consultation), which was used to resolve disagreements and conflicts within the social environment. The Prophet's political tolerance was deeply rooted in dialogue, mutual respect, and finding common ground, even when there were significant differences. The process of *shura* (consultation) was an essential part of the early Islamic political model and allowed for the peaceful resolution of issues in a manner that respected the rights and dignity of all involved. This model was based on collective decision-making and inclusivity, where diverse opinions were valued and incorporated into the governance of the community. The ethical foundation of political tolerance at that time was one of collaboration and consensus-building.

In contrast, modern political tolerance often revolves around uniting interests to strengthen shared goals, even if that requires changing existing laws and regulations. In the modern political landscape, tolerance sometimes involves compromising ethical principles to achieve collective objectives, which can include altering rules that may affect the social fabric or human condition. While this pragmatic approach can be effective in fostering cooperation and achieving political stability, it also runs the risk of undermining the ethical foundations of the republic. As such, it is crucial to balance the need for political compromise with the preservation of core values, ensuring that the sacrifices made in the name of progress do not erode the integrity of the republic's foundational ethics.

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Interview

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