# Islamism and The Challenge of Democratization in Indonesia

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**Abstract:**

This article studies the phenomenon of Islamism and its impacts on the process of democratization in Indonesia through a legal normative method by examining some regulations and cases regarding the issue. Extreme Islamic loyalist organizations authorize themselves to judge and decide what is and is not permissible, thereby hampering the development of democratic growth in Indonesia with their frequent interference in the government's affairs and political parties in decision-making. Democracy in Indonesia is put under threat by these organizations. Studies conducted by several scholars indicate that the socio-religious practices of some Islamic organizations in Indonesia are shifting further away from the goals of democratic values. This research seeks to reveal the involvement of Islamism and its impacts on the process of democratization in the Indonesian government. The research results found that addressing negative images to Islam is not something uncommon, raising concern among Muslims and leaving a big obstacle that the democratization in Indonesia needs to encounter.

**Keywords:** Islam; democracy; political party; religion.

## Introduction

Discussing the relationship between Islam and democracy is often inevitable.[1] Islam is a religion and treatises[2] that contain the principles that govern worship,

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[1] Sheikh Taqiuddin An-Nabhani, *The System of Islam (Nidham Ul Islam)* (London: Revival Publication, 2016).

morals, and relationships between people.[3] Whereas democracy only serves as a governmental system and mechanism among members of society, symbolizing positive values.[4] The polemic about the relationship between Islam and democracy was triggered by a theological tension,[5] where there is the desire to understand the doctrines that have long been established by the history of the Muslim dynasty with the demand to provide a new understanding of the doctrine in response to changing social phenomena.[6]

The democratic system has always been challenging and debatable,[7] not only in the Islamic and Western world but also on the internal side of Islam. El Fadl[8] argues that there are at least three groups related to this democratic discourse, namely the secular group, the rejectionist, and the reform group.[9] Secular groups demand the separation of religion and state issues; rejectionist groups (both moderate and puritan) state that the form of Islamic government is incompatible with the democratic system,[10] while reformers try to reconcile Islam and democracy by reinterpreting key concepts in the Islamic tradition, such as *shura* (consultancy between the people and the government), *ijma* (community consensus), *ijtihad* (reinterpretation) and *maslahah* (public welfare).[11]

Indonesia is home to the majority of Muslims and countless Muslim organizations with different *madzhab*. Muhamamdiyah, for example, stands against cigarettes and Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah declares that cigarettes are *haram*, while Nahdhatul Ulama and Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) declare them *makruh*. Those different views of *ijtihad* are usually brought to a serious debate in society, creating a disruptive situation for democracy in Indonesia. Another case about the

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[2] Hari Sutra Disemadi, Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, and Mochammad Abizar Yusro, "Indonesian Children Protection against Commercial Sexual Exploitation through Siri Marriage Practices in Maqashid Al-Shariah Perspective," *Brawijaya Law Journal* 7, no. 2 (October 31, 2020): 195–212, https://doi.org/10.21776/UB.BLJ.2020.007.02.04.

[3] Arif Budiman Alfariz and Gazi Saloom, "Religious Tolerance Measurement: Validity Test in Indonesia," *Jurnal Pengukuran Psikologi Dan Pendidikan Indonesia (JP3I)* 10, no. 1 (2021): 67–78, https://doi.org/10.15408/jp3i.v10i1.16482.

[4] Rene Klaff, *Prinsip-Prinsip Dasar Demorasi Dan Pemerintahan Yang Baik Dalam Islam Dan Barat: Demokrasi Dalam Masyarakat Islam* (Jakarta: FNS Indonesia dan Pusat Studi Islam Paramadina, 2002).

[5] Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, Nur Hidayah, and Isdian Anggraeny, "Islamic Law as A Value to Solve The Humanitarian Crisis: Lessons from Indonesia," in *3rd International Conference on Indonesian Legal Studies* (EAI EUDL, 2021), 1–7, https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.1-7-2020.2303662.

[6] Muhamad Fajar Mubarok, "Prinsip Ta'awun Dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Tafsir Al-Sya'rawi" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2019).

[7] Tonye Clinton Jaja and Zaka Firma Aditya, "Promoting the Good Governance by Advancing the Role of Parliamentarians and the Term Offices Limitation (Comparing Nigeria and Indonesia)," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 7, no. 1 (June 2022): 265–98, https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v7i1.54776.

[8] Khaled Abou El Fadl and Ian Lague, *The Place of Tolerance In Islam* (Beacon Press, 2002).

[9] Erin K. Wilson, "The Socio-Political Dynamics of Secularism and Epistemological Injustice in Global Justice Theory and Practice," *European Societies* 19, no. 5 (2017): 529–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2017.1334948.

[10] Nanang Hasan Susanto, "Politicization of Religion and the Future of Democracy in Indonesia in Populism Theory," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 18, no. 54 (2019): 139–58.

[11] Farihan Aulia and Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "PERBANDINGAN SISTEM HUKUM COMMON LAW, CIVIL LAW DAN ISLAMIC LAW DALAM PERSPEKTIF SEJARAH DAN KARAKTERISTIK BERPIKIR," *Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum* 25, no. 1 (2017), https://doi.org/10.22219/jihl.v25i1.5993.

principle of governance, such as *Hizbut Tahrir* mentioned *Khilafah* as the best and ideal principle in *siyasah syar'iyyah* in the Holy Quran and Hadits. However, the Indonesian principle points out that Pancasila is the legal ideology of the national being.

Indonesian Muslims do not encounter any difficulty in adjusting Islamic teachings to democratic principles.[12] The majority of Indonesian Muslims have been supportive of democracy.[13] Unlike others in various parts of the world who reject or doubt democracy, most Indonesian people instead view democracy as a realization of the principle of *shura* as taught in the Koran.[14] Apart from religious considerations, Indonesian Muslims support democracy based on the reality of the balance of most of them who embrace Islam.[15] Through democracy, the ideals of the community and state of Islam will be more easily fought for.[16] Therefore, the emergence of parties that represented the nature of Islam before and after the proclamation of Indonesian independence can be viewed from the context of upholding the pillars of democracy.[17]

## Method

This research used a legal normative method[18] by examining a few political phenomena related to the Islamic extremism issue. Thus, a relationship between Indonesian politics, democracy, Islamic radicalism, and the middle path is established. With a prescriptive analysis,[19] this research also seeks to generate fresh concepts and foresee the effects of the rise of radical Islamic movements in Indonesia--a democracy. Many radical sects in Indonesia can be resolved with a balanced political structure.

## Result and Discussion
## The Views of Muslims Towards Democracy

There were crossing views of Muslims on the issue of democracy, three of which are very contradictory: *First,* some view democracy as something infidel, either making democracy an ideology or making democracy a strategy. It makes no

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[12] Z Firma Aditya and Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "Democracy and Human Rights As A Solution To Resolve The Humanitarian Crisis In Muslim Countries," in *Conference On Islamic Studies (ICIS)* (Yogyakarta, 2017).

[13] Agus Pramono, "Ideologi Dan Politik Hukum Pancasila," *Gema Keadilan* 5, no. September (2018): 74–83, https://doi.org/10.14710/gk.2018.3650.

[14] Anis Tilawati and Ananda Emiel Kamala, "Syura Dan Demokrasi Perspektif Hermeneutika Abdullah Saeed : Relevansinya Dengan Demokrasi Di Indonesia," *Sophist: Jurnal Sosial Politik, Kajian Islam Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.20414/sophist.v2i1.21.

[15] Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan Dan Kemanusiaan; Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah* (Bandung: Mizan, 2009).

[16] Salman Audah, "Democracy in Islamic Perspektif," islamtoday.net, 2020.

[17] Hatem Bazian, "Islamophobia, 'Clash of Civilizations', and Forging a Post-Cold War Order!," *Religions* 9, no. 9 (2018): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9090282.

[18] Sholahuddin Al-Fatih and Ahmad Siboy, *Menulis Artikel Karya Ilmiah Hukum Di Jurnal Nasional Dan Internasional Bereputasi* (Malang: Inteligensia Media, 2021).

[19] Irwansyah, *Penelitian Hukum: Pilihan Metode & Praktik Penulisan Artikel*, ed. Ahsan Yunus (Yogyakarta: Mirra Buana Media, 2020).

difference whether this is practiced according to the nature of democracy so that power is given too much - this is the highest ideal of adherents of democracy among secularists - or carried out in its current form, where power is in the hands of the authorities and groups close to their families or from businessmen and wealthy people who control capital and mass media networks, where they can sit or seat whoever they want in parliamentary seats. Abu Bashir in his book *Thaghut* classifies the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat [DPR]), the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat [MPR]), and similar others as *Thaghut Akbar*.[20] He wrote: "Among the people's representatives' impulse towards God is that they specialize themselves, and for the people, they are legislative assemblies who call themselves the House of Representatives. Its job is to make and pass laws and regulations for humans. These assemblies and each of their members are *Thaghut Akbar*. They have positioned themselves as a rival to Allah in the most specific specialty of God in terms of making laws and establishing laws. These assemblies and their members become *thaghut* because they are believed to have the right to make laws that must be obeyed and followed.[21]

*Second,* some view: those who see democracy are not all infidels and may use them in a corridor not contrary to Islam, among them are Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, Hasan Al-Banna, Salman Al-'Audah, Muhammad Abu Zahrah, Manna 'Al-Qathan. Salman was mentioned in his fatwa when asked about Muslim participation in the election, he said:

*"In fact, I combined my voice with the teacher you mentioned about his fatwa about being able to vote in elections he was determined to reduce the danger and choose the best. Although there are many variables on this issue, voting has an influence, albeit limited, in terms of reducing the scale of crime, giving a rebuttal to the perpetrators of crime, exposing it, and being proactive in coming up with solutions that are consistent and operating with Islam, and explaining the influence towards the good of humans and their understanding of Islamic solutions".*[22]

In Indonesia, democracy and nomocracy are somewhat similar because the founders of Indonesia represented Islamic law values during the independence moment. Pancasila, the ideology of Indonesia, was amended in Article 1 to accommodate the Christians in East Indonesia. While Yusuf Qardahawi's statement about democracy that people are free to choose their leaders and reject the dictatorial law, in accordance with the core teachings of Islam, he revealed: "Willingness is determined by Islam through the orders of *shura* (deliberation) and *bai'at* (loyalty), denouncing authoritarian rulers. It is the people who choose strong others who are trusted, who are very capable and able to maintain the power of God with the people. It includes the right of every person to advise the ruler, remind him of a good act, forbid the evil, pay attention to noble etiquette, obey him in goodness, and refuse to be involved in disobedience and immorality, where there is no obedience to the creature in opposing its creator. What needs to be adopted from democracy is its guarantees and technicalities which forbid the spread of evil conduct in humans. How many countries are counted as democracies but

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[20] M. Saifudin Hakim, "Makna Istilah Thaghut," muslim.or.id, 2018.
[21] Halimah, Abdul Mun'im Musthafa, and Abu Bashir, *Thaghut, Apa Dan Siapa?* (Yogyakarta: Kafayeh, 2009).
[22] Audah, "Democracy in Islamic Perspektif."

dictatorship dominates, how many presidents have got 99% votes while very disliked by their people. It is truly the way of elections and winning most votes produced by democracy is a true instrument globally. Although it is not free from various deficiencies, it is safer and better than others".[23]

*Third,* others view democracy as a halal item in all conditions by following the most votes without considering whether it contradicts Sharia. Contrary to the first view which considers democracy a general disbelief, people of the third category understand Western democracy as a remedy that heals the country, nation, and people, with everything contained therein despite the values of social liberalism, economic capitalism, and freedom politics. They do not limit democracy with anything and they want democracy to be like those in Western countries, which do not rely on creed, are not taken from sharia, do not believe in permanent standards of value, even differentiate between science and morals, between economics and morals, between politics and morals and between war and morals. This is the view of most Muslims who take part in the euphoria of democracy.[24]

The different views above are motivated by ideological and behavioral factors in the political and socio-cultural aspects of society that gave rise to democracy. Seen from the origin of democracy, it is caused by the tension between the power of the church in the name of God and the suffering people, so the rejection of power in the name of God has an impact on the rejection of all religions, so the desired democracy is a secular democracy. The ideological content of democracy is so thick that the implementation of democracy tends to political secularism which alienates the role of religion in politics.

The actors of democracy are indeed mostly secular ideologies – although many are Muslim – so the secularity is thickly condensed in legislation, governmental and regional regulations.[25] Equally important, the democratic actors affiliated with Islamic ideology at the beginning of plunging into politics tended to lose in defending their ideology and many were dissolved in pragmatism attitudes which resulted in leaving Islamic principles for dominion. It is with this background that emerged the denial of democracy and the perpetrators. As for those who view democracy objectively as an instrument or mechanism for a change of power that can be emptied of its parent ideology, they tend to have a moderate view. A moderate view of democracy makes Islamic values easy to accept, including in legislative discourse. In the Indonesian context, this can be seen by including several Islamic legal norms into national law, such as the Compilation of Islamic Law, the Waqf Law, and the like.

## Islam, Democracy, and The Constitution in Indonesia

Democracy as an ideology and a power system has become the foundation and frame of community and state life that is almost everywhere in the world, both in the West and the Islamic world. Democracy is a system of government with the jargon "of the people, by the people, and for the people". Democracy was born in

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[23] Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, "The Islamic State Correspond to The Essence of Democracy," al-qaradawi.net, 2020.

[24] Susanto, "Politicization of Religion and the Future of Democracy in Indonesia in Populism Theory."

[25] Wilson, "The Socio-Political Dynamics of Secularism and Epistemological Injustice in Global Justice Theory and Practice."

Greece in 5 BC and was redesigned by post-Renaissance European intellectuals, due to a long conflict between intellectuals and churchmen, as a form of rebellion against the cruel authority of the church throughout the Middle Ages. The Western concoction of democracy is built on secularism, namely the separation of religion from the state, and the broadest freedom of the people in religion, freedom of speech, freedom of ownership, and personal freedom.[26] Then by western imperialists democracy was transferred to all their colonies throughout the world, including the Islamic world, and there was a secularization of the Muslim countries.

Democracy considers sovereignty or the right to make law in the hands of the people represented by members of parliament. The power (authority) to elect the members of parliament and the authorities in a democracy is in the hands of the people, and the people also have the right to reduce them although in practice the people do not have power because that power has been bought and usurped by the party and the members of parliament or the ruling party that they vote for. After the election of legislative members and the formation of a new government, the people were forgotten. Those people were even deemed no longer entitled to speak out because they had handed over the matter to them. Therefore, in a democratic system, especially in democratic championship countries such as the United States, the most prominent holders of power and sovereignty are limited to capital owners in giant industries.[27] They determine the members of parliament, senate, and president. They also determine the laws and various domestic and foreign political policies to protect the benefit of their companies and capital. This is the reality of a democratic system serving as an instrument of power by liberal capitalists.

With this concept people are free to act, free to talk, and free to change religion, triggering the prevalence of rampant drugs, uncontrolled pornography, varied forms of apostasy, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases, and vulnerable households.[28] Extensive freedom for individuals as the principle of democracy in religion, opinion, ownership, and behavior gives birth to various kinds of damage including capitalist ideology which results in power in the hands of capital owners, moral damage on the basis of freedom, damage to religion, unknown halal and haram, failure of managing the country with the emergence of a corrupt government, difficulty finding justice in the judiciary, moral and economic damage with a hedonistic and permissive life. [29] That is, democracy only gave birth to disbelief and destruction. On the other hand, there is a belief that improving the state and government that fit the people without causing damage can be done only by constitutional means and using the democratic system to make changes towards Islam. The reality is that most who go into politics by utilizing democracy are unable to maintain their idealism, thus creating the belief that democracy is of no use despite its strong implementation.

In its development, the thoughts about Muslim democracy are divided into three groups; some glorify democracy as if it were something sacred and non-

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[26] Abdul Qadim Zallum, *Demokrasi Sistem Kufur* (Jakarta: Pustaka Thariqul 'Izzah, 2009).

[27] Kacper Szulecki, "Conceptualizing Energy Democracy," *Environmental Politics* 27, no. 1 (2018): 21–41, https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2017.1387294.

[28] Muhammad Al Khaththath, *Parpol Islam Di Panggung Demokrasi* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2009).

[29] Abdul Khaliq and Abdur Rahman, *Siyasah Syariyyah Fi Ad-Da'wah Illallah* (Beirut: Daar al Fikr, 2001).

blamable, making fighting for democracy looks more like a holy war and the perpetrators deserve to be entitled hero.[30] The moment of upholding democracy is remembered by people more than any other moment of fighting for Islam. People are more impressed with the Tiananmen tragedy in China which claimed the lives of many pro-democracy students[31] or more impressed by Aung San Su Kyi in Burma who also fought for democracy than the struggle of Palestinian Muslims.[32]

People who shout democracy sound more heroic to them. Recently, some downplay Islam before democracy by declaring that democracy is part of the teachings of Islam. Not a few people dare to say that democracy is Islam itself. The fight for democracy is very sacred because it took a bloody revolution of humanity against tyranny and authoritarian practice, involving the reactionary efforts of philosophers, intellectuals, and the Christian people who were suppressed by the emperors in Europe under the approval of the church. This dramatized history is then considered the enlightenment of humankind from darkness (*renaissance* to *aufklärung* from the Dark Age).[33] Their accommodative attitude towards democracy was born from the assumption that democracy is an anti-tyrannical and dictatorship holy ideology. Democracy is considered the voice of the people: from the people, by the people, and for the people. It can be understood that democracy is an embodiment of the spirit of *liberte* (freedom), *egalite* (equality) *fraternite* (brotherhood).[34] Fighting democracy means fighting against the voice of the people, and the voice of the people is the truth.

The supporters of democracy loudly declare that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Some Muslims believe that democracy in all its forms, is an infidelity, and all ideologies of democracy, and following democracy in all its forms are punished by infidels, even just by using only a portion of democratic products such as joining elections, or being an official in a country that uses a democratic system can be deemed infidel. However, some others view that exploiting the opportunities provided by democracy to fight for the values of truth and leading people to a better life without having to leave and sacrifice Islamic principles is acceptable.[35]

The differences in the three views above do not stop at the ideological level but rather cause a lot of social and political tension among Muslims. On one hand, there is indeed a tendency to accommodate all the neglect that accompanies democratic life, so that the stigma of such infidelity is often heard from those who do not agree with all democratic interactions, even to the extent that they are allowed to kill and destroy their honor. This is undeniable that there are disputes

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[30] Umar Misyar Al-Misri, *Al-Musyarakah Fi-Alhayah As-Siyasiyah Fi Dzilli Andzimati Al-Hukmu Mu'ashirah* (Cairo: Daar Al-Kalimah, 2006).

[31] Xin Mao, "The Religiosity of Populism: The Sanctified and Abused Power of the People," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 16, no. 47 (2017).

[32] Indah Mustika Permata, Nadya Hijrah D, and Anita A. Sinulingga, "Humanitarian Diplomacy: Indonesia's Response Toward Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis," *Journal of Diplomacy and International Studies* 1, no. 1 (2019): 1–12, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25299/jdis.2019.vol2(01).4422.

[33] Anthony Grafton, "Philological and Artisanal Knowledge Making in Renaissance Natural History: A Study in Cultures of Knowledge," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2018): 39–55, https://doi.org/10.1086/696301.

[34] Mun'im A Sirry, *Islam Leberalisme Demokrasi, Membangun Sinergi Warisan Sejarah, Doktrin Dan Konteks Global* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002).

[35] Susanto, "Politicization of Religion and the Future of Democracy in Indonesia in Populism Theory."

and divisions and even prolonged animosity between them. However, regarding the Indonesian Constitution, various freedoms and guarantees of the fulfilment of other constitutional rights are inherent in every citizen.

## Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia

Democracy provides broad space for anyone and anywhere, including in Indonesia. In a democratic country like Indonesia, organizations and community groups can freely carry out their activities without strong control from the state. Consequently, many organizations and groups are not in line with the nation's ideology, namely Pancasila. One of the problems faced when consolidating democracy in Indonesia is the existence of an extreme Islamic loyalist movement that often violates democratic rules. Moreover, Their thought also opposes the values of democracy itself as a mutually agreed rule of the game. The extreme Islamic loyalist movement does not represent Indonesian Muslims in general. The majority of Indonesian Muslims are at least reflected in the political lines of various leading mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah,[36] both of which are known to be moderate. Thus, excessive concern over the extreme Islamic loyalist movement as a serious threat to the future of democracy in this country does not make enough sense although it must still be watched out for.

Several studies confirm that this organization also spreads almost throughout the Islamic world with its very ideology: "The courage to change the world quickly despite some blood involved". This group has no clear notion of civilization but is relatively bound by a single fascist ideology. Conversely, the moderates generally accept and defend democracy and human rights. They are not worried whether the idea came from the West or East. If these principles support the Koranic ideals of upholding justice, peace, morality, and good relations among humans, why should they be rejected?[37] Upon traced, extreme Islamic loyalist organizations in Indonesia have a direct relationship and contact with transnational figures of extreme Islamic loyalists. Their relationship is also based on general orientation, ideology, and movement goals. These organizations are believed to be dangerous and threaten Pancasila, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the 1945 Constitution pose a serious threat to Islam in Indonesia which is appropriate and tolerant. Among the transnational movements operating in Indonesia are, *firstly*, the Ihwanul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) founded by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt [38]. The Muslim Brotherhood was present in Indonesia initially through campus missionary institutions which later became the Tarbiyah Movement (education movement). This group then gave birth to the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS). The second is Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)[39] which was dissolved by the Indonesian

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[36] M. Zaki Mubarak, *Geneologi Islam Radikal Di Indonesia: Gerakan, Pemikiran, Dan Prospek Demokrasi* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2008).

[37] Muhammad Mumtaz Ali and Muneer Muhammed Rafeeque, "Wasaṭiyyah (Moderation) as the Principle and Objective of the Shariah as a Solution for Preventing Violence and Extremism," *Center for Sociological Studies, Islamic Perspective* 3, no. 20 (2018), https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v15i2.760.

[38] Sakinatul H. S. Hayati, "Peranan Imam Syahid Hasan Al-Banna Dalam Mengembangkan Ikhwanul Muslimin Di Mesir Pada Tahun 1928-1949," *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Riau* 2, no. 1 (2015).

[39] Ken Ward, "Non-Violent Extremists? Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 2 (2009): 149–64, https://doi.org/10.1080/10357710902895103.

government in 2017 with the idea of Pan-Islamism.[40] This institution expected to establish the Khalifah Islamiyah (pure Islamic state) throughout the world and put Indonesia as part of it. *Third*, Wahhabi organizations are trying to spread global Wahhabism. Among the transnational movements, Wahhabi is the most powerful fund provider with its many abundant oil wells.[41]

Meanwhile, the presence of Wahhabis in modern Indonesia is inseparable from the role of the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) [Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council].[42] With generous financial support from the Salafi Group (Wahhabi), DDII sent scholars to study in the Middle East, some of which later became Wahhabi-Ikhwanul Muslimin ideological agents in Indonesia. Later, with full support from Wahabi-Saudi Arabian funds, DDII established the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam Arab (LIPIA) [Arab Islamic Science Institute] and most of its alumni later became agents of the Tarbiyah Movement and the Salafi Group in Indonesia.[43]

In addition to DDII, which preceded and after the New Order (President Soeharto's era) collapsed, Indonesia also witnessed so many local extreme groups that grew massively, including Front Pembela Islam (FPI), Forum Umat Islam (FUI), Laskar Jihad, Jemaah Islamiyah, Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah (FKASWJ) and its militia wing; Laskar Jihad, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) and it's Laskar Mujahidin, Hizbut Tahrir, Hammas, Hezbollah Front, Ikhwanul Muslimin and Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (KISDI), Komite Persiapan Penerapan Syariah (KPPS) in several areas, and others. The main agenda of these extreme Islamic loyalist groups is to gain political power through religious formalization. While the idea is far-fetched, they keep claiming that if Islam becomes the basis of the state, if sharia is established as positive law, and if the Khalifah Islamiyah is upheld, then all problems will be resolved.[44]

The understanding and concept of the religion of extreme Islamic loyalist organizations are vastly different when compared to the understanding and concept of the religion of moderate Muslims. On the other hand, as a result of narrow and limited interpretations of Islamic ideology, they emphasize an outward (physical) understanding of religion and ignore inner (mental) understanding. Symbols, identities, and quantities are more important to them than spiritual awareness and quality in religion. They want to impose their understanding of Islam on anyone through the formalization and implementation of Islamic law, establish an Islamic State or Khilafah Islamiyah, and take political maneuvers to gain power.

FPI, FKASWJ, MMI, HTI, Hammas, Front Hizbullah, Ikhwanul Muslimin, and KISDI have the same concern, that Islamic law must be taken more seriously by the state and the wider Muslim community. This perspective is mainly based on

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[40] Rifai Shodiq Fathoni, "Mengupas Sejarah Pan-Islamisme," wawasansejarah.com, 2016.

[41] Abdurrahman Wahid, *Ilusi Negara Islam: Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2009).

[42] Darwin Zainuddin and Fakhrur Adabi Abdul Kadir, "Dinamika Gerakan Dakwah Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia Di Indonesia," *Journal Analytica Islamica* 2, no. 1 (2013): 1–17.

[43] Elia Tambunan, "Indonesian Islamism: The War Of Islamic Literacy From Millennialism To Radicalism," *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (2019), https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v24i1.1612.

[44] Muhammad Rikza Muqtada, "UTOPIA KHILĀFAH ISLĀMIYYAH: Studi Tafsir Politik Mohammed Arkoun," *Jurnal THEOLOGIA* 28, no. 1 (2017): 145–64, https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2017.28.1.1410.

three important factors; theology, demography, and socio-politics. These organizations are ideologically called within the framework of the Militant Salafi Movement,[45] viewing that theologically Islam contains facts as a religion that offers guidelines and solutions for all aspects of life, socio-cultural, economic, political, and so on. This position has led them to believe that all Muslims have a religious obligation to base all aspects of their lives on the values and teachings of Islam as outlined in Sharia. Demographic factors refer to the fact that the majority of Indonesians are Muslims, representing 89% of the total population. It takes a socio-cultural and political legitimacy to set Islam as the basis of the state or at least recognize Islamic sharia as a core element or an integral part of the constitution. Socio-political factors refer to the fact that positive-secular law does not produce good socio-cultural, economic, legal, and political improvements for Muslims.[46]

Islamic organizations within the framework of the Militant Salafi Movement did not develop during the authoritarian New Order regime. However, during the government of President Habibie, the militant movements were free to develop their existence and mission. In reality, under President Habibie's government, freedom of the press and civil rights expanded widely, thus making a significant contribution to strengthening civil society.[47] The Militant Salafi Movement, *first*, tends to promote "Islamic textual civilization".[48] Textual civilization is the paradigm of building the interpreter's authority in a dominant position in providing religious understanding. Text is fully understood only as text. Understanding the text solely as text, not as a discourse that needs to be explored carefully and integratively will discriminate against the historical, sociological, and cultural background of the text. When the interpretation takes this method, it will give birth to a rigid, literal, and intolerant attitude towards others in everyday life.

*Secondly*, the Militant Salafi Movement is loyal to "Sharia minded" [49]. So, the core attraction of this movement is the formalization of sharia at the state level in all aspects of Muslim life. In the Indonesian context, the call found its justification in the reform era (President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's era) which had given freedom of expression to the people after 32 years under President Soeharto's authoritarian regime when the Islamic movement was suppressed. The *third* is related to an excessive belief in conspiracy theories[50] and that Muslims are victims. In this context, an excessive belief in conspiracy theories is associated with fierce suspicion and accusation that the West, especially America and its allies, does have a hidden agenda to destroy or eliminate Islam from the earth.

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[45] Mark Woodward, "Resisting Salafism and the Arabization of Indonesian Islam: A Contemporary Indonesian Didactic Tale by Komaruddin Hidayat," *Contemporary Islam* 11, no. 3 (2017): 237–58, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-017-0388-4.

[46] Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam Dan Negara: Transforganisasi Gagasan Dan Praktik Politik Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Democracy Project, 2011).

[47] M. Syafi'i Anwar, *Memetakan Teologi Politik Dan Anatomi Gerakan Salafi Militan Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2008).

[48] Bazian, "Islamophobia, 'Clash of Civilizations', and Forging a Post-Cold War Order!"

[49] A Murfi Fitriyani, "Islam Nusantara: Religion Dialectic and Cultural for Pluralism-Democratic Society," *KnE Social Sciences* 3, no. 5 (2018): 44, https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i5.2324.

[50] Joseph E. Uscinski, Darin DeWitt, and Matthew D. Atkinson, "A Web of Conspiracy? Internet and Conspiracy Theory," in *Handbook of Conspiracy Theory and Contemporary Religion* (Brill, 2018), 106–130, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004382022_007.

*Fourth*, the Militant Salafi Movement tends to develop an anti-pluralism agenda. This movement has a strong tendency to denigrate pluralism by considering the idea of attacking Islam as a single truth while others are considered unbelievers and have deviated from Islam or infidels.[51] They also claim that God has created a distinction between "Muslims" and "Infidels". Based on literal and textual interpretations of the Koran, the militant movement also believes that God said that Jews and Christians were "damned groups"[52] and had an agenda to seduce Muslims and entice them into their religion.

The explanation above indicates that for extreme Islamic loyalists, some Muslims tend to set the Islamic Shari'a as if it were an antibiotic drug that could cure all diseases across borders and generations. They see Islamic sharia as a perfect teaching regulating all aspects of human life starting from worship, and interaction with God's creation and in the government system [53]. The implication is that Islamic Sharia does not require non-sharia theory or science. All economic, political, social, cultural, and legal problems can be solved by the Islamic Sharia that God sent down fifteen centuries ago. The emergence of the spirit of extreme loyalty cannot be separated from the various factors that lie behind it. One of the main causes of the emergence of Extreme Islamic loyalist action is an understanding of religion itself. Furthermore, Azyumardi Azra, as quoted by Abdul Munip[54] said that the roots of rigid understanding among Muslims originated from many: [1] The Literal, piecemeal, and partial understanding of the verses of the Koran; [2] Wrong reading of the history of Islam combined with an excessive idealization of Islam at certain times; [3] Political, social, and economic deprivation that persists in Islamic society.

Such as FPI, this organization then brings its own understanding to the community and seeks to articulate and implement it in the form of radical changes in the social and religious order, such as the culture of Islamization, as well as political and legal arrangements such as Islamic state projections, Islamic law, Islamic economics, and others. Some of these attitudes can be tolerated and justified in the arena of democracy, but this excessive enthusiasm is more destructive and cannot be justified. Another mistake of this organization is that they cannot engage in a dialogue between the moral values contained in religion. Regarding this, there is often a conflict between the ideal and the real, between ideals and facts, or between text and context because the understanding is very rigid and linear. As a result, such views are often violated by dynamic social reality, needing an unchangeable natural provision.

Understanding Islamic loyalist extreme organizations, regardless of their forms, seems to be based on biased text- and context-reading, too far left or too far right, so that it becomes extreme left or extreme right. This partial and one-sided understanding cannot be considered a complete understanding and cannot be used

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[51] William A. Galston, *Anti-Pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy*, 2018.

[52] Mohammad Hassan Khalil, "Islam and the Salvation of Others," in *Religious Perspectives on Religious Diversity* (Brill, 2019), 149–161, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004330436_007.

[53] Syarifuddin Jurdi, *Pemikiran Politik Islam Indonesia: Pertautan Negara, Khalifah, Masyarakat Madani Dan Demokrasi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008).

[54] Abdul Munip, "Menangkal Radikalisme Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* I, no. 2 (2012): 159–82, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2012.12.159-181.

as a guideline in creating an ideal society, because one-sided understanding certainly ignores other moral messages that must also be applied. In other words, this understanding is a wrong understanding because it cannot be justified methodologically or substantially. Moderation can be said to be a more insightful religious path, having the readiness to side with people of different beliefs and different understandings. This requires its adherents to focus more on similarities rather than differences. A moderate attitude in religion is shown by ways of thinking and acting that take the path of *tawassuth* (moderate), *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (middle way), and *tasamuh* (tolerant), in accordance with the Islamic mission revealed to the earth, namely *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (giving happiness to the whole universe).[55]

Even so, it is essential to highlight that the moderate path is not an "effeminate", non-assertive, non-opinionated, or opportunist religious attitude. A firm and resolute attitude towards standing in defense of Allah's religion is both necessary and mandatory. However, the role of humans as God's representatives on Earth must be able to pay attention to the context of space and time in addition to God's instructions contained in the texts.[56] To some extent, being "radical", requires changes at the grassroots and the subject matter when space and time do provide the possibility for that. Moderation in religion allows everyone to exert his strength, and strive to build a nation while promoting religion as an ethical foundation in thinking and acting.[57] This is because Islam is not only a spiritual source but also a source of movement in the development of a civilized society. In the Indonesian context, moderate religion is needed so that the role of religion in this country is maximized in realizing a just and civilized society under the protection and blessing of the almighty God.

**Moderation of Islam as a Solution**

One of the main manifestations of moderate Islam is its tolerant attitude. Of course, this tolerance holds a juridical-normative basis from the Koran and the Hadith and has been exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad himself, especially when leading Medina to a prototype of an Islamic state capable of accommodating various interests within it. In Islam, that difference has become natural, and even a blessing. Quraish Shihab notes: "Diversity in life is a necessity that God wants, including diverse opinions in the scientific field, even the diversity of human responses about the truth of the holy books, interpretation of their contents, as well as the form of their experiences."[58] Thus, through a moderate view, Muslims are taught to think realistically about the problems of the people. This realistic thinking, in turn, requires Muslims to always consider reality wisely while continuing to get connected to religious messages as contained in the Koran and Sunnah. The willingness and ability to dialogue the text (religion) and context (history) are believed to provide greater benefit, not only for Muslims but also for other people,

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[55] Said Aqil Siroj, *Tasawuf Sebagai Kritik Sosial, Mengedepankan Islam Sebagai Inspirasi, Bukan Aspirasi* (Bandung: Mizan, 2006).

[56] Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Fiqih Maqashid Syariah Moderasi Islam Antara Aliran Tekstual Dan Aliran Liberal* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2007).

[57] Manisuli Ssenyonjo, "Jihad Re-Examined: Islamic Law and International Law," *Santa Clara Journal of International Law VO - 10* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1.

[58] M. Quraish Shihab, *Secercah Cahaya Ilahi: Hidup Bersama Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 2007).

so that the goal of Islam as a religion *rahmatan lil alamin* will be achieved in the context of the state of Indonesia. In *Rahmatan lil alamin,* Muslims are an entity shown as a moderate society, always sharing happiness and peace, helping people and loving.

**Conclusion**

The discussion above indicates that the development of Islamism and the challenges of democracy in Indonesia are very dynamic. The Islamic perspective influences a person's behaviour and how they accept Islam. To make Islam a religion that is *rahmatan lil alamin* in Indonesia, Muslims in Indonesia should choose the middle path, a moderation point of view on religion because *khilafiyah* and differences of opinion between schools of thought (*mahdzab*) are deemed normal in a religion. An extreme Islamic loyalist movement is led by people or groups who suffer from historical and sociopolitical injustices. Even with the elevation of religious symbols, historically and sociologically, symptoms of violent practices carried out by a group of Muslims are more appropriate as socio-political symptoms than religious occurrences. The Western media has distorted these phenomena, practiced by some Muslims, turning it into a global conversation and fostering the idea that Islam is violent and horrible. Because of this propaganda, it is usual for Islam to be associated with negative connotations, leading to the perception that many Muslims are suspects. This extreme Islamic loyalist organization in Islam began to emerge during the reign of Uthman bin Affan Era. This is what distinguishes the extreme Islamic movements of contemporary loyalists at that time (*aqidah*) from now (*sharia*). What is often debated at present is the matters relating to sharia, not aqidah, meaning that politics practiced in religion today is on the Sharia fundament, not on the aqidah. Although democracy presupposes the election of a policymaker based on most votes, only in this way can the system be changed, so following the elections of leaders may be obligatory. The notion of fiqh states that "Obligations will not be perfect unless with one thing, perfecting that one thing is obligatory." This is in line with those ideas. Thus, it may become necessary to observe the elections for leaders in this context if doing so will ensure that the appropriate thing is invited and that it does not become nasty at the most fundamental level, which needs the greatest number of votes.

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